

A Strategy for Cumbria's Primary Schools

Revised March 2009

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1. The Local Perspective

1.1 Vision for Cumbria

The Strategic Planning Framework from Cumbria's Council Plan sets out our vision for children and young people:

All children and young people in Cumbria will have access to appropriate, high quality education in the community that enables them to achieve the skills, knowledge and qualities to become responsible and successful citizens.

We will achieve this vision by providing learning that:

- Is inspirational, enjoyable, meaningful and relevant
- Encourages collaboration
- Actively develops innovative and creative practice
- Helps overcome barriers to achievement
- Supports individuals and communities, respecting their differences
- Encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning

The Plan and our vision were widely consulted upon during the autumn of 2008 and were endorsed by partners, including schools, in January 2009. It is that vision which drives the Primary Strategy.

1.2 The Context of Cumbria

Cumbria faces many of the challenges of other rural counties such as hidden poverty, isolation, a lack of choice in terms of service access. In some ways, however, Cumbria is unique. Our spectacular geography and tourism industry coupled, in the context of this Plan, with good levels of educational attainment, sometimes hides the diversity of our communities. There are high levels of deprivation in urban areas like Barrow, Workington and Carlisle where traditional heavy industry no longer provides the 'job for life' available to older generations. Our population is certainly not as diverse as many other areas in terms of racial origin, yet our communities have very strong local identities.

Some of our more picturesque rural communities – particularly those around the tourist destinations of Keswick, Ambleside, Coniston and Windermere and areas like Eden in the east of the County – have an aging population. These areas are increasingly populated with retirees and many houses are second homes or holiday lets. Pupil numbers continue to fall in these areas but, in many cases, the closure of the local school is simply not an option given the distances pupils would have to travel to alternative provision. In our more urbanised areas, birth rates have recently shown an upturn, suggesting that in a few years primary pupil numbers will begin to slowly increase. And, whilst primary school attainment generally compares favourably with that of our statistical neighbours, there are pockets of underperformance, closely linked with the areas of highest deprivation, which need to be tackled, particularly in areas like Barrow and along the west coast in Workington, Maryport and north to Silloth.

There is, then, no 'one-size-fits-all' panacea. We know that there are gaps in provision – discussed later – that need to be addressed. But we also recognise that we have, through national initiatives like the PCP and BSF, as well as through local developments like our Energy Coast regeneration project, opportunities to make

significant improvements to the life, aspirations and outcomes for young people and their families. As well as national initiatives to reduce the attainment gap in Cumbria we are and must continue to work at raising aspirations for some of our young people and their families. This includes not only support for schools but for the communities in which they live so that accessibility and quality of services continues to improve. Careful identification and targeting of resources are also essential as those communities and young people in need can be very localised even within areas identified generally as ones of deprivation.

2. Baseline Analysis

2.1 Standards

Cumbria is justifiably proud of the standards of attainment achieved by schools in the primary sector and is determined to build on these successes to secure continuous improvement. Some 80% of our primary schools are now rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. Our KS2 results are outstanding: Cumbria is rated 1 against its statistical neighbours on this measure.

Recently established collaboratives between secondary schools within each of the operational areas of Cumbria Children's Services (4) have been working hard with their feeder primary schools to secure a smoother transition between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. This has involved cross-phase fertilisation of pedagogy and practice; securing an improved understanding of what pupils have actually achieved; identifying pupils' learning styles and improving strategies for encouraging more positive attitudes to learning. The outcomes of this work are currently being presented as case studies of good practice and will be used across boundaries to secure improvement further in the quality of transition processes and pupil outcomes.

Officers from Children's Services have worked closely with National Strategies to identify schools considered to be coasting in terms of pupil outcomes. Currently there are two schools that fall into that category, support mechanisms have been identified and successful strategies will be utilised as part of the overall strategy for continuing improvement and transforming learning.

Local Area Integrated Management Teams are actively engaged in identifying the particular issues that contribute to pupils and students becoming disaffected, behaving inappropriately and not attending school as they should. This focus is leading to well defined local area delivery plans which have appropriate success measures that will enable all partners to evaluate the impact of their collective actions on pupil outcomes.

The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning initiative (SEAL) has been implemented successfully across Cumbria schools. This has enabled teachers from both primary and secondary phase to develop new strategies to enable children to engage more positively with their learning; this strategy will continue to be a corner stone of strategic direction in terms of integrated working and making effective use of resources.

- Results at KS1 are above the national average, but have not significantly improved over the past few years.
- At KS2, results are outstanding. Cumbria is rated 1 against its statistical neighbours in every measure other than higher attaining girls in mathematics.
- At both KS1 and KS2 there is a gender issue with girls consistently out-performing boys in English. However, this gap is narrowing.
- There are issues at Foundation Stage in communication, language, literacy and personal development where performance is below average.

- There is a significant gap between urban and rural areas in terms of KS2 performance: against the County average of 75.9% (L4+), 77.9% of children in schools deemed as 'rural' achieve L4+, whilst only 74.1% of their urban peers achieve the same levels. The position is more marked in smaller areas. For example, in the rural schools around Barrow, 82.2% meet the standard, whilst in the town of Barrow itself the figure reduces to 71.9%. This gap needs to be addressed.

Cumbria has many successful schools, both Primary and Secondary. For those schools inspected within the last round of Section 5 Ofsted Inspections i.e. up to the end of August 2008, 28 Infant/Nursery and Primary schools and 4 Secondary schools were judged to be outstanding; 164 Infant/Nursery and Primary schools 15 Secondary Schools were judged to be good; 68 Infant/Nursery and Primary and 11 Secondary schools were judged to be satisfactory. Of the 44 schools inspected since September 2009, 11 schools (25%) have achieved a better grade since their last inspection. 27 schools (61%) have remained the same and 6 schools (14%) have achieved a lower grade. 26 schools are, however, currently performing below floor targets.

These statistics indicate that whilst it is correct that we should celebrate our successes with an overall judgement, we would not wish to be complacent and will take the opportunity afforded by the Primary Capital Programme to improve those learning environments where they are seen to be having a more negative impact on learning and pupil outcomes.

Cumbria County Council recognises also that children in the County's primary schools already benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum, receive excellent pastoral care and enjoy a wealth of enrichment activities. These positive experiences are highly commended by external regulators such as Ofsted and it is these excellent practices that we intend to build upon in the delivery of the strategy. We recognise, however, that we cannot afford to be complacent: we need to continue to support schools to improve and innovate and to develop the new forms of delivery that will help us to deliver a step-change in performance.

2.2 Every Child Matters (ECM)

The Authority's CYPP is regularly refreshed, assessing progress against ECM targets and setting out areas for further development. The Primary Strategy will also need to be flexible to respond to those changing priorities and, for that reason, we will update it and consult on any changes at least annually.

We have made good progress in some areas. For example:

Increased accessing of screening and preventative health services by Looked After Children (82.4%)

99.6% of schools have been supported to become involved in fruit and veg schemes

Launched the Safer Schools Partnership in April 2008

Continued to improve performance at Key Stage 2

Introduced measures to actively reduce surplus places

Closed the attainment gap between boys and girls

Improved attendance

Increased number of childcare places

In terms specifically of primary schools' contribution to that agenda, the position is as follows:

Deprivation

Some 68 primary schools within the County have pupil populations that reflect the 20% most deprived lower super output areas (LSOAs) in England; these schools tend to be located in the major centres of population. 13.6% of the Authority's primary age pupils are eligible for free school meals which is low compared with the national average. Again, eligibility for free meals is, inevitably, not evenly spread and the highest concentrations are in Barrow, Carlisle and the west coast. Even within these areas, there are huge variations

with, for example, a range of below 2% to almost 74% in Barrow. In the rural areas, percentages tend to be much lower but, again, there are large variations with some schools having no eligible pupils while a few have numbers approaching 30%.

Typically, the more financially deprived urban areas are also those which display the poorest academic standards and aspirations. In parts of Barrow, Carlisle and across the length of the west coast, KS2 results are typically lower than in other parts of the County. These areas also demonstrate a higher incidence of SEN and poor attendance, the worst health indicators and the highest incidence of teenage pregnancy, crime and anti-social behaviour, and it is these same young people who typically underachieve in primary schools. It is these areas which must be targeted for investment through the PCP and other funding streams. Deprivation indicators will inform our prioritisation and help us to focus on providing access to integrated services where they are most needed.

Healthy Eating/Healthy Schools

Of the Authority's 279 primary schools, 198 have facilities that allow them to cook meals on their own premises. The remaining 81 schools are dining centres that have meals brought in either from other schools or from elsewhere. These may in some instances be multi-purpose spaces. Cumbria County Council has worked in partnership with the Primary Care Trust to develop health initiatives in schools. At the present time 161 primary schools have healthy schools accreditation.

Indoor/outdoor sports areas and the provision of play areas

All schools currently have access to outdoor play areas, but, in some instances these are either very small, or not suited to the delivery of formal sport. Several schools do not have secure play areas easily accessible to nursery/reception children. Just fewer than 10% of schools have no school hall, although some of these have access to off-site facilities.

Provision for SEN/disabilities

Cumbria was one of the first authorities to embrace the spirit of the 1981 Education Act. As a consequence of this, we now have only 5 special schools and very few of our pupils with SEN are accommodated in these schools (currently only 154 pupils of primary school age). The special schools that do remain have all been the subject of extensive remodelling and extension in the last decade, are of good quality, and fit for purpose.

The Authority's approach to SEN/disabilities is that as many pupils as possible are accommodated in the mainstream primary schools chosen by their parents. Over the years, a high proportion of primary schools have been adapted to allow them to cope with a wide range of disability. Where the needs of individual children are such that they need more specialist provision this is, wherever possible, dealt with in a network of mainstream schools with more specialist facilities and staff expertise. Only following consideration of these options are pupils placed in special schools. A very small number of pupils (currently 15) are educated in very specialist facilities outside the County.

The network of resourced mainstream schools currently totals 21, soon to increase to 24; of the 21 operational schools, 13 are in the primary sector. Before 2002, this network was developed on a pragmatic basis and, on occasions, via initiatives taken by individuals rather than as a result of an adherence to an agreed strategic rationale. As a consequence of this, some provision was with hindsight made in the wrong locality and/or in the wrong type of school. Additionally, there are significant gaps in current provision. Key areas for development in the primary sector are:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder provision in North Copeland and South Lakes;
- Provision for Severe Learning Difficulties in South Allerdale;

- Provision for pupils with physical/medical difficulties and Severe Learning Difficulties in North Copeland.

2.3 Diversity, Choice and Responsiveness

Cumbria currently has 279 primary schools providing 38,636 places (DCSF Surplus Place Return 2008). The current roll is 34,891 (January 2009); this is projected to fall to 34,400 over the next five years. Whilst the birth rate is showing a slight upturn in some areas, in others, particularly the very rural parts of the County, it continues to fall. Surplus capacity is clearly a massive issue for a County with such a dispersed rural population: only 38 primary schools have a number on roll equal to, or greater than, the maximum school capacity. The majority have some surplus places (see Appendix 1 for full details). There are currently 19 schools classed by the DCSF as having a 'high' level of surplus capacity (greater than 25% of the total and more than 30 places – as per Surplus Place Return 2008); this number is expected to rise to around 35 over the next five years (highlighted in Appendix 1). In total, we expect to have around 4,200 surplus places (based on a simple measure of net capacity against projected number on roll) by 2014.

The smallest school has a capacity of 57 and a roll of 18. The largest has a capacity of 414 and a roll of 409. There are currently 219 all-through primary schools and 60 separate infant/junior schools. 19 schools have foundation status, 77 voluntary aided status, 50 voluntary controlled status and 133 are community schools. A significant number of Cumbria's small rural schools have CE voluntary aided or voluntary controlled status, with no Community alternative nearby. At this stage, Cumbria has no academies with primary age pupils, although we are currently developing 4 academies for the secondary age range. Cumbria has also recently facilitated the establishment of a 9-18 cross-authority boundary trust school.

In addition to the 279 primary schools, Cumbria has 6 nursery schools providing places for 421 pupils and the primary schools themselves provide nursery places for 2,419 pupils. There are 5 special schools spread across the County with a total roll of 445; 154 of these pupils are of primary age. Cumbria has a high profile inclusion policy [see above], and only pupils with very severe and complex needs attend our special schools. All other pupils who require the support of a statement are able to have their needs met in mainstream schools and settings.

Given the extremely rural areas they cover, closure is simply not an option for many of our smaller schools. In urban areas, more can and will be done to reduce the number of empty places, and this will also inform our prioritisation.

We must also embrace our role as the Commissioner of school places, listening to parents' views and seeking out new opportunities. We already have diverse provision across the County and the establishment of Academies and Trust schools in the secondary sector demonstrates our willingness to adopt new ideas. The PCP, when linked with BSF and other resources, will provide the opportunity for further developments here, and we are currently considering the potential benefits of all-through schools, co-location and a campus style approach. We need to recognise, however, that we are always likely to have higher levels of surplus capacity than many other Authorities: closing many of our rural schools is simply not an option. We know we need to be creative, and increased collaboration and federation could be viable options for providing a more efficient service in the future.

PANs, particularly in rural areas, are continually reviewed. This will continue to be a feature of our planning process.

2.4 Buildings

Generally speaking, school buildings are in either good or reasonable condition. Maintenance costs are, however, relatively high, partly as a consequence of the large number of small establishments and the relatively high costs of construction and maintenance generally found across Cumbria. High levels of revenue and capital resources have been committed to dealing with condition over the past ten years. Despite this, the maintenance/condition backlog for primary schools is currently estimated to be around £50m and, as a consequence of very high local levels of building cost inflation, this figure is rising. The backlog cost per m² varies between £34 and £383; the backlog cost per pupil varies enormously. The variation in the cost per pupil stems not from the fact that some schools are in much poorer condition than others but, rather, from the fact that costs per pupil are much higher in very small schools. Improved management of the school estates and closer monitoring of the services provided by our strategic partner will be fundamental to addressing this issue in the future.

A very large number of suitability issues have been dealt with in recent years. Despite this, most schools have at least some suitability problems – these are set out briefly in Appendix 2. Some 27 schools currently have no hall (although some of these have access to off-site facilities) and 69 have no separate head's room/staffroom. All schools have access to on-site external play areas, but, in some instances, these are very small.

A small number of schools (less than half a dozen) serve very isolated rural communities with significant travel times to the next nearest school (over 45 minutes each way) – these schools each tend to have less than 50 pupils on roll and, in some cases, only around 25. A significant number of other rural or semi-rural schools are much less isolated but still have relatively low numbers on roll. Around 80 schools (less than a third of the total) have the physical capacity to accommodate 1FE or more, and only 25 have more than 250 pupils on roll. Small schools have a higher than average cost per pupil in revenue terms. This is not to say, however, either that the alternatives for pupils who attend these schools would be cheaper or that these schools do not provide value for money and fulfil an important and wider function at the heart of their communities.

Whilst condition is, perhaps, less an issue in Cumbria than in many LA areas, it will be a contributory factor when we prioritise schools for support. Where, for example, schools show similarly high levels of deprivation and attainment – and these are the schools we will prioritise for investment – we will give a higher priority to those with the worst condition and suitability defects.

2.5 ICT Provision

For all schools, connectivity is provided through the Regional Broadband Consortium, Cumbria and Lancashire Education Online (CLEO). Infrastructure provision for schools currently is of a high standard, with connectivity and availability averaging well above the SLA target of 99.5%. Work is being planned to further enhance the connectivity and connection speeds to all schools and improve the resilience of the network.

Only around 50% of our primary schools, however, buy into the available subscription services that can have a direct impact on the use of ICT in supporting learning and raising standards, and this is an area which we clearly need to develop. School representatives have told us through our ASOG meetings that they are keen to make better use of the available technology, and we acknowledge that we need to work with them as part of the PCP to ensure that schools make the best use of what is available, or we provide something better (potentially in line with BSF ICT development) which is more attractive to service users. The provision currently available includes:

- Examples of good practice in the County of how videoconferencing can enhance the learning process. Schools have potential to link to other schools in the county, nationally and in other countries or link to

a range of local and national museums and other sites. There is a further opportunity to widen usage and build on current pockets of good practice across the County

- Virtual Learning Platforms. Support for all schools across Cumbria providing schools with a low-cost option for implementing a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The choice of MOODLE was based on the experiences of working with a number of schools that have found that MOODLE successfully meets their teaching and learning requirements.
- Access to the National Education Network (NEN), which allows schools to share resources developed by colleagues in other parts of the UK. Access to excellent resource content either developed or commissioned by CLEO. Access to Espresso the country's leading content provider and local hardware to hold the information.
- Advice, Training and technical support. Through the school improvement team and other consultants is helping in ensuring teachers are familiar with, skilled and competent in the use of ICT and capacity to transform learning. Training and development in ICT is a continuing and essential part of the CPD process to maximise ICT capabilities.
- Remote Access Service via CLEO supports schools in enabling "anytime, anywhere" learning for pupils. Now in place, its further (already programmed) development will allow extended access by school staff to resources, files and services outside of the classroom and school hour constraints.
- Training and support on E safety. Using the CLEO network, Cumbrian schools benefit from a range of measures to ensure that learners are able to access the Internet safely. Provision of centralised services dealing with e-mail, web site development, and Internet and e-mail filtering. Cumbria has also been developing additional facilities to address issues such as e- bullying.
- CLEO provides a capacity to support schools in developing as well as hosting their websites should this be required.
- The Local Authority also works closely with its strategic partner to provide and support an integrated management information system to support school leaders in effective management practice. This gives aggregation and analysis of data between and across schools, allowing informed decision making, analysis of learner performance and course effectiveness.

ICT will play an important role in the personalisation agenda and will provide significant benefits in terms of teaching and learning practice in the future. We recognise that this is an area in which we can make significant improvements, and will seek to do so through PCP investment.

2.6 Extended Schools

The County has been divided up into 37 Children's Centre and Extended Services footprints. These footprints will be the platforms through which integrated and inclusive services are developed and delivered to all children and young people (aged 0-19 years) and their families. Extended Services Advisers are employed by the Local Authority as part of the Children's Centre and Extended Services Team on a locality basis, one per footprint.

Advisers support the schools in their footprint in the development of Extended Services and promote the roll out of the strategy by ensuring schools develop in line with National and Local guidance. They visit schools termly, update audits and work with schools and key stakeholders to produce a development plan for their area, which will inform PCP investment. In addition they offer support to enable schools to: monitor impact

and work on SIP and SEF; apply for funding for the development of services ; set up a systematic process for consultation with children, young people, families, governors, staff and the wider community in the footprint in line with development priorities

As of 31st March 2009, 78% of schools across the County deliver the Full Core Offer of Extended Services. The can be broken down as follows : approximately 88% of primary schools offer access to childcare provision either on site or at a neighbouring location; similarly, 89% of schools offer a varied menu of study support activities; 90% swift and easy referral; 87% parenting support and 86% community access.

3. Long Term Aims and Objectives

3.1 Outcomes

Over the course of the PCP we will achieve:

- Improved outcomes for children and young people:-
 - Attainment and progress measures will be in the top 10% at all key stages
 - Cumbria will be amongst the best 10% of LAs for pupil absence
 - Cumbria will be amongst the best 10% of LAs for exclusion rates
 - A 50% narrowing of the gap between children and young people on FSM, CLA, other vulnerable groups and their higher performing peers including raising overall outcomes of those primary school in the lowest quartile to
- Shared ownership in relation to school improvement:-
 - All schools are 'Good' or 'Outstanding'
 - No schools in Ofsted categories of concern
 - All schools report that the partnership with the LA has a positive impact on school improvement
 - All schools are members of collaborative networks/clusters
- Improved relationships, confidence and reputation:-
 - Achieve a four star standard for 'enjoy and achieve outcomes'
 - All schools report satisfaction with education leadership in the LA
 - Demonstrate and promote excellence which is nationally recognised

It is difficult to be as specific on other outcomes. We will, for example, remove surplus capacity, but far more work and consultation will be required before we can give a realistic estimate of the number of places we can practicably take out of use. The PCP and BSF are long-term programmes, and we expect other capital resources to continue to be delivered to facilitate further change over the next 15 years. Whilst we fully recognise our responsibilities, we need to see them in that long-term context. For that reason, no specific targets are given below, although the broad headings recognise the need for improvements in those areas.

- A reduction in surplus capacity:-
 - Removal/alternative use of empty capacity in urban areas
 - Review and update all school capacity measurements/PANs
 - Undertake further work and consultation over the coming 12-24 months on specific surplus place removal schemes

3.2 Guiding Principles

These were developed via our School Organisation Strategy Group (SOSG). This was established specifically to consider the principles which would drive, on a consistent basis, future decisions on school organisation in the County. The Group was made up of officers (including the Corporate Director for Children's Services and senior School Improvement Officers, Diocesan representatives, LSC/FE reps, as well as Headteachers.

The Group then consulted on the principles more widely, with all school stakeholders and parents. Whilst there was general consensus that they represented a sound basis for future school reorganisations, it is not yet possible to give a definitive view on which schools will be affected by reorganisation as a result of the opportunities afforded by PCP investment. This will require further consultation with stakeholders within the context of the agreed Strategy.

The delivery of those outcomes will be governed by 8 underlying strategic principles:

Principle 1. Giving Priority to Learners

- Learners should be able to access a broad range of extra-curricular activities within their communities.
- School organisation in Cumbria will be driven by the needs and aspirations of its learners.
- Schools are required to facilitate and promote personalised learning and equality of outcomes for all their learners.
- Strategic provision of schools in Cumbria will actively support the integrated Children and Young People's Plan.
- School learning and experiential environments will raise individuals' aspirations, self-esteem and achievements.
- All learners and teachers will have access to high quality ICT systems to improve learning, teaching and achievement, and enable distance learning and enhanced communication.

Principle 2. Inclusive Planning

- Planning for primary school organisation in Cumbria will include all learners and providers for foundation stage to 11 years as part of the life long learning strategy.
- Strategic and specialist resources/provision will be planned and provided at area/district/county level according to the nature of the resources/provision.

Principle 3. Serving the Community

- There is a DCSF presumption against the closure of rural schools that is supported by Cumbria County Council. This is not to say that no rural school should close in the future and this strategy should cement the role of primary schools within both rural and urban communities but rather that there must be compelling arguments and the exploration of alternatives if this is to happen.
- Geographically strategic schools – those where there is no reasonable alternative – although very small, will be retained. The continued maintenance of other small schools, however, will be reviewed when appropriate: for example, where standards are low or falling, where continued maintenance of the building is impossible without a disproportionately large investment, or on the retirement of a Headteacher. Schools cannot be retained for their own sake at the expense of young people's achievement and future prospects.
- Schools must have the capacity to deliver all aspects of the curriculum, potentially in collaboration with others.
- Surplus capacity will be recognised as costly and removed where practicable: retaining unnecessary empty places is not in the best interests of the wider community. This does not necessarily mean closing schools. Given our geography, we need to be creative in reducing the number of surplus places across the County. DCSF will not support additional funding for developing learning

environments if we are not serious about removing or reducing inefficiencies.

- Schools should be at the heart of wider community learning.
- As far as possible, children, young people and adults will be able to access learning, actually, and/or virtually, in the heart of their community.
- Any organisation of schools will reflect local need.
- Geographically remote areas will be identified, with a desire to maintain a learning site in these locations providing there is a reasonable demand.
- Re-organisation will take place with full consultation with local communities.
- A 'school' should be conceived of as a learning site which children can attend from 8.00am – 6.00 pm and beyond.
- Strategic planning will be aligned with planning for Children's Centres, Extended Schools and other relevant areas.
- All schools are within extended schools' clusters.
- Clusters of schools should be empowered to work together to secure enrichment of provision for all.
- Every child should have an identified 'key worker'.

Principle 4. Diversity and Parental Choice

- Cumbria remains committed to diversity of provision and wishes parents, as far as possible, to be able to choose between a range of effective primary schools.
- Cumbria recognises the need to plan all learning provision strategically; acknowledges autonomy of schools; and will work with communities, partners and schools to achieve diversity and choice.
- Church and secular provision should be maintained broadly in line with current proportions.
- Where a new school is required, statutory requirements of competition will be observed.

Principle 5. Buildings and Environments Fit for Purpose

- The buildings in which learning takes place will have a positive effect on learning outcomes.
- Behaviour, achievement and attitudes will be improved, along with teachers' performance and job satisfaction, when in conducive learning environments. These factors contribute significantly to school effectiveness.
- Buildings identified to be required as Primary Learning Sites, will therefore be provided as attractive, welcoming and comfortable.
- Buildings will be suitable for the pedagogy of the 21st century, with flexible spaces and fully integrated ICT provision throughout.
- Buildings will be as sustainable as possible within the resources available.

Principle 6. Efficiency and Viability

- The LA will seek to make efficient provision for school places.
- Any assessment of efficiency must take account of surplus pupil places, financial efficiency (both Capital and Revenue) and educational standards.
- All schools should be sustainable and viable.
- There is a preference for all through Primary Schools (3/4-11), although any changes to current arrangements would only take place with the support of the communities that the schools serve.
- Flexible management arrangements, collaborations, formal Federations, Trusts and clusters of small schools may be models to promote efficiency and viability.
- Opportunities for co-located services will be explored and promoted in order both to reduce surplus places and share costs and to facilitate better local access to a wider range of public services.

Principle 7. Effective ICT

- ICT will be recognised as key to new styles of teaching and learning across our schools, and will form an integral part of the transformation agenda.
- ICT provision will be developed to support effective and efficient school management.

- ICT provision will be developed to meet the priorities identified in the Harnessing Technology document.
- The LA will provide integrated connectivity for information services using MIS systems and a virtual learning environment through a shared platform.
- There will be integrated online personal learning space including support for children, learners and staff.
- Virtual learning platforms will be used to encourage and sustain collaborative working and to highlight good practice, share resources and raise standards.
- Leadership will be developed in the strategic and day to day management of ICT so that it becomes a tool to aid learning and raise standards through the use of the BECTA self review framework.
- High quality resources will be developed and procured to facilitate the mobility and personalisation of learning. This will be supported by a high quality infrastructure that is resilient and provides high bandwidth.

Principle 8. Effective Leadership

- Effective leadership is the key component in achieving school improvement.
- Cumbria LA will grow and develop different models of leadership to match the diversity of provision and support trusts, federations, collaborations, networks and partnerships.
- Cumbria LA will lead innovative practice through strong partnership with schools to build leadership capacity; ensure succession planning and meet the challenges of recruitment and retention of school leaders.
- Cumbria LA will work in partnership with external agencies, including NCSL, to further develop leadership of schools.
- School leaders will not have a greater teaching load than 0.5.

3.3 To recognise the County's geographical diversity, four models have been developed to be considered in consultation with the communities that the schools serve. (See paragraph 3.2 for an explanation of the models' development.)

Although the Models set out below may, in some instances, seem more appropriate in some geographical settings than in others, there is a wish to see them used flexibly and with local community support. There may also be other models of delivery that emerge through further debate and as time progresses and learning and teaching practices evolve.

All schools should:

- Be able to provide an ideal breadth/balance of curriculum;
- Be able to provide for the full range of ECM outcomes;
- Be able to provide/be a centre for Extended Schools;
- Be able to withstand turbulence in areas such as staffing;
- Be sufficiently large to allow for distributed leadership;
- Be able to address disadvantage and low achievement and, consequently, improve outcomes for pupils through sustainability, the management of change and the personalisation of learning.

The diverse geographical contexts within Cumbria will present challenges and the above may only be achievable where schools are working in collaboration with others. ICT, as an enabling tool, may help to deliver these aims.

Model 1:

Where urban areas are sufficiently large to support this model, schools should be a minimum of one form of entry. We will need to consult further on the concept of amalgamation of infant and junior schools in these areas. In addition, although this will not have application everywhere, consideration may be given to the concept of separate primary and secondary schools on the same campus.

Model 2:

All through schools that:

- Would have many of the advantages of Model 1;
- Would reduce the negative impact of KS2/3 transition on pupil outcomes;
- Would have the potential to become all age academies or, following the model that is being developed in the Alston area, trusts.

Model 3:

Very small primary schools that:

- Need to be retained because of the unreasonable travel to learn times that would result from closing them.

It is particularly important that these few schools are part of a hub arrangement as outlined below and are not left to attempt to stand on their own. This, along with a continuing review of provision should ensure the sustainability of these schools.

Model 4:

Schools that are likely to be below one form of entry but rather larger than the very small capacities necessary in isolated rural settings. There needs to be an appropriate balance between the educational and organisation optimum and a requirement to establish, protect and enhance sustainable communities both rural and urban. Co-operation with other schools will be key.

3.5 'Hub and Spoke' Arrangements

Throughout the County we are planning to deliver those models through the Hub and Spoke concept. This recognises that, whilst we cannot hope to deliver every service in every community, institutions and service providers can be brought together to deliver key services. Building on existing collaboration, the Hubs and Spokes will:

- Be able to provide specialist expertise across schools and the full spectrum of need.
- Be able to provide breadth/balance of curriculum.
- Be able to provide for full range of ECM outcomes.
- Be able to provide/be a centre for ES links with existing ES clusters.
- Through 'shared' staffing, be better able to withstand turbulence.
- Lend themselves to Trust/Federation development.
- Allow for more effective development of E-learning and use of ICT for school management.
- Increase opportunities for broad links with industry, and vocational opportunities.
- Increase potential for use of school buildings outside class/term times.
- Allow the development of community use of facilities that could contribute to outcomes for young people.
- Consider all primary schools.
- Address both rural and urban disadvantage and low achievement.
- Allow for provision of alternatives at an early stage to avoid exclusion and disaffection.

- Allow special schools to be a 'hub' and provide expertise/act as a resource for others.
- Lend themselves to a range of models of leadership, management and governance.

4. What the vision will deliver

4.1 Every Child Matters

This Strategy will enable better delivery of the ECM outcomes by:

1. Joining up funding streams as outlined in the Vision, in order to make maximum impact.
2. Providing the 149 schools that do not currently provide the full core offer with opportunities to do so via either on-site or off-site facilities.
3. Cumbria has set stringent targets to reduce alcohol consumption in young people and focuses in its planning on the need to prevent smoking-related illness. Programmes delivered through PSHE will support this. PSHE and Citizenship in schools will also support education about relationships, self-esteem and community cohesion as part of initiatives to reduce teenage pregnancies, raise aspirations, understanding and appreciation of the diversity within the United Kingdom.
4. Improving access to quality outdoor play provision, particularly for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and especially in schools serving the 20% most deprived children. All early years facilities will be provided with secure play areas. Through the hub and spoke arrangements outlined elsewhere, all schools will have access to both indoor and outdoor sports facilities that enable them to deliver the full PE curriculum.
5. Enhancing the LA's current approach to SEN provision. The Strategy and the associated additional funding will, however, both facilitate more strategic decisions and speed up implementation as follows:
 - All new schools, and any school that is significantly remodelled, will have full disabled access including access for visual and hearing impairment. Such schools will also be provided with assisted toilet/changing facilities in order to allow them to admit as wide a range of pupils with SEN/disabilities as possible. In principle, this should reduce the need for specially resourced mainstream schools; in practice, however, the low incidence/high impact nature of some complex needs means, that in some schools, it is unlikely that the kind of skills required could be developed and retained.
 - The network of mainstream schools providing more specialist SEN facilities will be expanded so that increasingly localised access is available. These facilities will be strategically located, bearing in mind in this process the hub and spoke arrangements that are to be developed.
 - Specialist advice/support will be available to mainstream schools with the five existing special schools acting as hubs for this process.
6. Enabling all children to have access to healthy, nutritional food in appropriate surroundings. All schools will be accredited healthy schools.
7. Improving access to community services. The Authority is clear about the impact that school buildings have in local communities. In looking at any potential school reorganisation, consideration will be given to the opportunities that this might present for improved access to community services. This will not only form an integral part of the school review process, but will, in addition, form part of the countywide strategic property review and review of customer access points that are being undertaken in conjunction with district councils, health, police and the voluntary sector.

4.2 Diversity, Choice and Responsiveness

The PCP and other initiatives will enable the Authority to develop its role as the commissioner of local services. In particular, we foresee significant opportunities in linking PCP and other funding streams with the resources to be provided through BSF to deliver the transformational services that parents want:

1. Using the hub and spoke arrangements outlined in the principles/models which may lend themselves to more formal collaboration between schools through federations and to the creation of further Trust Schools. The possible creation of all-age schools in some areas may open up potential opportunities for all-age academies.
2. Recognising both the need for a range of different models of provision and a need to ensure diversity and choice. In any school reorganisation proposals, the popularity and success of individual schools will be factors that are considered in proposing/agreeing solutions.
3. Reducing surplus places over the 14 year period of the Strategy, to a maximum of 10% of the total, across the County. This will be achieved by reducing the number of schools, by encouraging self-financing community use of parts of school buildings and, as part of the building work arising out of this strategy, by reducing the amount of accommodation at some retained schools or using what exists in more creative ways. We believe that the development of state-of-the-art learning facilities delivered through this strategy will be a strong driver towards the organisational change that is required.
4. Continuing to work with Area School Organisation Groups (ASOGs) in developing consensus-based, transformational solutions for each geographical area. In 2006, the Authority embarked upon a review of the current pattern of school provision. To date, most of the effort has been concentrated on secondary provision in various parts of the county and primary provision in a small number of urban areas. This process now needs to gain momentum, which the ASOGs and our various strategies will facilitate. ASOG membership is cross-phase and cross sector, involving those engaged in the day-to-day delivery of childcare, education, post-16 training, youth services and employment. It includes decision makers in elected members and those who work closely with young people. It is through these groups that the good practice which already exists is disseminated and made to form an integral part of the PCP and other developments. Crucially, though, the ASOG also provides a forum in which ideas can be discussed and developed. We have made the point to our partners that it is them that will drive this process, that this is not simply about replacing old with new, but about providing something which could be wholly different. We have encouraged ASOG members to be imaginative and innovative, to 'think the unthinkable'. Coupled with exemplar designs and wider consultation with young people, we genuinely believe that we will create an atmosphere that is conducive to a step change in delivery.

4.3 Buildings

We will seek to use the various capital streams now available to us to deliver transformational learning environments, whether that is through rebuilding or remodelling schools, or through the use of ICT to change the way teaching and learning are delivered. We recognise the importance here of consulting with young people on the design of facilities, and have recently employed a Student and Community Engagement Officer specifically to undertake this task. We are committed to:

- Exploring options and opportunities for transformational building change.
- Working with partners to maximise the vision.
- Harnessing all capital opportunities.
- Rebuilding or, in a limited number of instances, taking out of use, at least the 5% worst conditions schools.

- Significantly improving or, in a limited number of instances, taking out of use at least another 45% of schools, particularly where there are high levels of surplus capacity.
- Working with the remaining schools in order to ensure that the use of devolved formula capital contributes to the delivery of the Strategy.
- Reducing the maintenance backlog to £20m.
- Reorganising, where appropriate, single phase (junior, and infant, nursery and first) schools to form primary schools.
- Expanding the network of mainstream schools providing strategic SEN facilities in such a way that increasingly localised access is available and that, in planning these additions account is taken of the hub/spoke arrangements that are to be put in place more generally.
- Ensuring that all primary schools have access to facilities that allow them to deliver the full core offer.
- Developing an agreed framework for each area.

Again, these are ambitious targets, particularly in terms of rebuilding or remodelling 50% of the County's school building stock. We believe, however, that PCP, BSF and other initiatives can provide the lever to more strategic deployment of Devolved Formula Capital (DFC): if, for example, we can provide an integrated ICT network across the County's schools to allow an introduction to the secondary curriculum for primary schools, it may mean that a relatively small outlay in terms of DFC can improve the transition for pupils and contribute towards the transformational change we seek.

5. Approach to Change

5.1 Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Cumbria County Council, as the Commissioner of Services, has overall responsibility for preparing, implementing and evaluating the Primary Strategy for Change. The Director of Children's Services and the Portfolio Holder have been directly involved in the development of the Strategy. The final version of the Strategy has been approved by Cabinet and also by County Council (on 26 June 2008). Further consultation will be required over the course of the programme as national and local priorities change. For the purposes of this Revised Plan, we have consulted with the Dioceses and with Headteachers through our County School Organisation Group, which includes 4 primary representatives.

In the drafting and development of the original Strategy, consultation took place with:

- Local Partnership Groups
- Diocesan Authorities
- Members
- Schools
- Cumbria Association of Secondary Heads
- Primary Heads Association
- Governors
- Parents
- School Councils
- Potential new school providers

Individual projects for 2009/10 and 2010/11 (see Section 7) have been chosen on the basis that they will have a significant impact on educational standards, they are based in schools that have a secure future and they involve no formal school organisational change. Individual projects for 2011/12 onwards will be chosen on the basis of their impact in maximising educational standards and minimising surplus places.

Each individual project will have a set of Key Performance Indicators attached to it. Ongoing evaluation will

take place in order to establish actual impact against these indicators and the nature and content of subsequent projects will be adjusted in the light of this. Benchmarking and communication networks will be established with other rural authorities in order to share and learn from good practice. We will also seek to provide the support needed by school leaders involved in major building projects. Initial feedback from our Area School Organisation Groups has highlighted this as an area of concern for many Headteachers, and it is something we clearly need to address. The LA will seek, working with schools, to extend consortia and collaborative work which can involve, where applicable, federation to meet the specific needs and circumstances of the schools involved. This is of importance where there are number of small rural schools in proximity to each other, for example.

Change Management

While we understand the opportunities that come as a result of improving the facilities and environments for learning, we also realise that we must support the staff that are responsible for delivering a step change in performance on the ground. Central to our readiness for change is the commitment to supporting staff via their workforce development programmes.

Parents and pupils will be at the centre of each school's improvement strategy in raising expectations and achievement for all. This will involve developing and remodelling the workforce to benefit every child, including training and assessing new specialist staff to support personalised learning.

The LA has already been working with schools and the QCA about curriculum change for the future. There will be a need to further this work in extent and quality. The focus of teaching and learning will move further to the development of skills and attitudes to enable our pupils to be independent learners and be more active in their own learning. This will require working with our schools to identify needs for continuous professional development of teaching staff. Changes in teaching and learning also will require further development of assessment, to know how pupils are progressing and how best to support them. With these significant developments in teaching and learning any planned changes to school buildings must be appropriate to meet these pedagogical aims.

Capacity to Deliver

The Authority's BSF team is now being established. This already includes significant experience and expertise in managing complex change programmes. Our Head of Service (BSF) was previously involved in developing the Strategy for Change with a Wave 1 BSF Authority, whilst the County Manager – School Organisation previously delivered a large-scale primary school reorganisation aimed at removing surplus capacity and worked within a Wave 4 BSF Authority before joining Cumbria. We have appointed a Student and Community Engagement Officer with experience of delivering projects with and for young people, who will ensure that the 'student voice' is reflected in the design of new facilities.

Our property team has significant experience of providing the client function in major projects including 3 Academies (with another about to begin) and several other major secondary and primary school projects. We also have a good working relationship with Capita, our strategic partner, who procure and project manage our building projects. Whilst we are still in the very early stages of the BSF programme (working on our Readiness to Deliver documentation), we expect in future to be able to use the LEP to deliver non-BSF schemes.

The PCP (along with all other Children's Services related projects) will be overseen by a Programme Executive Board. This is an already-established, high-level board chaired by the Director for Children's Services and attended by other Corporate Directors, representatives from the Dioceses, and other from external agencies (e.g. Health). A dedicated team of officers and stakeholders will be established to oversee and monitor individual projects.

We have also established a specialist BSF team within the Service, the Head of which chairs a Programme Management Group involving officers delivering projects across the ECM agenda. This board meets fortnightly, and provides a forum for updating on individual projects, addressing collectively any issues and discussing future developments. Because the Group draws its membership from across and beyond the corporate body, it provides an ideal mechanism for joining-up diverse funding streams.

We will deliver:

- clear strategic leadership – the Local Authority has experience in directing complex change programmes and the strategic structures and processes to facilitate this
- project management expertise
- key change champions within project plans - this enables key stakeholders within a given project to deliver effectively within clear project parameters
- adaptability and flexibility – the Local Authority has shown itself able to adapt and flex in accordance with needs on the ground during change programmes. This is an essential organisational capability bearing in mind the complexity of most change programmes

We are aware that change can often be challenging for those directly affected. It is important therefore that appropriate support is provided at the right time to enable people to navigate successfully through the process of transition. Communication will be vitally important here. We are, though, experienced in developing clear communication plans to support change initiatives.

Risk Assessment

It is the Authority’s programme management policy to run a focused Risk Workshop with relevant attendees at the Project Initiation stage of any major project in order to understand the potential risks to the programme which may cause delays or disruption.

In line with the Council’s corporate approach to risk management, all risks to the programme will be categorised as belonging to one of the following risk types:

- Strategic
- Operational
- Governance
- Project

The Programme utilises the risk evaluation framework. This framework assesses risk likelihood and impact to produce the following matrix:

RISK MATRIX			
4	8	12	16
3	8	9	12
2	4	6	8
1	2	3	4

A score of 12-16 indicates a risk is red, a score of 6-9 indicates a risk is amber and a score of 1-4 indicates a risk is green.

Risk	Score	Mitigation
Programme does not bring about transformational change	12	Close involvement of School Improvement Team in process to gauge/advise/spread good practice. Engagement of stakeholders through ASOGs to ensure that best practice is shared across the County. Development of ICT provision paramount given that investment will not cover significant rebuild/remodel at a high percentage of schools.
Project delivery	12	Close liaison between School Organisation and Property Teams to ensure clarity re. likely future projects and enable advance planning.
Stakeholders do not 'buy-in'	9	Engagement of Heads/Governors through ASOGs. Transparent process of prioritisation and clear aims. Elected members regularly briefed/updated on progress/outcomes.
Other service providers do not/are unable to 'buy-in'	9	Bringing diverse resources together in the same place at the same time will be difficult. Engage with other providers early to set out timescales/likely priorities.
ICT not integrated to programme	8	ICT adviser involved in all projects at earliest stage. ICT Champion appointed via ASOG work groups.
Affordability - VA Contribution	6	Further work required with Diocesan partners re. 10% contribution/slippage of priority projects should there be no way of funding.
Affordability - Borrowing	6	Cumbria is likely to be involved in Wave 7 of BSF, with its inherent affordability issues. Longer-term planning will assist in giving an indication of likely cost to the Authority over the course of the Programme. Links with other capital streams (in particular BSF) and resultant may mitigate.
Programme produces a two-tier system	6	Given number of schools and level of investment, many will receive no additional funding. Continue to work with schools on planned maintenance programme and encourage use of DFC for smaller-scale investments that will contribute towards transformation agenda.
Failure of statutory proposals	6	Tradition of strong opposition to change in Cumbria will need to be challenged. Full and comprehensive consultation process will be designed.
Design – lack of innovation/transformation	6	Process will be child- and delivery- focused. Design champion to be appointed. Learning Transformation Task Group to be established which will advise.
Strategy Not Approved	6	Ensure process is open and transparent, and work closely with Dioceses to secure sign-off. Liaison with DCSF consultants where appropriate re. further amendments.

In terms of the overall risks associated with this strategy see Appendix 2.

5.2 Achieving Educational Transformation

Finance

Capital funds from all available sources will be joined together in order to ensure that programmes stemming from the Strategy have the maximum possible impact. In addition to funding sources such as the Primary Programme, Modernisation, School Places, Schools Access Initiative, Devolved Formula Capital, Children's Centres, Extended Schools, LCVAP and the Authority's own internal resources, the Authority will attempt to maximise opportunities to utilise funds available to external partner agencies.

The CE and RC Dioceses have now confirmed support for this Strategy by way of a signed letter.

Procurement

Cumbria currently has a strategic partner that provides full professional services for most projects procured directly by the Authority; the existing contractual arrangements will be subject to review/re-tendering early in the lifetime of this Strategy. There are also framework contracts with three building contractors that again are currently being reviewed. Most recent building projects have been procured utilising these two contractual arrangements.

Voluntary Aided school projects have tended to be dealt with by individual school governing bodies in consultation with the appropriate diocesan authority.

Whilst the Authority is in the very early stages of the BSF programme, with our 'Readiness to Deliver' not yet assessed, any future LEP will be considered as a route for procurement of PCP and other capital projects. The Authority is about to procure a range of academies and these schemes are being dealt with via the Partnerships for Schools National Framework.

With all this in mind, the intention at present is to use existing framework arrangements for remodelling/extension/refurbishment projects, and to enter into new design/build framework arrangements for new-build schools. Voluntary aided schools will be encouraged to use this framework.

It is intended that ICT will be secured via a new ICT framework contract.

Design

Within the Authority's current strategic partner (Capita), groups of architects, quantity surveyors, engineers and project managers have built up considerable expertise in designing and delivering major schools projects. These same individuals have, similarly, gained experience in delivering projects for a range of other authorities both in other parts of England and in Scotland. This experience stands them in good stead to help with the design, delivery and procurement of projects arising out of this Strategy.

The Authority has available to it the DCSF Exemplar Designs, DCSF Design Guides and Building Bulletins and designs and feedback for a range of primary school projects undertaken by other authorities. In addition, it has been the practice with recent secondary school projects, to arrange for design team members to visit a range of recently completed projects of a similar nature elsewhere in the country in order to provide them with inspiration and to learn from good, and indeed less good, practice; it is intended to extend this arrangement to significant primary school developments.

Design Quality Indicators will be established for all major projects and external accredited facilitators will be used to run workshops for each stage. The Authority has, for many years, sought the views of building occupiers following the completion of each project. Too little attention has been given, however, to a formal evaluation at a rather later stage (1-2 years after completion) and it is intended to remedy this situation. A design champion will also be appointed for each major scheme.

The aim for any new school will be to achieve a BREEAM "very good" rating. Consideration will be given to the cost-effective use of small scale renewables for all major schemes.

Cumbria is currently seeking to establish a network of customer service outlets for the delivery of/access to a wide range of services provided by the County Council, the District Councils, Health, Police and a range of voluntary organisations. Opportunities will be sought to link these developments with the outcome of the

Primary Strategy and associated school review process.

Fundamentally, however, the design of new facilities will be driven by educational requirements and service users. We have appointed a Student and Community Engagement officer to ensure that the views of practitioners and pupils are gathered and are used as the starting point in the design process. We recognise that, in the past, school design and organisational change have sometimes been driven by other factors: the existence of too many surplus places or the condition of existing buildings, for example. But if we are to achieve transformation, it is vital that we listen carefully to the views of those delivering and using services and act on what they say. This will be the cornerstone of the design process, and already forms a fundamental part of the design stage of projects.

ICT – Support for Teaching and Learning

Developing seamless integration of each school's VLE with its management information system will create a Managed Virtual Learning Environment (MVLE). Through the MVLE children and young people will be able to track their progress in any subject at any time. Accessing formative, summative and adaptive assessment at the point of need and receiving feedback through on-screen assessment online. The MVLE will provide access to assigned homework and, through a secure online classroom, pupils will be able to submit their work and receive feedback online.

Progressing a "Search, Find and Share" service for the managed learning environment will enable teachers and pupils to more easily share and access online media rich resource banks either internal to CLEO, the NEN or external. Integration with and provision of other services e.g. remote access, video conferencing services and streaming services where appropriate will enhance the learning process with ease of access to learning tools and more open access to resources. Pupils will have the option to take control of their own learning and open up the possibility to share experiences and materials with others.

The home access programme set up in 2007 and the computers for pupils initiative have provided a solid foundation for universal access. Cumbria has focused attention through virtual head teacher on children looked after to ensure vulnerable children are placed in an as advantaged position as other pupils and reducing the impact of the digital divide and will continue to build on securing universal access.

Home access is essential in supporting anytime, anywhere learning on an equal basis. Learning continues outside of the classroom and by embedding technology motivation and engagement are improved and associated with this is improved performance. Learning can be tailored around where and whenever a pupil feels it is best for them.

Personalised learning through the proposed CLEO MIDAS (*Moodle Integration and Dashboard Authentication Service*) will expand the reach of audiences who can interact with a school's learning platform. This will include school management staff and, most importantly, parents and carers, with easy to access resources during lessons and also on an anytime anywhere basis. A child or young person will be able to access resources best suited to their own learning style and focused on learning outcomes. The resources will be clearly signposted and available to children, teachers' parents and carers. Children will be able to work at their own pace yet still be supported by teachers more closely aware of pupils' abilities and interests. This will help in achieving improved engagement and bring in disaffected students.

By providing secure electronic access to appropriate information from schools Management Information Systems and where appropriate the ability to establish a communication channel between parent and school parental involvement will be made easier. Giving straightforward and easy access to information on progress, attendance data, assessment data, behaviour data, SEN and timetable information will aid parental engagement and participation in the learning process. The family is at the centre of learning and key to

maximising this opportunity is the engagement of parents in the learning process and building the relationships between teachers, parents and pupils in supporting the home as a place of learning.

E-portfolios development will provide Primary age pupils with suitable interfaces and simple features to support and encourage younger pupils in learning and developing the skills required to enable them to move easily into the use of e-learning tools.

Integration with, and/or provision of, a data sharing/whiteboard audio and/or video virtual classroom environment for Moodle will enable pupils and teachers to interact with other pupils/teachers or other providers in a virtual online classroom.

Leadership will be developed in the strategic and day to day management of ICT so that it becomes a tool to aid learning and raise standards through the use of the BECTA self review framework.

7.1 Initial investment priorities for 2009/10 and 2010/11

The selection of the individual schemes has been based on a range of factors:

- Projects arising out of the current formal consultative processes will be well on the way to completion by 2009/10.
- No further school reviews were sufficiently far advanced by April 2008 to commit funds to their implementation at that point.
- On this basis, given the fact that initial projects had to be set out in detail by 10 June 2008, those projects to be undertaken during 2009/10 and 2010/11 involve no formal school organisation change.

Projects selected for the first two years of the Programme (Barrow Island, St George's and Vickerstown, all in Barrow) have been targeted at areas of highest deprivation based on the tax credit data, where standards are poor, where suitability difficulties are affecting access and delivery of the curriculum, and on schools which have a secure future. We now need to progress work on the next phases of the programme, including any that will require statutory proposals: local elections are to be held in June 2009, after which we can begin making firm arrangements for the next phases of the programme.

Whilst the three initial projects are likely to utilise all funding from the first two years of the programme, the assessment matrix (an example of the factors used is attached at Appendix 3) indicates that the remaining 12 years of the programme will need to target other areas of high deprivation and poor performance, in particular:

- Schools on the West coast, in particular in Workington, Maryport, Whitehaven
- Schools serving Carlisle and its surrounding areas
- Outstanding issues in some Barrow schools
- Smaller-scale schemes aimed at improving learning environments whilst removing surplus capacity across the county

We need to consider very carefully the phasing of these projects and their scope. Whilst the initial projects supported have all been large scale, we now need to consider whether it would be more advantageous in the second wave of funding to undertake more lower-cost projects. Until a final decision is made in consultation with stakeholders, we cannot give any certainty around phasing.

We recognise also that this strategy must be dynamic and will need to be revisited often to ensure it continues to target the areas of greatest need. We will use the Area School Organisation Groups to inform this process and will continue our dialogue with the Dioceses and other partners throughout its implementation.