

<b>CABINET</b>	<b>Paper No.</b>
<b>Meeting date: 3 April 2007</b>	
<b>From: Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Corporate Director – Children's Services</b>	
	<b>**</b>

## **SCHOOL ORGANISATION : A STRATEGIC APPROACH – POTENTIAL INFANT/JUNIOR SCHOOL AMALGAMATIONS**

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

#### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**1.1 This paper concerns the potential amalgamation of three pairs of infant and junior schools.**

**1.2 More specifically, it reports on the outcome of public consultation processes and asks Members to take decisions on whether they feel amalgamations should go ahead in relation to:**

- **Belle Vue Infant and Junior Schools in Carlisle**
- **Beaconside C of E Infant and Junior Schools in Penrith**

**1.3 The paper also deals with the possibility of consultation occurring on the potential amalgamation of Brampton Infant and Junior Schools.**

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

##### **Policy Position**

**2.1 The potential infant and junior school amalgamations, which this report focuses on, represent school organisation change.**

- 2.2** *The policy position on school organisation matters is set out in the 7 September 2005 Cabinet paper ‘School Organisation – A Strategic Approach’.*
- 2.3** *The document ‘Enhancing Lives Through Learning – A Vision for Schools in Cumbria’, which was approved by Cabinet on 28 February 2006, underpins and guides the Authority’s school organisation processes.*

#### **Budgetary Implications**

- 2.4** *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.*
- 2.5** *As far as capital expenditure is concerned, some of the potential school organisation change identified would require funding to secure its implementation. The Authority has already, with the CE diocese, reserved a capital allocation from the LCVAP in 2007/08 to facilitate the possible amalgamation of Beaconside Infant and Junior Schools. This assumes the resultant primary school would be voluntary aided.*

#### **Links to the Council Plan**

- 2.6** *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.*
- 2.7** *This is supportive of the Plan’s themes, ‘Improving Council Services’ and ‘Children and Young People’.*

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Cabinet is invited to agree that:**

- 3.1** *All necessary action be taken to seek to achieve the ‘amalgamation’ of Belle Vue Infant and Junior Schools, including the publication of a statutory proposal to close the Junior School and a linked proposal to extend the age range of the Infant School from 4-7 to 4-11.*
- 3.2** *All necessary action be taken to seek to achieve the ‘amalgamation’ of Beaconside Infant and Junior Schools, including the publication of a statutory proposal to close the Junior School and supporting a proposal by the governors to extend the age range of the Infant School from 3-7 to 3-11.*

**3.3 Consultation should occur during the summer term 2007 on the possibility of the 'amalgamation' of Brampton Infant and Junior Schools.**

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

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

### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

#### **Belle Vue Infant and Junior Schools**

##### **The General Context**

- 4.1 As part of the strategic approach to school organisation which involves the review of schools throughout Cumbria, the governors of Belle Vue Infant and Junior Schools wrote to the Authority requesting that serious consideration be given to the amalgamation of the two schools.
- 4.2 Following a recommendation from the School Organisation Forum to that effect, the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 28 November 2006, agreed to undertake the necessary consultations.

##### **Specific Background**

- 4.3 The review involved whether or not to amalgamate Belle Vue Infant and Junior Schools.
- 4.4 Because the schools share the same catchment area, a single series of consultation meetings took place on 7 February 2007. In line with established practice, there were separate meetings involving staff, governors and parents/public. In addition, meetings were held with each of the schools’ pupil councils. The meetings and the consultation process more generally were based on the consultation paper attached as Appendix A.

##### **Feedback from the Consultation**

- 4.5 The response to the consultation process is contained in appendices as follows:
- Appendix B – an analysis of the responses received
  - Appendix C – notes of the consultation meetings
  - Appendix D – the response from the joint working party of staff and governors of the two schools
- 4.6 The governing bodies of both schools and almost all of those who responded to the consultation exercise supported the amalgamation of the two schools.
- 4.7 Both governing bodies indicated in letters received subsequent to the end of the consultation period that they are agreed on a preferred way of bringing the two schools together. This is by closing the Junior School and extending the age range of the Infant School from 4 – 7 to 4 – 11.

## **Beaconside Infant and Junior Schools**

### **The Context**

- 4.8 In a similar vein to the Belle Vue situation, the staff and governors of Beaconside Infant and Junior Schools approached the Authority and asked for a review to be undertaken.
- 4.9 Following a recommendation from the School Organisation Forum to that effect the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 30 January 2007, agreed to undertake the necessary consultations.

### **Specific Background**

- 4.10 The review was about whether or not to amalgamate Beaconside Voluntary Aided CE Infant and Beaconside Foundation CE Junior Schools.
- 4.11 Again, as the schools share the same catchment area, a single series of consultation meetings took place. This was on 28 February 2007. The basic format was as for the Belle Vue meeting. The focus of the consultation was the document attached as Appendix E.

### **Feedback from the Consultation**

- 4.12 The response to the consultation process is set out in appendices as follows:
- Appendix F – an analysis of the responses received
  - Appendix G – notes of the consultation meetings
  - Appendix H – the response from the joint working party of staff and governors of the two schools
- 4.13 The bulk of those responding to the consultation process, were in favour of an amalgamation. This included both governing bodies.
- 4.14 As with Belle Vue, the governing bodies of the two Beaconside Schools are agreed on the way they would like to see an amalgamation brought about. This is through the closure of the Junior School and the extension of the age range of Beaconside C of E Voluntary Aided Infant School from 3 – 7 to 3 – 11.

## **Brampton Infant and Junior Schools**

- 4.15 The heads and governing bodies of both schools have asked the Authority to seriously consider the possibility of amalgamation.
- 4.16 The School Organisation Forum, at its meeting on 14 March, agreed to recommend to Cabinet that consultation on this takes place.

## 5.0 OPTIONS

- 5.1 Members could decide to support the amalgamation of the Belle Vue and Beaconside Schools in line with the outcome of the consultations. Alternatively, Cabinet could retain the status quo.
- 5.2 With regard to the primary schools in Brampton, Members could decide to agree to move to consultation or not to do so.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Given the support locally for the outcomes which would result from the implementation of the recommendations, Members will no doubt want to seriously consider giving them their support.

**Jim Mitchell**

**Manager/Coordinator, School Organisation Project**

12 March 2007

## APPENDICES

***Appendix A – ‘3-11 education in Belle Vue, Carlisle : Planning primary education for Belle Vue area of Carlisle – A consultation document’***

***Appendix B – 11-19 Education in Belle Vue, Carlisle : The future for Belle Vue Schools in Carlisle – Analysis of the responses to the consultation***

***Appendix C – Notes of the meetings with the Belle Vue Schools’ Council, schools staff, the governing bodies, parents and the wider community***

***Appendix D – Belle Vue - Responses to the consultation from organisations/groups***

***Appendix E – ‘3-11 education in East Penrith : Planning primary education for East Penrith – A consultation document’***

***Appendix F – 3-11 Education in East Penrith : The future for East Penrith Schools – Analysis of the responses to the consultation***

***Appendix G – Notes of the meetings with the Beaconside Schools’ Council, schools staff, the governing bodies, parents and the wider community***

***Appendix H – Beaconside - Responses to the consultation from organisations/groups***

## IMPLICATIONS

Staffing: There are real/potential implications for staff working in a school which is the subject of school organisation change. The position of staff in the potential changes covered in this report is set out on page 9 of Appendices A and E.

Financial:  
Revenue - The potential implications concern the use of existing resources rather than absolute fluctuations in budget levels overall. Moreover, school organisation change can lead to a more 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. Again, however, this is likely to involve the use of available resources included in the Authority's Capital Plan and the capital budget for voluntary aided schools.

Electoral Division(s): Belle Vue, Brampton and Gilsland, Penrith East, Penrith North, Penrith Rural, Penrith West and 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

Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny?  No  
If so, give details below.

### **PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

**Cabinet 7 September 2005**

***Cabinet 30 January 2007***

### **CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

***Not considered by Overview and Scrutiny.***

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

***No background papers.***

### **RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER**

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

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