

<b>CABINET</b>	<b>Paper No.  18</b>
<b>Meeting date: 1 September 2008</b>	
<b>From: Cabinet Members for Children's Wellbeing and Transport and Corporate Director – Children's Services</b>	

## **SCHOOL ORGANISATION : A STRATEGIC APPROACH –THE POTENTIAL ACADEMY FOR BARROW**

### **SECTION A:**

#### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** *This report focuses on the potential Academy in Barrow to replace Alfred Barrow, Parkview and Thorncliffe Schools.*
- 1.2** *It describes the envisaged changes to secondary education in Barrow and updates Members on the general progress towards the establishment of an Academy but concentrates particularly on the issues of Academy sponsorship and the possibility of undertaking a further public consultation exercise.*

#### **2.0 POLICY POSITION, BUDGETARY AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS AND LINKS TO COUNCIL PLAN**

##### **Policy Position**

- 2.1** *The way forward for secondary education in Barrow adopted by Cabinet on 5 February 2008 involves school organisation change and includes the establishment of an Academy to replace three of the five existing schools in the town.*
- 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 *A contribution to sponsorship funding for the potential Academy for Barrow, up to a maximum of £1m, over a period of time, e.g. £200k each year for 5 years, or £100k per annum over 10 years (see paragraph 4.10). It is envisaged that this would be considered as a budgetary pressure during the current budget process.*

### **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 'Improving the Life Chances and Well-Being of Children and Young People'.*

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Members are asked to agree to:-*

- 3.1 *Provide up to £1m sponsorship funding for the potential Academy for Barrow over a period of time, e.g. £200k each year for 5 years, or £100k per annum over 10 years (see paragraph 4.10). It is envisaged that this would be considered as a budgetary pressure during the current budget process.*
- 3.2 *A further consultation exercise being undertaken specifically on whether the potential Academy should be based on a single-site (Parkview) or on two sites (Parkview and Thorncliffe).*

**Jim Buchanan**  
**Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing and Transport**

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

### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

#### **The General Context**

- 4.1 Following an extensive consultation exercise, Cabinet agreed a way forward for secondary education in Barrow on 5 February 2008. This involved the closure of Alfred Barrow, Parkview and Thorncliffe Schools and their

replacement with an Academy on the Parkview site. It also included the provision of additional places at the other two Barrow town secondary schools, St Bernard's and Walney.

- 4.2 The first stage in the development of Academies is the preparation and submission to the DCSF of an Expression of Interest (EoI). Following the 5 February Cabinet meeting, the Authority with the co-lead sponsors of the Academy (ie Barrow Sixth Form College, Furness College and the University of Cumbria) worked up an EoI for an Academy for Barrow. This was forwarded to the DCSF in late April and approved by Ministers on 8 May 2008. The EoI was based, in line with the 5 February 2008 Cabinet decision, on an eventual single-site Academy located on the Parkview site.
- 4.3 The approval of the EoI meant that planning could move onto the next phase, ie the feasibility stage. A management company, Mouchel, was appointed recently by the DCSF to assist the sponsors in their planning of the detailed arrangements for and operation of the Academy. The Project Steering Group that is about to be formed, which will include representation from the Authority, will oversee the further development work.
- 4.4 During the last few weeks Ministers have indicated to the Authority that they would like to see a different model for the Academy considered during the feasibility stage. If this possibility were to be pursued, the Authority would need to carry out a further public consultation exercise over the coming months.
- 4.5 A further step which the Authority needs to take, as agreed by Cabinet on 5 February 2008, is to publish the statutory proposals to close the three predecessor schools to pave the way for the establishment of the Academy. It is intended that these will be published as soon as possible during the feasibility stage of the Academy's development, though this would need to be after any further consultation exercise was carried out. Following the publication of the closure proposals there will be a statutory six week period for objections and other comments. DCSF statutory guidance to Local Authorities and other decision-makers on school organisation issues contains the presumption that proposals to close schools to make way for the establishment of Academies will be approved.

#### **An Option for a Different Academy Model – The Possibility of Further Consultation**

- 4.6 When the Authority undertook the 2007 public consultation exercise and decided on the way forward for secondary education in Barrow it was on the understanding that the DCSF would only be prepared to support a single Academy in the town operating on a single site. Ministers have very recently indicated that, whilst their position is unchanged on one Academy for Barrow, they would now be prepared to support and fund a model which involves the Academy's on-going use of both the Parkview and Thorncliffe sites. Essentially, the idea is that the two campuses would have parallel 600 place 11-16 operations but perhaps with each offering one of the Academy's two specialisms. This revised model is seen to offer more flexibility for further development in the future and greater choice for parents. It would also help to address the known concerns about school size.

- 4.7 In line with DCSF guidance to local authorities and advice from the Council's solicitors, because the initial consultation did not contain the revised model as an option and the Cabinet's decision is based on an Academy located solely on the Parkview site, a further consultation exercise is required if this new possibility is to be considered. The focus of any such consultation would be limited to whether the potential Academy should be located on one site (Parkview) or two sites (Parkview and Thorncliffe)
- 4.8 It is not envisaged that consultation on the one or two site models would prevent the Academy being established on 1 September 2009 as per the Cabinet's decision on the way forward for Barrow. After all, it was always intended that the Academy would initially be based on two sites. The planning for the new Academy mentioned earlier would continue alongside the process of further consultation and decision-making.

### **Financial Sponsorship**

- 4.9 In the early days of the Government's Academy Programme, sponsors were required to make a (usually) £2m contribution to the capital costs of the buildings. This changed three years or so ago to an endowment fund model.
- 4.10 The DCSF currently expect sponsors to create an endowment fund of £2m, with £<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>m being provided in the first year. The £2m can be built up incrementally during a ten year period but sponsors are encouraged to do this within five years.
- 4.11 Where lead sponsors come from the educational field, as is the case in Barrow, they are not required to make a financial contribution themselves. The major employer in the town, BAE Systems, has indicated that it is seriously considering a contribution close to £<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>m. Other local businesses are believed to be interested in providing sponsorship.
- 4.12 The sponsorship funds go into a trust to allow Academies on an on-going basis to fund activities over and above the core education offer which they provide for their pupils. These resources can enable Academies to, for example, finance activities which counter the educational impact of disadvantage or deprivation and/or for educational work within the local community.
- 4.13 As has happened elsewhere in the country, the Authority could at this stage become an active financial sponsor by committing, say, up to £1m. To do this would:-
- demonstrate the great commitment the Authority has to the enhancement of the education of the young people of Barrow for the mid to long term;
  - provide support for Barrow 6<sup>th</sup> Form College, Furness College and the University of Cumbria who have willingly taken on the challenging role of sponsors of the Academy;
  - help to provide stability and build confidence as the Academy moves into a very important stage in its development;

- reduce the risk of delay in the implementation of the potential Academy project and the rest of the agreed way forward in Barrow;
- encourage other local financial sponsors to come forward.

4.14 As already indicated, the expectation is that the endowment fund starts at £<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>m in year one and increases incrementally to £2m over a five to ten year period. The actual overall level of the Authority's sponsorship and the level of contribution each year would be determined in discussions with other financial sponsors and the DCSF.

## **5.0 OPTIONS**

5.1 Members could decide to provide up to £1m of the sponsorship funding for the potential Barrow Academy or decide not to do so.

5.2 Similarly, Members could agree that a further public consultation exercise be carried out or decide not to consult further.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

6.1 Given the information and argument set out in the paragraphs 4.6, 4.7, 4.8 and 4.13, it is assumed that Cabinet Members will want to support the recommendations.

**Jim Mitchell**  
**Manager / Coordinator, School Organisation Project**  
*22 August 2008*

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## **APPENDICES**

**There are no appendices**

## **IMPLICATIONS**

Staffing: There are no staffing implications.

Financial:  
Revenue - Over a period of up to ten years, up to £1m depending on the level and timing of input from other financial sponsors. Budgetary provision would need to be made during the coming and subsequent budget rounds.

Capital - None

Electoral Division(s): All Barrow

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?

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

**Cabinet, 7 September 2005**

**Cabinet, 28 November 2006**

**Cabinet, 5 February 2008**

## **CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

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

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

***Enhancing Lives Through Learning – A Vision for Schools in Cumbria (2006)***  
***Planning 11-16 Education for Barrow – A Consultation Document (Oct 2007)***

## **RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER**

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