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| <b>CABINET</b>  | <b>Paper<br/>No.</b><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><b>10</b> |
| <b>Meeting date: 7 September 2005</b>   |   |
| <b>From: CABINET MEMBER FOR<br/>CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND THE<br/>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b> |   |

## **SCHOOL ORGANISATION: A STRATEGIC APPROACH**

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

#### ***1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

- 1.1 *This paper describes the issues facing the Authority with regard to school organisation and the supply of school places more generally and in response to the Every Child Matters agenda and other initiatives.*
- 1.2 *It makes proposals to address these issues by means of a strategic countywide approach which leaves scope for flexibility locally in its implementation.*

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

##### **Policy Position**

- 2.1 *The policy position on school organisation matters was contained in the Authority's School Organisation Plan (SOP). The legal requirement to have a SOP and for the School Organisation Committee (SOC) to have regard to it when considering statutory proposals was repealed with effect from 1 March 2005. The majority of the content of the latest SOP (2003-2008) does, however, remain current/valid.*
- 2.2 *A Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) must be produced by Children's Services Authorities by April 2006. This will include a strategic approach to the supply of school places and other school organisation issues but will not go into the same kind of detail that was required for the SOP.*

### **Budgetary Implications**

- 2.3 *The proposed strategic approach to school organisation has the potential to free-up resources which could be redirected to secure the maintenance and improvement of educational standards.*
- 2.4 *To achieve that outcome, it would be necessary to incur additional capital and revenue costs. These are outlined in Section 4.*

### **Links to the Corporate Strategy**

- 2.5 *The basic thrust of the possibilities/suggestions set out in this paper is the improvement of the education and other services to pupils and their families provided through the network of schools maintained by the Authority.*
- 2.6 *This is supportive of the Strategy's Theme A, 'Improving Council Services' and Theme D, 'Improving the Life Chances and Well-Being of Children and Young People'.*

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

*Cabinet is invited to:-*

- 3.1 *Agree the adoption of the approach outlined in the report.*
- 3.2 *Authorise the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors to take the necessary steps to secure its implementation, working as far as possible to the timescales set out in paras 4.56 – 4.59.*

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

## **SECTION B:**

### **ADVICE OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

#### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

##### **General Introduction**

- 4.1 Each of Cumbria's 5 School Organisation Plans (SOPs) made it explicit that the Authority's approach to school organisation matters was based fundamentally on the aim of safeguarding and improving educational standards and attainment.
- 4.2 Successive SOPs also pointed-up the challenges which were facing and would face the Authority and its key partners in relation to demographic change. Essentially the message was that the significant fall in primary school rolls experienced over the last few years would continue and would begin to impact on secondary schools around 2006/2007.
- 4.3 Using a range of measures, it has proved possible to bring the overall percentage of unfilled primary school places down to within the SOP target of 10% and to

maintain this in recent years. With secondary school rolls rising, coupled with arrangements involving the alternative use of parts of some schools, it has been relatively easy in recent years to also hit the target in the secondary phase. However, a continuation of the somewhat ad hoc and opportunistic approach involved in attaining this is very unlikely to achieve the same results in the future as the primary pupil population falls still further and secondary rolls begin to fall significantly. A number of the Council's major partners in the provision of education services in the County now recognise the need to tackle strategically the school organisation problems involved. Whilst the Authority had been hoping that the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) initiative would effectively deal with these issues in the secondary phase, the fact that resources for Cumbria will not start to become available for almost a decade means action in the interim is essential.

- 4.4 Brief details of the issues relating to the supply of school places and school organisation which will confront the Authority in the short, medium and longer term are set out in this report. It is proposed that to tackle the issues involved, a long-term strategy is needed which sets out the direction and priorities for education asset planning at the macro level.
- 4.5 Such a strategy would need to be based on evidence including that from projected changes in the pupil/student population, social economic data, information on levels of education achievement and so on. It is recognised that a plan of this kind would need to be updated regularly to reflect changing dynamics in local communities. Priorities would also need to be reviewed and refreshed over time. It is also important to ensure that the strategy maintains the viability and success of education establishments prior to any changes being agreed.
- 4.6 The nature of the network of schools and the supply of school places is fundamental to the delivery of the outcomes required by the Change for Children agenda/the Children Act. What is considered to be needed is both a strategic and a locally co-ordinated approach which sees the further integration of the school network with initiatives including children's centres, extended schools, local Sure Start programmes and family centres.
- 4.7 This paper sets out an approach which:-
  - is Countywide, strategic and covers the mid to longer-term
  - provides for involvement and influence at a more local level
  - allows scope for early decisions to be taken to deal with current and emerging issues at various points across the County including Carlisle and Barrow
- 4.8 The strategic approach will be a component of the Children and Young People's Plan, the initial version of which must be produced by the County Council by April 2006.
- 4.9 The suggestions in this report respond to Theme D of the County Council's Corporate Strategy, "Improving the Life Chances and Well-Being of Children and Young People". Alongside the key focus of ensuring the maintenance and improvement of educational standards and quality, the review process involved would provide the opportunity to consider the role of schools in contributing to the

overall provision of Children's Services. Amongst the panoply of possibilities would be the co-location of other public sector and voluntary services and linkages to the proposals in the Green Paper on Adult Social Care, "Independence, Well-being and Choice."

### **School Places/School Organisation Issues**

- 4.10 The trend in pupil numbers in Cumbria reflects the general trend in England i.e. the number of primary age pupils will continue to fall in line with the overall reduction in the birth rate and the secondary age pupil population (which is now at its peak) will decline from next academic year (i.e. 2006/07) as the lower annual cohorts feed in from the primary sector.
- 4.11 This year's return to the DfES on surplus places showed a figure of 8.2% for Cumbria in the primary sector. Given the further fall in pupil numbers which will occur, this will rise to around 15% - 16% by 2009/10 if the number of schools and their capacities remain constant.
- 4.12 In the secondary phase, increasing numbers in recent years and other factors resulted in this year's percentage of unfilled places being quite low at 6.8%. If the number of schools and their capacities stay the same, that figure will rise steadily to around 25-26% by the 2016/2017 academic year as the trend referred to above impacts.
- 4.13 As pupil numbers fall, not only will some schools be significantly under-occupied, the number of schools with small and very small numbers of pupils will increase. Some will undoubtedly become educationally unviable. This effect has already begun to be felt in the primary phase over the last few years.
- 4.14 Given this scenario, the retention of the status quo is untenable. This would clearly work against the need to maintain/improve educational standards and levels of attainment. Moreover, there are developmental initiatives and opportunities to embrace. These include:-
- The second phase of children's centres
  - Extended schools
  - Strategic SENS provision and the Inclusive Cumbria agenda

### **A Cumbria-Wide Framework**

- 4.15 There appears to be general acceptance that action is required to address the issues arising from demographic change, the need to sustain improving educational standards and to plan coherently to respond to the more developmental agenda already described. That being the case, it is suggested that, to achieve consistency of approach, a common process is designed and adopted. The objectives of this would be to secure delivery of the 5 key Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes, particularly those relating to enjoyment/achievement and economic well-being but also those involving being healthy, staying safe and making a positive contribution.
- 4.16 The start point should be action which would lead to the achievement of enhanced educational outcomes for children and young people. It follows that the aspirations of individual stakeholders and providers should be secondary to the needs of pupils/students.

- 4.17 It will be necessary to agree with our partners the rationale for change, a clear vision for education in Cumbria in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, overall processes, timescales, consultation arrangements, review criteria/priorities and so on. To work-up an approach which includes these components, it is proposed that a Cumbria-Wide School Organisation Forum be established.
- 4.18 It is felt to be appropriate and important for this countywide approach, the aim of which is to achieve a measure of consistency, to be applied in accordance with prevailing local circumstances. Arrangements would therefore need to be put in place to enable the development of options for the pattern of schools and children's services to occur in each area/locality.
- 4.19 Options identified through this process would be the subject of consultation with schools and the wider community. As some of the options are likely to involve formal school organisation change and be subject to decisions of the School Organisation Committee, it would be necessary to follow appropriate and explicitly set out processes which meet statutory requirements.
- 4.20 The intention would be to ensure that, at all stages, consultation with elected members takes place and that updates for them are provided.

### **A Strategic Approach**

- 4.21 The suggested Cumbria-Wide School Organisation Forum could be chaired by an independent expert with its members including representatives invited from, for example:-
- Cabinet
  - Other cross-party Members
  - Diocesan authorities
  - Learning and Skills Council (LSC)
  - Primary Heads Association
  - School Admissions Forum
  - Unison/GMB
  - District Councils
  - Government Office North-West/DfES
  - Further education colleges/work-based learning organisations
  - Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel
  - Cumbria Association of Secondary Heads
  - Early Years and Childcare Partnership
  - Cumbria's MPs
  - Schools Forum
  - Teachers' associations
  - University Education Cumbria
  - Town/Parish Councils
  - Connexions
  - Employer bodies e.g. CBI or Chamber of Trade

4.22 The intention would be for the Forum to develop and recommend an educational vision, a set of core values and criteria to guide the formulation of options in localities. Back in 2003, an initial attempt at some of this was made as part of the Authority's expression of interest linked to the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) initiative which relates largely to secondary education. This is attached as Appendix A as the majority of its content is felt to remain valid. Other criteria and principles to guide option development locally might include:-

- recognition that there is no single universal model to apply – what matters is what works locally.
- an agreed approach and presumptions about preferred school size (minimum and maximum)
- a requirement to address surplus places
- the need to consider federation opportunities
- options being based on the needs of children/young people rather than institutions
- recognition of wider community role of schools and the needs of smaller and isolated communities
- the importance of improving Every Child Matters outcomes and meeting the requirements of the Children Act 2004
- the need for a revised school network which is more efficient and cost-effective
- the need to balance the clear benefits of strategic mid to long-term planning with the downsides of the potential this has for 'blighting' individual schools
- the need for secondary school students to have access to a minimum curriculum entitlement
- the need to retain broadly the existing balance between secular and church schools
- the range of post-16 opportunities/provision
- the recognition of the importance of progression routes
- inclusivity in relation to special education and other needs
- the importance of new methodologies in teaching/learning and the establishment of e-learning environments
- pupils' social and developmental needs

4.23 The Forum would set out the general case for change drawing upon demographic trends, schools' pupil rolls, school capacity ranges, information related to further education/work based learning and other data. Advice on the priority order for reviewing each area/locality and who might be involved would also be provided by the Forum. Local reviews would at their outset be informed and guided by, for example:-

- performance of individual schools and their capacity for improvement
- locational needs and preferences of local communities
- need to embrace initiatives like extended schools, children's centres etc
- sensible and appropriate transportation patterns and journey times
- the extent to which there are surplus places/excess capacity
- the content of the DfES' Statutory Decision Makers' Guidance for SOCs

4.24 It will be important at all stages to take account of the views of young people and their parents.

#### **Local Flexibility/Option Development**

4.25 It is proposed that the preparation of detailed options within county-wide criteria for school networks, size, location etc are developed locally. This seems to be both appropriate and more likely to ensure that progress is made.

4.26 In this context, a local area is being assumed to mean one of the five acknowledged learning zone/consortium areas for secondary and special education in the County. These are the areas on which Cumbria's BSF planning to date has been based. The individual consortia cover:-

- Carlisle
- Eden
- Furness
- South Lakeland
- West Cumbria

4.27 Within each area it is envisaged that collective discussions with key partners on option development will take place. This will involve early years, primary, secondary and special education provision. Representatives of the relevant County Council Local Committee(s) will play an important part in the process. The partners likely to be involved will include:-

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Representative(s) of district, town and parish council(s) | • The local M.P(s)   |
| • Representatives of school governors and heads             | • The Cabinet Member for Children's Services (or his representative) |
| • Diocesan representative(s)                                | • Representative(s) of the LSC                                       |
| • FE college governors and principal(s)                     | • Representative(s) of work based learning organisations             |
| • Connexions representative                                 | • Employers' representative  |

- 4.28 The outcome of these discussions will be reported to the relevant Local Committees, Cabinet and the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel.
- 4.29 If any of the options identified are to be further considered, a formal process of consultation with all involved parties and the local community will then take place. Should it then be determined to publish statutory proposals for school organisation change, their approval or otherwise would be considered by the SOC and, potentially, the School Adjudicator.

### **The Role of the School Organisation Committee (SOC)**

- 4.30 Given the inevitable involvement of the SOC in many of the outcomes of the review processes, is important to briefly touch on its role and composition.
- 4.31 The 1998 School Standards and Framework Act required the LEA to appoint a SOC. This is not a committee of the LEA but a separate statutory body which brings together the key partners in education at a local level. The composition of the Committee is prescribed by statutory regulations.
- 4.32 Cumbria's SOC was established in 1999 and took the place of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in the decision-making process on statutory school organisation proposals. These include formal proposals to amalgamate or close schools, change a school's age range to add a nursery class or establish a new school.
- 4.33 The Committee, though a statutory consultee on the CYPP, is not involved in examining options for change to the pattern of provision in an area. Its main role is to consider formal proposals which are made. This is only at the stage where a decision needs to be taken on a proposal which has been formally published.
- 4.34 The Committee is comprised of five groups. In relation to decisions on statutory proposals, each group has a single vote. All of the Committee's decisions on these matters must be unanimous or the proposal passes to the School Adjudicator to finally determine a binding outcome.
- 4.35 The detail of the composition of Cumbria's SOC is:-

| <u>Group</u>  | <u>No of Members</u> |
|---|----------------------|
| • LEA (elected members)   | 5                    |
| • C of E Diocesan Authority   | 3                    |
| • Catholic Diocesan Authority   | 3                    |
| • Learning and Skills Council   | 1                    |
| • Schools (governors of community, foundation and non-denominational voluntary-aided nursery, primary, secondary and special schools) | 7                    |

- 4.36 It should be pointed out that the LSC group normally only participates in decision-making on individual statutory proposals which relate to 14-19 provision.



- 4.37 Further information relating to the SOC concerning membership, public participation arrangements and the processes associated with statutory proposals for school organisation change is attached as Appendix B.

### **Resource Issues**

#### **The Establishment of a Project Team**

- 4.38 The formulation of a strategic approach and its subsequent implementation will only be successful if adequately supported and resourced. There is currently limited strategic capacity in the Education Directorate and the Property and Transport Services Unit (where the school organisation role sits) is under-resourced for such a task. Formal project management methodology will be required and the process will be intensive and demanding of both officers and Members.
- 4.39 A self-contained Project Team is suggested, staffed/resourced along the following lines:-

| <u>Composition</u>  | <u>Estimated Additional Costs p.a. from<br/>2006/07</u> |
|---|---|
|   | £K  |
| • Project Manager/Coordinator (part-time)   | 40  |
| • Research, Data Input, Mapping etc   | 20  |
| • Project Management and administration – 2 posts (incl. materials, printing etc costs) | 70  |
| • Finance, Legal, Communications, Media Support   | 30  |
| • Education Policy/Strategy Planning  | <u>40</u>   |
|   | 200   |

- 4.40 Strong support to the Project Team would also be required from the Education School Improvement Team, other Education Directorate teams, the Property and Transport Services Unit and highways personnel in the Economy, Culture & Environment Directorate. It is anticipated that contributions will also need to be made as necessary by other colleagues across the Council. This task should be seen very much as a corporate exercise and one which is not limited to the Education/Children's Services Directorates.
- 4.41 It should be recognised at this stage that the Head of Property and Transport Services intends to retire in May 2006 and the replacement arrangements must be factored into the planning. He has, however, offered his continued services on a part-time basis for a period after this date in respect of this project only. Leaving that aside, there are existing capacity issues relating to the Property and Transport Unit which would be exacerbated should the Council, as is its aspiration, move strategically to further rationalise and improve the Council's overall property

portfolio. It will be important to, at the very least, secure a replacement Head of Service by early 2006, ideally allowing a 4/5 month period of overlap. The cost of this would be a maximum of £35k.

- 4.42 It also needs to be recognised that, concurrent with the school organisation task, there will be a period of transformation and change for the Education and Social Services Directorates leading to the creation of a Children's Services Directorate under the new Director. The sustainability of the arrangements regarding school organisation need therefore to be ensured for as long as necessary and this reinforces the requirement for a dedicated Project Team.
- 4.43 To give greater capacity on the Education front, it is further proposed that an ex-headteacher with a strong national and local reputation be approached to help with the work of the Forum and to reinforce the Project Team from an independent education perspective. This would effectively be a short fixed-term consultancy arrangement costing in the region of £30k. To ensure the integrity of the process, the person concerned should not at the time of involvement be a member of the SOC or a governor of any school likely to be affected significantly by the subsequent review processes.
- 4.44 It is judged that good progress needs to be made in 2005/06. For this to occur, a maximum budget of £120K will be needed. This can be found from existing funding contained in the Education Capital Programme (£40K) and the Chief Executive's New Initiatives/Policy Development Budget (£80K). As the initial process formulation and the review/decision-making processes are likely to take 2/3 years to complete, the funding for the continuation of the Project Team will need to be identified as a pressure in the 2006/07 budgetary round.
- 4.45 The officer lead on the Education side would be the Head of Standards and School Improvement who would work to the Corporate Director – Children's Services. The Project Team would report to the Chair of the Cumbria Wide Forum and support both that Forum and its work and the local option development and review processes.

### **Capital Funding/Costs**

- 4.46 Implementing school organisation change can be a capital intensive business. Cumbria receives a formulaic capital allocation each year of around £8m. This is for capital expenditure on the Authority's 249 non-voluntary-aided schools.
- 4.47 Some of these formulaic resources have always been allocated to support the implementation of statutory proposals and surplus place removal projects. Provision for this is made in the current 5 year Education Capital Plan. Given that the work required each year on the school estate for which the Authority is responsible in terms of enhancing aspects of safety, security and suitability is considerable, the proportion available to assist in delivering school organisation change is going to be limited. There is, of course, the potential for prudential borrowing, the opportunities for which the Authority has to date used only sparingly.
- 4.48 The Government remains committed to improving the quality and appropriateness of school facilities as it sees this as contributing significantly to education transformation and improvements in standards/attainment. Consequently other/additional more specific funding to supplement formulaic allocations may continue to be available.

- 4.49 In terms of BSF resources, their availability for Cumbria, as indicated previously, remains a long way off. The current indications are that the BSF programme for the County will be delivered during the period 2013/14 – 2023/24. Any variation in that timeframe is likely to involve slippage rather than earlier access to resources.
- 4.50 The local financial contributions which are required to secure the release of the potential capital resources for secondary school facilities in Carlisle are referred to in Appendix C.
- 4.51 Some limited capital costs are likely to be incurred through the commissioning of Capita Symonds to undertake feasibility-type work during the local option development processes. Provision for this needs to be built into the Education Capital Plan when it is revised during the coming budgetary round. Subsequent design work would be part of the project costs referred to above.

### **Revenue Implications**

- 4.52 Any changes to the pattern and numbers of schools result in shifts in revenue budget terms which affect individual establishments. Given the nature of the envisaged school organisation changes, such shifts are very likely to be positive and to assist in the required outcome which is improvements in the quality of education and other services for young people and their families.
- 4.53 Some more specific factors affecting the financing of schools are summarized as follows:-
- Cumbria has a large number of small schools; more, on average, than other LEAs.
  - To keep the vast majority of these schools open and financially (and, therefore, educationally) viable, budget decisions taken over the years have meant paying a subsidy to such schools, at the expense of other schools and services in the Authority.
  - Although it would be recognised that larger schools will have certain economies of scale and smaller schools will have higher unit costs, the amount of subsidy paid to such schools in Cumbria is proportionately larger than in other authorities.
  - As well as small schools protection, other funds could be saved and be available for distribution to other schools if the LEA was to take the decision to propose and achieve the closure of some schools. For example, closing the relatively small number of schools with fewer than 35 pupils would offer for redistribution around £1.3m annually.
  - As pupil rolls fall in the next few years, the number of small schools, and the total subsidy to be paid to them (and consequently not available to others), will increase. This will happen at a time when the total funding available to schools will decrease (again as a result of falling rolls).

### **Current/Immediate/Urgent Issues**

- 4.54 There are a number of individual school organisation issues which are either currently going through formal processes or will have to be progressed concurrently with the initial work of the Cumbria Wide Forum. These include:-

- Bampton C of E School – The possibility of the school’s closure has been the subject of formal consultation which has now been completed. The school will have no pupils from the start of the Autumn Term 2005. The Cabinet will be asked at its meeting on 20 September to formally consider the future of the school.
- Satterthwaite and Rusland C of E School – Again, the future of this school has been the subject of a formal consultation exercise. The school has just 9 pupils and there is wide acceptance that it is no longer viable. The Cabinet on 20 September will also be asked to consider the future of this school.
- Yewdale School, Carlisle and Moor Row School – Consultation has already taken place on changes of age range from 4-11 to 3-11 to enable the extension of early years services to be provided. These issues will also be considered by Cabinet on 20 September.
- Early Years Provision in Kendal – A number of schools are intent on securing the publication of formal proposals for age-range changes to enable them to make nursery education provision. This would impact significantly on Kendal Nursery School and, potentially, other providers. The continuation of an on-going dialogue is important to secure a planned and co-ordinated approach to early years provision in the town.
- Morton Park School, Carlisle – This school has been in special measures for around 18 months. All the indications are that it is not sustainable in the mid to long-term. An immediate review is required to safeguard the educational interests of its pupils.

4.55 Early and initial discussion on feasibility work and other activity concerning future secondary education provision in Carlisle and Barrow began some time ago and is ongoing. These processes will have to dovetail into the strategic approach outlined in this paper. However, particularly in the case of Carlisle where there is a good deal of urgency involved, the initial work of the proposed Cumbria-Wide School Organisation Forum will be undertaken in parallel with discussion occurring locally. Current position statements on the situations in Carlisle and Barrow, including indicative timelines, are attached as Appendices C and D respectively. It should be noted that the precise timescales will need to be agreed by the Cumbria Wide School Organisation Forum and local arrangements.

### **The General Timeframe**

4.56 As already indicated, there is felt to be a need to make good progress during the remainder of 2005/06.

4.57 For this to happen, it is suggested that the following action takes place in parallel during the Autumn Term:-

- Establish the proposed Cumbria-Wide School Organisation Forum and ask it to do its initial work on educational vision, making the case for change, review criteria, consultation approaches, timescale priorities, etc.
- Begin to put together the Project Team.
- Develop the approaches/processes relating to the work of the local partnerships.

- Open new dialogue on secondary provision in Carlisle and Barrow.
  - Deal with the urgent school organisation issues outlined in para 4.54 above.
- 4.58 Recommendations which emerge from the Cumbria-Wide Forum and on the work of local partnerships could then be considered by Cabinet in early 2006.
- 4.59 Local option development work, public consultation and County Council/SOC decision-making on options/formal proposals would then follow on a prioritised basis. The first priority is almost certain to be the secondary phase in the Carlisle consortium area for the reasons set out in Appendix C.
- 4.60 The availability of resources, staff deployment/recruitment issues and other factors may potentially influence the pace of progress.

### **A Summary of the Process**

- 4.61 In summary the process outlined in this report is as follows:-
1. The establishment of a strategic Cumbria-Wide School Organisation Forum to work on an educational vision, make the case for change, formulate criteria, agree consultation processes, set the timetable, suggest priorities and hold the process to account.
  2. The establishment of locality-based partnerships, involving Local Committee representatives and a range of partners, to identify possible options.
  3. Formal consultation.
  4. Decisions by the School Organisation Committee and their subsequent implementation.
  5. Oversight, political direction and decision-making by Cabinet throughout, with engagement with the Scrutiny process.
  6. A cross-party approach.
  7. A dedicated and adequately resourced Project Team to drive the work forward.
- 4.62 It should be stressed that the responsibility for the major decision-making in the processes described in this paper rests with the County Council's Cabinet and the SOC.

## **5.0 OPTIONS**

- 5.1 It is open to Members to decide to continue with the present arrangements relating to the prospect and consideration of school organisation change.
- 5.2 The option which this paper focuses on, because of the nature and extent of the issues facing the Authority, is the adoption of a more proactive, concerted and consistent countywide approach. Members may, of course, if they accept this concept, wish to suggest alternatives in respect of the details involved.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 These proposals suggest strategic action to preserve and enhance educational standards and deal with the increasing mismatch between the levels of school provision and the numbers of pupils. The County Council must also ensure a corporate and strategic response to school-related initiatives like Every Child Matters and the Children Act 2004, Childrens Centres and Extended Schools.
- 6.2 The task is too sizeable to be achieved solely from current resources and through existing processes. The holistic, partnership-orientated and consistent approach suggested in this report is recommended as appropriate to the situation and potentially capable of a good measure of success.

**Peter Stybelski**  
**Chief Executive**  
**18 August 2005**

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## APPENDICES

Appendix A – Strategic Plan for Secondary Education (taken from Cumbria’s Expression of Interest relating to the BSF initiative)

Appendix B – Cumbria’s School Organisation Committee – Membership and Arrangements for Public Attendance and Participation at Meetings

Appendix C – The Future of Secondary Education in the Carlisle Area – A Position Statement

Appendix D – The Future of Secondary Education in Barrow – A Position Statement

## IMPLICATIONS

Staffing: There will be additional staff and secondees needed to set up the suggested Project Team. Contributions to its work from across the Council are also envisaged (see paras 4.35 – 4.45 for details).

Financial: There will be additional revenue costs incurred in resourcing the Project Team in 2006/07 and beyond. Revenue costs relating to 2005/06 will be met from existing funding. Capital costs will, in the main, be met from DfES financial allocations but prudential borrowing is an option (for details see paras 4.46 – 4.53 and Appendix C).

Electoral Division(s): All

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

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

None.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Cumbria's School Organisation Plans

## **RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER**

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

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