

## **PLANNING 11-16 EDUCATION IN BARROW - THE POTENTIAL ACADEMY: ONE SITE OR TWO?**

### **NOTES OF CONSULTATION MEETINGS HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2008 AT THORNCLIFFE SCHOOL**

#### Introduction

As part of the consultation process to determine whether the proposed Academy should be permanently based on one campus or two campuses, three meetings were held on 15 October 2008 at Thorncliffe School: one with Thorncliffe student council, one with staff of the school and a final meeting with the governors. Present at all the meetings were a panel of County Council officers who were there to respond to any questions and comments made and to record what was said.

Mr Wilson, Headteacher of Thorncliffe School opened each meeting by welcoming everyone and asking the officers to introduce themselves. Jim Mitchell introduced the consultative paper by stating that the main aim of the consultation was to consider whether the proposed Academy for Barrow should be permanently based on one campus the Parkview site, as originally proposed, or two campuses on the Parkview and Thorncliffe sites. Each campus would house 600 pupils were that option to be agreed. He said this was the purpose of the consultation and asked that that issue be considered first. However, he was aware that there may be a lot of related questions that those present would wish to raise and they were not precluded from doing so.

#### Thorncliffe Student Council Meeting

##### Introduction

Following Jim's brief introduction, the nine Council members present proceeded to ask a number of questions and present observations on the issues raised.

##### Differences in Academy Buildings

The first questioner asked how will the buildings differ on the two campuses? In response it was stated that while it was not just up to the Local Authority to design the buildings, it is likely that each campus would have substantially the same range of buildings but there may be minor differences in the range of specialised facilities. For example, the Thorncliffe site already has additional sports facilities due to its sports specialism. However, it was too early to say what the extent of those differences could be. Given that the new Diplomas were starting, there will be a lot more movement of students between educational (and other) establishments to access appropriate facilities and enable greater choice.

##### Admissions

In response to a question 'how will you decide which pupils will go to which site? It was explained that the initial allocation arising from the admissions process will be for a place in the Academy. It will then be up to the sponsors to determine a policy to decide which students will attend which site. That policy is likely to include an opportunity for parents to express a preference but may also include the educational needs of the student and other factors.

## Student Preferences

A number of students indicated a preference for two campuses for the following reasons:

- It was easier to get to know teachers on smaller sites.
- There would be a waste of existing facilities if Thorncliffe became redundant.
- Retaining a secondary school site in the locality.
- Smaller schools would be easier for children transferring from primary to secondary schools to fit in to.
- Having two sites mean that they are easier to get to from where the students live.

In response to that it was explained that most of the existing buildings would be replaced when a new building was erected – this didn't however preclude the retention of facilities, such as Hoops. It was also stated that it hadn't been decided yet which side of the road the new buildings would be placed at Thorncliffe as the decision as to whether there would be any at all still needed to be taken. That was the purpose of this consultation

It was not possible that all children living in Barrow will get into the new Academy but those relatively nearby are more likely to obtain a place. It was explained that from 2010 the Academy will admit 240 pupils each year. Although initially the Academy will be much larger than the 1200 students as it needed to bring together all the students in the three existing schools onto the Thorncliffe and Parkview sites. After this discussion a show of hands was unanimous in that all preferred the two-site option

## Future of Thorncliffe School Site

If the move was made to Parkview for all students in 2012 what would happen to Thorncliffe School site and its buildings? It was stated that it was unlikely that all the buildings will remain and many are likely to be demolished. There were no plans to sell off the site. It is likely that the playing fields, and certainly the Hoops facility will remain. There are regulations to prevent the selling off of school playing fields and in any case the Council wishes to see the development rather than the contraction of sports and recreation facilities.

## Academy Related Issues

In response to a question 'where will the head be if there are two sites?' It was stated that there was no staffing structure yet but the head or principal was likely to have an office on both campuses.

It was stated that there will be at least the same sports opportunities, and there may be more, though it was understood that inter-schools sport competitions could be reduced because of the reduction in the number of schools. The two campus approach allowed the possibility of fielding two separate teams for each sport, or alternatively picking a stronger team from the whole Academy

The students felt that by having the two campuses would spread the school run at the start and end of the school day and would therefore be less of a

problem. It was stated that this could be considered by involving traffic planners when decisions are taken with regard to entrances to any new buildings, whether on one or two sites.

Asked whether Academies worked elsewhere? It was stated that there are some good examples and some less good. However, the Authority is confident that the sponsors for the Academy in Barrow want what is best for the students of the town. There is some emerging evidence that Academies are getting better results compared to their predecessor schools. To some extent the success of an Academy depends on the students and how much they want it to work. The problem at the moment was that there was considerable uncertainty around and that was dampening potential enthusiasm. However, there are a number of events planned for the students to enable them to get to know and mix with students in the other schools, which will help when they are eventually brought together. It is currently planned that in September 2009 the Academy will open using both the Thorncliffe and Parkview sites and both will cater for children throughout the age range 11-16. The Alfred Barrow buildings are likely to close for most, if not all, the students attending it. Where they go still had to be decided. It is likely that exam groups, for example, will be kept together. The same could be the case for particular year groups.

It is almost certain that there will be a single uniform for the Academy and that there would be no difference in that respect whether it was based on one or two campuses. There are start-up funds to enable all existing students of the predecessor schools to receive some money to help pay for the new uniform. However, decisions on this and what it is likely to look like have still to be taken. It is the intention to involve students in designing the uniform for the Academy. Similarly there still needs to be decisions taken on whether there will be head boys and girls, prefects and other organisational issues. It may be that students will be involved in saying whether these are appropriate for the new Academy.

It is likely that there will be a much greater choice of options for students moving into Year 10. This would happen whether or not an Academy was created. Already much more movement is happening for students in Years 10 and 11 to allow them access to a greater range of subjects, etc.

The two campus option was seen to have the advantage that the buildings could be more easily expanded without becoming too large. Whereas a single campus would end up with a much larger school were there felt to be a need for it to expand in the future.

### Thorncliffe School Staff Meeting

#### Introduction

After the initial introductions, Jim Mitchell started the meeting by stating that the consultation document contained the reasons why we needed to consult again. The document was focused on the single issue as to whether the proposed Academy should be permanently sited on one campus or two. He did, however, recognise that wider issues would wish to be discussed. He said it should be noted that the Authority were not developing the Academy, and as such the Authority did not have all the answers. However, notes of the meeting would be taken and passed to the Cabinet who would make the decision on one site or two. Any other issues relating to the development of the Academy

would be passed on to the management team helping the sponsors in that process.

#### Management of Two-Site School

Concern was expressed as to how one head of department could manage and retain standards over two separate campuses, particularly if staff were generally working only in one of them. It was stated that no decisions had been taken on the structure of the Academy and those looking at the details were currently working on the assumption that, as was known, the Academy would be opening on two sites irrespective of the outcome of this consultation. Those discussions were happening in parallel with this consultation process although there was, as yet, no timescale fixed for the release of the staffing structure or indeed for other areas of the Academy organisation. However, the staff will be involved in the development of the education brief as that evolves.

#### Timescale of Opening

Concern was expressed that there was insufficient time to get the appropriate planning in place and all the appointments made before the Academy was to be up and running in September 2009. It was stated for information that the appointment of the Principal of the Academy was already planned with the aim of an appointment being made before the end of the year. It is anticipated that the person appointed will be full-time in post by no later than 1 April 2009. Following the appointment it is hoped to negotiate part-time release before that date.

#### TUPE and Human Resources Issues

It was stated that everyone who has a permanent post in the three predecessor schools when they close will have a job in the new Academy on their existing terms and conditions. There was no guarantee that changes to those would not take place for three years. In fact, the Board of the Academy could instigate consultations with the staff that transfer into it on changes to conditions as soon as it is created. That is no different than any other employment situation. It was noted that as the catering and cleaning staff at Thorncliffe School were employed by the school they will have the same TUPE rights and will transfer like all other permanent members of staff on current terms and conditions. While there is no legal obligation for the Academy to recognise Trade Unions and Associations it felt to be unlikely that the lead sponsors, who have an education background, would wish to alienate those organisations. There is a wish on their part that the staff will be involved in the consultations with the sponsors and the project management company in putting together the education brief which includes the staffing structure.

One teacher expressed a view that before a decision could be taken on whether there should be one or two campuses he would need to know how he would be affected by that decision and without knowledge of the staffing structure, etc that was not possible.

#### Site Issues

One member of staff said he understood that if the Academy was built on one site it would essentially be a complete rebuild. However, if the two-site option were chosen could the amount of new build be compromised and a lot of the existing buildings need to be retained? In response, it was stated that when the Authority and sponsors met with DCSF officials they were anxious to make it known that it will essentially be new build whether that be on one or two

campuses. An assurance had been given by the Government that the funding to allow that to happen would be available if the two-site option was determined as the way forward.

Concern was expressed at the practicalities of working between two sites and a question was asked whether it would be the teachers or the students that would move between sites? It was the intention that the amount of movement between the two sites of both students and staff should be limited as the full age range of 11-16 would be taught on both sites. There will, of necessity, be some movement of staff and older pupils to access particular courses but this would be kept to the minimum required for that purpose.

#### Need for an Academy

One member of staff asked 'why do we need a new Academy in Barrow? In response it was stated that during the last consultation the community had supported the need to improve the education for secondary aged students in the town. In order to have transformational change to bring that about, the only route that was immediately available to the Authority was to have an Academy. There was consensus among the education providers and employers, that it was important to change things as quickly as possible. It was understood that two community schools was the preferred option of the public. However, all those referred to above believed that the establishment of an Academy would provide the best opportunity to transform and improve education in the town. The decision of Cabinet in February 2008 means that all three schools are planned to close at the end of August 2009 and be replaced by an Academy based initially on the Thorncliffe and Parkview sites. Depending on the outcome of this consultation, that arrangement may become permanent or alternatively move to a single campus on the Parkview site. It is clear that Alfred Barrow pupils will need to move to one of the two remaining sites, and that while it may be tight in the first year or two, it is possible to accommodate all the pupils from the three schools in the existing buildings while the new buildings are built. It was explained that the transition arrangements were already being planned and that ways of how the children and the staff can work together were being looked at. One possibility was an early joint school council for the students in the three predecessor schools.

#### Walney and St Bernard's Schools

It was stated that provision for capital development had been included in the capital programme to enable the expansion of both St Bernard's and Walney Schools in line with the Authority's decision taken on 5 February 2008.

#### Academy Sponsors

It was stated that the existing sponsors had indicated that they are prepared to work with whatever decision is taken on the outcome of these consultations as to whether the Academy would be permanently situated on one or two campuses. Currently BAE Systems and the County Council have indicated their wish to be involved as financial sponsors and the aspiration is to see other local businesses involved in sponsoring the Academy

#### Specialisms

The Expression of Interest stated that maths and sports would be the specialisms of the Academy. However, as St Bernard's already has science as its specialism, some discussion has taken place to possibly changing from maths. If that were to be considered appropriate, it would require ministerial

approval.

### Two Site Concerns

A concern was expressed that the use of two sites could result in the perception of one being the satellite of the other. It was important to ensure that the structure of the staffing gave equal weight to both campuses. The fact that there were to be eventually 600 students on each site would assist that process (ie an even split of students). Doubt was expressed that successful two site Academies existed despite assurances given that there were.

### Admissions and Preferences

It was explained that for admissions from September 2010 onwards, parents would apply for a place at the Academy. A further decision would then need to be taken to determine which campus their children will be mainly educated on. The sponsors have indicated that, wherever possible, this would be in line with parental preferences, although other factors such as 'education need' may be considered.

Likewise, staff will have an opportunity to state which site they would prefer to work. However, it was recognised that responsibilities to existing students will need to be considered when putting together the staffing structures. Again, the staff said that it was not possible to make an informed decision on what was most appropriate, one or two sites, without a lot of the detailed information on the Academy. While this may be so in the minds of some people and it was clear that final decisions on staffing structure and admissions arrangements would not be in place before the end of the consultation, staff were requested to complete the questionnaire on the information that is available.

### Thornccliffe Governors Meeting

#### Introductions

After initial introductions, Jim Mitchell started the consultation with the 12 governors present by explaining that this was about whether the proposed Academy would be situated permanently on one or two campuses. However, it would be possible to look at the broader issues surrounding the establishment of the Academy.

### Question and Answers

#### Timing of Opening

The first speaker was concerned that they needed to know a lot more about the process, what the catchment area would be?; what the admissions criteria would be?; etc before they were able to make an informed judgement on whether it would be more appropriate to have the Academy situated on one campus or two. He felt that the whole process was being rushed and that information on the curriculum, etc needed to be in place before he could decide.

It was explained that the heads of the schools, the sponsors, the County Council, the Government and others all wanted the Academy to start in September 2009. Before that could happen there was a need to consult and take a decision on whether the proposed Academy would be on one campus or two. The document had indicated a number of advantages and disadvantages of one or two sites and most of the 'missing information' would apply whether

or not that choice needed to be made. It was initially felt that the community would be more receptive to the two-site issue in view of their response to the earlier consultation. The potential advantages of the two site option were outlined in the consultation document, as were the advantages of a single site arrangement. What is proposed is a new Academy from 1 September 2009 using the existing facilities on the Parkview and Thorncliffe sites. The original Expression of Interest stated that the Academy would eventually be situated on the Parkview site and the feasibility was currently underway based on that. However, the Government asked the Authority to consult with the people of Barrow on whether they would prefer that the proposed Academy be situated permanently on two sites. They had indicated that they would go along with the views of the people of Barrow on this issue. Likewise the sponsors had indicated that they would work to establish an Academy whether that be permanently on one or two campuses. The planning for that Academy was already well underway and taking place at the same time as these consultations were happening. Clearly it would be helpful to have an early indication as to whether the Academy was to be permanently on one or two sites. But the planning could continue as for the first three years the Academy would, of necessity, have to occupy two sites.

The Government is anxious to see change as soon as possible in Barrow and the heads of the existing schools said that delaying it further beyond September 2009 is not good for the retention and morale of the staff and it could lead to difficulties in maintaining good levels of education for the existing students. The offer of funding for the buildings is there now and that may be more likely to remain in place if the decision is to open in September 2009. In addition, the local politicians wanted to see change now. It was believed that all those referred to above believed that the transition period needed to be as short as possible, ie opening in September 2009 to have the least impact on students and staff. The management company appointed was working with the Steering Group for the Academy to ensure that opening on 1 September 2009 will work effectively. That management company was heavily involved in the development of other Academies and had a wide range of experts, including those from education fields.

#### Admissions

It was explained that while the plan is to close the Alfred Barrow School as well as Parkview and Thorncliffe, parents applying for places in September 2009 needed to apply to the existing schools. Were they to be offered a place in those schools, then they would be guaranteed a place in the Academy, if it opened in September 2009 as planned using the existing Parkview and Thorncliffe buildings.

#### Other Academies

There was evidence around that two site Academies can work effectively, though there is no evidence that it would be better than a single site Academy. There are clearly difficulties in managing two campuses, although there could be, for example, community advantages in having two sites. It is for that reason that a judgement needs to be taken and that is one of the main reasons why we are consulting on that issue. It was stated that the availability of capital to provide up-to-date, modern facilities was a factor in the decision. However, having those facilities would clearly make the process of teaching the curriculum more appropriate. As stated in the earlier consultation, there was currently nothing to suggest that having two Academies in Barrow was a

possibility.

#### Student Voice

It was stated that there was a petition circulating amongst the students that was anti-Academy because they were committed to Thorncliffe School. In contrast it was reported that the student council were, in the main, very positive about an Academy and were keen to take part in the process of developing it. To that end, the head explained that an alliance involving the three schools and Cumbria Creative Partnerships had been put together to involve staff and students from all schools in the development of the Academy and also to help the integration process and ensure that while transition is taking place we continue to maintain and improve educational standards. The governors were informed that the children in the Carlisle Academies had put together a DVD giving their aspirations for the future and it is hoped to get their opinions on how things developed and are continuing to develop in their new Academies.

#### Timeframes and Influences

The decision has already been taken by the Authority to plan for an Academy to open in the town to replace the three schools. The final decision on the closure of the schools still needed to be taken as the legal process was still to be completed. There was still no final decision on the funding arrangements as that is not taken until the end of the feasibility phase. The plan is to open the Academy in September 2009 with two 11-16 parallel arrangements. There may need to be some minor preparatory building work to make the campuses fit for purpose before that date. However, the design process will start in earnest once the funding agreement is signed to ensure that the new buildings, whether on one or two sites, are ready for occupation in September 2012. It was suggested that an alternative of a small Academy on the Parkview site and a Community School on the Thorncliffe site be pursued. It was explained that this would require BSF funding and that would not be available, as things stood, until around 2015-18 at the earliest.

One governor expressed the view that a single site would be clearly more cost effective than two which would be more expensive to maintain and resource properly.

#### Summary

The student council were clearly interested in the possibility of an Academy but were unanimous in their view that this should be on two campuses and not one. In contrast both the staff and the governors expressed views and concerns, although the majority appeared to favour a two-site option as that would retain a presence in the community surrounding Thorncliffe School.

## **PLANNING 11-16 EDUCATION IN BARROW - THE POTENTIAL ACADEMY : ONE SITE OR TWO?**

### **NOTES OF STUDENT COUNCIL / STAFF / GOVERNORS CONSULTATION MEETINGS HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2008 AT ALFRED BARROW SCHOOL**

#### Introduction

Three meetings were held on 16 October 2008 at Alfred Barrow School as part of the consultation process relating to whether the proposed Academy for Barrow should be situated permanently on one campus (Parkview) or two campuses (Parkview and Thorncliffe). One meeting involved the students of Alfred Barrow School, a second took place with the staff of the school and the third had the governors as attendees.

A panel of County Council officers was present at all the meetings to respond to questions and comments made.

#### Alfred Barrow meeting with Students

##### Introduction

24 students were present for this meeting. Brenda Wile explained that the purpose of the meeting was to listen to the students' views on whether the planned Academy should be situated on one campus or two. The original decision was to put the Academy, with its new buildings, on the Parkview site. An opportunity had arisen that it could be permanently situated on the Parkview and Thorncliffe sites. She explained that there was no possibility of it being kept on the Alfred Barrow site as there was insufficient space to develop, particularly relating to the need for outside areas, including playing fields for delivery of the curriculum. To start the meeting Brenda invited comments on whether the students thought, having one campus or two campuses was preferred.

##### For two sites

The first speakers were in favour of two sites as they felt it had more space and room. They expressed the opinion that there was less chance of being with people they didn't like and believed it was easier to maintain good behaviour on smaller sites.

##### Movement of Students

Concern was expressed that the students may need to move between sites to attend different lessons. It was explained that in the first three years there would be very little movement between sites, as essentially the same curriculum would be taught on both sites. However, in Years 10 and 11, there is likely to be a much greater range of subject choices and not only may students need to attend different subjects on different sites, they could well be attending, for example, Furness College or other schools to access the subjects they wished to pursue. It is possible that part of the provision on whichever option is chosen will have a drop-zone for alternative provision.

It was explained that if students live more than two miles from their new school then free transport will be provided if they transfer from their old school to their new school site. Current plans are for one Academy and one

catchment area for the Academy.

#### Choice of Site and Admissions

For those that currently attend Alfred Barrow School, it is likely that they will be offered a choice of preferred sites when the Academy opens and that, as far as possible, that preference will be honoured. However, it could not be guaranteed. For example, it may be necessary to keep GCSE exam groups together as far as possible with their current teachers. Parents of Year 6 children who are currently expressing a preference for their children's secondary education can, for September 2009, still choose Alfred Barrow, Parkview or Thorncliffe. If they are allocated a place at one of those three schools they will be guaranteed a place in the Academy, assuming it opens as planned in September 2009. All students currently attending these schools will also be given a place at the Academy. The intention is that the Academy opens in September 2009 using the existing buildings at Thorncliffe and Parkview. The expectation is that it will not disrupt existing GCSE classes, but a decision had yet to be taken as to whether or not Year 10 students could be educated in the Alfred Barrow buildings with, as far as possible, their existing teachers.

#### Why Are We Having an Academy?

It was explained that creating an Academy was an excellent opportunity to provide new buildings and facilities to improve the education prospects of students in Barrow. The Authority wants to provide the best buildings available and the intention is that they be ready for occupation by 2012. It is hoped to involve students in the whole process of the building. There will be some investment in other secondary schools, such as St Bernard's and Walney at the same time to improve their facilities. It was explained it was not possible to use the capital set aside for an Academy for other purposes.

#### What is Going to be Different?

Plans are already in place for a series of joint school activities and a joint school council is to be established. The planners of the Academy are already working hard to ensure that a behaviour policy is in place to reduce any trouble arising from the integration of students. It will be part of the planning for the Academy to look at the school day and how the community could use the facilities. There is a likelihood of common timetabling, not only between the two campuses but with other schools. A facilitator, Sandra Wearden, would be coming into each of the three schools to ask the students what they would like to take from their existing school and what they would like to leave behind. The aim would be to integrate the best practices from each of the three schools. No decisions, for example, had been taken as to whether students would be allowed out at lunchtimes. However, plans were already being put in place for the Academy to open in September 2009. The Academy will have a different name and uniform. It is likely that the students in the existing schools will have say in what the name should be and what the uniform will be like. The uniform is expected to be the same whatever campus of the Academy a student normally attends. One student suggested that the opening of the Academy be delayed, retaining the three schools until the new buildings were ready to move into.

It was suggested that if two campuses were retained then that would give additional opportunity for sports teams, etc to play each other. Issues as to

how free school meals would be dealt with were amongst the things that still needed to be sorted by those planning the Academy. It is likely that the teachers working at Alfred Barrow School will be employed in the Academy.

### Alfred Barrow Staff Meeting

After initial introductions, Jim Mitchell addressed the 30 or so staff members that were present referring them to the content of the consultation document, a copy of which they should already have received. He explained that the focus of the consultation is to determine whether the Academy should be permanently situated on one campus or two. He said that there would be an opportunity to discuss other issues in relation to the Academy, however as the Local Authority was not making most of the decisions, there were as yet few answers that could be given to a number of questions.

### Issues Associated with Two Campuses

In response to the question how will the two sites be staffed? it was said that plans were in hand to keep the movement between the two sites of both students and staff to a minimum. This will particularly apply to those teaching Years 7 to 9. Years 10 and 11, of necessity, will need to be more fluid to enable curriculum choice to be maintained and enhanced. The aim would be to guarantee that current Year 10 would, as far as possible, retain their existing teachers and be kept together as a group. There are enough spaces in the Parkview and Thorncliffe sites to accommodate children from the three schools. However, decisions have still to be taken as to which children would transfer to which site. As far as possible this would be in line with parental preference, although educational issues need to be considered and it may be that Year groups will be kept together or some other method of accommodating the students be adopted. While it is likely that Thorncliffe and Parkview students will not need to move, there needs to be arrangements in place to integrate wherever possible without disturbing the education process. The existing Thorncliffe and Parkview buildings have over 1800 spaces, but ultimately the new buildings, whether on one or two campuses, will accommodate 1200 students.

### Specialist Status

Currently sports and maths have been identified in the Expression of Interest as the specialisms of the Academy. However, as maths is close to the specialist status of St Bernard's discussions are in hand as to whether or not that should be changed to a business specialism. It had not yet been determined whether or not the Academy would have a specialism on each site or be integrated throughout the school.

### Timescale

It was explained that a decision on whether the proposed Academy be permanently based on one or two sites is likely to be taken on 6 January 2009 by the County Council's Cabinet. The admission process means that people will need to express their preference by 24 October and will know in March 2009 whether or not they have been allocated a place at one of the existing schools and therefore guaranteed a place in the Academy. At that time it is expected they will know what the arrangements are likely to be in determining which children are to attend which site and the appeals mechanism. However, this is an internal decision for the developers of the

Academy along with a range of other important issues, such as the education vision, the curriculum and the staffing structure. These will be consulted upon during the next few months and in advance of parents needing to accept the place offered.

The intention is to appoint a Principal as soon as possible and plans were in hand to make that appointment this term with the intention that the Principal designate starts full time on 1 April 2009, although it is hoped that s/he could be released from their current position, wherever that may be, on a part-time basis as soon as possible after the appointment has been made.

#### Staffing Issues

It was explained that staff who are in the predecessor schools at the date of their closure will transfer on their existing pay and conditions in to the Academy. It was not known which staff are likely to be based on which campus. It was suggested that if the students from Alfred Barrow are transferred to both sites, then there was a need to similarly spread the staff around so that the children would know some faces. Meetings have already taken place with heads and governors to start to look at the staffing issues and as time goes by there will be more liaison between the three schools as the staffing structure is put together.

It was said that the NUT had implied that not all staff will be needed in the Academy. It was stated again, that everyone in post at the end of August 2009 will be transferred using the TUPE regulations into the Academy. There will be no redundancy packages and experience elsewhere has shown that staff turnover is likely to be higher than normal. The main strategy is to retain good staff. As the catering and cleaning staff were employed by the school they would also be transferred using the TUPE regulations. Once staff have been transferred across, the employers could, if they so wish, commence consultations to alter terms and conditions and while they could technically refuse to recognise existing trade unions and associations as the three lead sponsors are from the education world locally, this is a very unlikely scenario. The sponsors concern is about the retention of good staff. Elsewhere in other Academies, where terms have been altered it has been mainly for the management team where senior posts have been advertised on new pay levels but with for example different holiday entitlements. To a large extent structures have been moulded around the staff available on the list to transfer. It was stated that nobody in Carlisle that had transferred into the Academies had lost any holiday entitlement. There will be a need for restructuring that will apply in any organisation as time goes by, for example, to deal with the reducing student numbers and to cater for extended services.

Elsewhere, staff in schools closing to be replaced by academies have been offered the opportunity to go to other academies to talk to staff about what had happened to them. Information on the TUPE regulations was requested. As there were three members of the HR team present, they offered to stay after the meeting to listen to individual concerns and advise accordingly.

#### One Site or Two?

One member of teaching staff expressed the opinion that they were against two sites as the Alfred Barrow students will be treated differently to those

staying in their existing school's premises, though he was equally concerned about an Academy of 1200 pupils on one site.

Concerns were expressed that it was very difficult to retain equality if the Academy was on two sites. It was explained that information on vision, ethos and wish list was already under development and it was anticipated that an early draft of the education vision would be available in early November. Workshops were planned to take place in the school on 24 November.

There were a number of varying views on the merits on one large campus or two smaller ones. One, for example, liked the idea of two smaller campuses but was concerned that the Academy would have no sense of unity. Others were concerned at how that it could be organised to ensure that interactions between the staff working on different sites are not lost. The issue of size was raised yet again. It was explained that there were very mixed views and opinions on this and that evidence from elsewhere that size doesn't matter when it comes to the educational outcomes. Some clearly prefer small schools and there could be apprehensions in moving to larger schools for the staff as well as the students. It was explained that heads were already working on plans for student and staff integration. A facilitator, Sandra Wearden, was already appointed to help that process.

#### Academy Issues

One member put forward a view that the Academy should not open until 2012 when the new buildings were available to move into. This would be more equitable for staff and students of all three schools. Concern was expressed as to how children would get to school and whether or not they would need to move between campuses? The policy on free school transport was briefly outlined; as was the wish to talk to Stagecoach about providing additional bus services between the campuses. One member of staff suggested that the Academy might look at the possibility of providing their own transport through mini-buses, etc.

It was explained that there was a fund available to help in the provision of uniforms for students transferring to an Academy and also for minor improvements to existing buildings to facilitate integration, etc. One member of staff suggested that if we have to have two sites, then a lower school and upper school arrangement would be fairer for all students and staff. It was explained that the decision had already been taken to arrange on two 11-16 campuses for the start of the Academy and the consultations were on whether that arrangement should become permanent or not.

#### Concluding Comments

Linda Potts, head of Alfred Barrow School, concluded by thanking the staff for attending. She said that the three heads involved were all committed to making the new Academy work whatever is decided on the outcome of one campus or two. She expressed the wish that the sooner that clarity could be given on a range of issues surrounding the proposed Academy, the quicker it would be to get rid of rumours and assist parents, students and staff to accept it. Equity of treatment was her main concern with the students first and foremost. The whole process needs to be carefully managed to enable the retention of the good staff members who already work in the three existing schools. To assist in the process it would be

extremely useful if the staff could hear directly what is happening before it appears in the press. Jo Richardson explained that she had been appointed to improve communications and to date had been working with the NWEM to get a more balanced view whenever items appeared. She would be working with the management company, Mouchel, to try to improve things further and get into place more direct communications with staff, students and parents.

### Governors Meeting

After introductions between the five governors present and the officers, Jim Mitchell began the meeting by explaining that the focus was to be on whether or not the proposed Academy should be permanently based on one campus or two. However, that did not preclude the discussion of other issues around the development of the proposed Academy.

### Integration

The first comments concerned what provision would be put into place to integrate both staff and students. It was stated that plans were already underway to develop ways to integrate both staff and students into the new Academy. The aim would be to ensure the highest level of education provision and the least disruption possible. For example, current Year 10 would be guaranteed that they could complete their GCSE and other courses and that as far as possible that would be with the same teachers. Already all the schools were working closely to determine what future options would be available and developed and hopefully extended for students of all three schools. That choice would include not only GCSEs and existing courses but also the new Diplomas that were coming in.

### One Site or Two?

One governor expressed the opinion that split-site schools don't work and was in favour of the one campus option. Another was of the opinion that he favoured two sites as they were likely to be more adaptable in the future were the population to grow. He considered that one site for 1200 students was too big. Although he did have concerns about the logistics about split site working. It was explained that the intention is to have two parallel 11-16 campuses with up to 600 students on each site.

### Communication

It was suggested that there was a need to set up communication links with a coordinator in each school so that a consistent, common and shared message is provided. Jo Richardson had been appointed as the Local Authority communication advisor and was already starting to get a more balanced view presented in the local press. The management company will also appoint their own communications advisors. It was the intention to set up a group with named representatives from existing schools, with the aim of producing a regular newsletter for staff and others.

### Transition and Timing

There was a firmly expressed view that the sooner we could plan and explain what was happening, the better. It was explained that the feasibility had already commenced with the management company and the education vision, etc being developed. Plans were in hand to appoint a Principal designate for the Academy with the hope that s/he could start work on a full

time basis on 1 April 2009. It is hoped that the person appointed would be able to work on a part-time basis in advance of that appointment date to help with the development of the Academy. The current plan is for the Academy to open on the 1 September 2009, on the two sites, Parkview and Thorncliffe. A decision on what will happen to the Alfred Barrow students had still to be decided and it may be possible that, for example, for the Year 10 students to complete their studies within the Alfred Barrow buildings. It was explained that there was no possibility of changing the decision on one or two campuses once that had been made. Were an Academy not to be created it would not be possible to close Alfred Barrow School without further consultation. The governors were in general agreement that if the Academy was to be created then that should happen in September 2009, as there was a much greater risk of losing good teachers and other members of staff through delaying the process.

### Sponsors

It was confirmed that the three lead sponsors were the Furness College, the Barrow Sixth Form College and The University of Cumbria. In addition, there were two other financial sponsors in place; the County Council with up to £1m of sponsorship and BAE Systems with £<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>m. There was a requirement for up to £2m worth of sponsorship to be in place within ten years of the Academy opening and more local sponsors were being sought. Meetings that had taken place with the Carlisle Academies sponsors were to look at the lessons learnt from the development of the Academies there. They were not undertaken to allow them to exert influence on the shape of the proposed Academy for Barrow. The work of developing the Academy will be undertaken by the lead education sponsors with support from the Local Authority and advice from the project management company who had a lot of experience with those particular issues.

Concern was expressed on the need for equity of treatment for staff and there was concern for the more difficult position the Alfred Barrow staff have in transferring into 'existing establishments'. In addition, they were concerned that parents need some familiar faces and a point of contact that they knew, particularly when they had 'vulnerable' children.

### St Bernard's / Walney

Planning is already on underway for the extensions at both St Bernard's and Walney Schools. There are a number of surplus places already at Walney School which should be able to accommodate any students who wished to attend it from September 2009. New buildings would need to be in place from September 2010. There are sufficient places available in Thorncliffe and Parkview Schools to accommodate all the existing students that will remain in September 2009 and for the new intake into Year 7 at that date.

### Summary

It was the view from all three meetings there were a lot of questions still to be answered and those answers needed to be given as soon as possible. Overall there was a commitment to making the Academy work, whether on one campus or two. There were concerns relating to how it will work and also how Alfred Barrow staff and students could be equitably integrated into the Academy. There was no obvious wish to delay its opening and there were positive statements for it to be in place in September 2009.



## **PLANNING 11-16 EDUCATION IN BARROW - THE POTENTIAL ACADEMY: ONE SITE OR TWO?**

### **NOTES OF STUDENT COUNCIL / STAFF / GOVERNORS CONSULTATION MEETINGS HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2008 AT PARKVIEW SCHOOL**

#### Introduction

As part of the consultation process relating to whether the proposed Academy for Barrow should be situated permanently on one site or two, three meetings were held on 20 October 2008 at Parkview School; one with the Parkview school council, one with the staff of the school and a final one with the governors.

After initial introductions, Jim Mitchell referred to the consultation document and emphasised that the main purpose was to discuss whether or not the proposed Academy should be permanently situated on one campus or two. He went on to say that all comments and questions would be recorded and form part of the report to Cabinet on the outcome of the consultations, and also reported back to the Academy sponsors to take account of.

#### Parkview Student Council Meeting

24 students from Parkview School attended this meeting. John Lewis took the lead and invited questions and comments from the students.

#### Travel Between Sites

The first student asked whether or not they would be required to travel between the two campuses to access different lessons? In response it was stated that the plan is for both sites to cater for education from age 11–16 and that the aim is for the curriculum design to limit travel to the absolute minimum. It is almost certain that most, if not all, of the core provision for Key Stage 3 students (that is Years 7 – 9) will mean that there is virtually no movement between sites of those pupils for education. In contrast the delivery of Key Stage 4 options means that there is no more likelihood of movement between sites than there is to other educational establishments to access provision. One student suggested that the Academy consider purchasing a minibus to transport any students that needed to be between the campuses.

#### Future Use of Sites

It was explained that no decisions had been taken as to what would happen to any of, or part of, the school sites that may not be required in future. It is likely that the Alfred Barrow buildings will not be used from the date the Academy opens. The buildings there may be used for some other education or community use.

At Thorncliffe the Hoops facility and the playing fields are likely to be kept for that purpose. However, the school buildings are likely to be redundant and not used once the new Academy buildings are occupied (whether they be only on the Parkview site, or on both the Thorncliffe and Parkview sites).

It has not been decided where the Academy buildings might be built on the Parkview site. Clearly the site is too big for 600 pupils, and some of the land may be retained by the Local Authority. Again, a decision would need to be taken with regard to retention of any of the existing Parkview buildings.

#### One or Two Campuses

One student was of the opinion that to have two campuses would not unite the Academy. In particular the students attending each of the campuses would not associate themselves with the Academy. It was stated that the students will be asked for their ideas on a name for the new Academy, and also on the design of the new uniform, and may be involved in the design of the new buildings. The Parkview site is quite extensive and it is possible for the new buildings, once designed, to be constructed while the existing school buildings are utilised for the Academy.

The intention would be to keep and enhance existing community activities, particularly in the sports area, and there will be opportunities to improve other facilities. It is likely that the two specialisms of the Academy, one of which would be sports, would be available to students whichever campus they attended. To minimise movement between the two campuses the intention is to ensure an equality of access, whichever campus a student attends.

#### Sponsors

It was explained that the three lead sponsors for the Academy are all local education providers i.e. the Furness College, the Barrow Sixth Form College, and the University of Cumbria. They would have the most control over what is provided at the Academy. In addition, there is a requirement to provide an endowment fund of £2m. Already BAE sponsors have indicated that they would be prepared to put in £<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>m and the Cumbria County Council has indicated they would put in up to £1m. The shortfall is being sought from local businesses, although that does not need to be in place for up to ten years.

#### Academy Accountability

One student asked 'what would happen if the Academy was not successful'? In response it was stated that Academies are like all other schools and will be inspected by Ofsted in a similar manner. However, with three education sponsors the structures are already being planned to ensure that the Academy is successful.

#### Preferred Option – One Campus or Two

When asked whether the students preferred the idea of the Academy being on one campus or two, a number expressed a preference for the one campus alternative. While there were reservations as to its size, they believed that could be overcome with suitable arrangements. Reasons given for supporting the one site option included that there would be no travel between sites in a one campus option. It would be easier to maintain unity on one site. There would be more specialist staff and teachers available on a single site.

It was stated that most of the staff currently employed in the three schools will be employed in the Academy, and none would lose their jobs because of the establishment of it. There would be generally the same number of staff required whether the Academy was based on one or two sites.

One student was concerned that competition in sports could be lost with the one campus option, as two campuses allowed more teams.

### Parkview Staff Meeting

#### Introductions

After initial introductions, Jim Mitchell referred to the consultation document and outlined the purpose of the meeting. He explained that the notes would be taken back to the planners of the Academy to enable them to be aware of the concerns and issues around. He then invited questions and observations from the 30 – 35 staff that were in attendance.

#### Timeframe

It was explained that references to the potential Academy need to be taken in context. For example, the County Council took the decision back in February to pursue the possible establishment of an Academy. Since then the Expression of Interest was written by the sponsors and that had been accepted by the Secretary of State. A management company, Mouchel, had since been appointed by the DCSF and planning is going ahead with a view to the Academy opening in September 2009. Before the Academy can be definitely implemented the Authority needs to go through the legal process to close the three existing schools, and the Secretary of State is required to sign the funding agreement. It is likely that the publication of the statutory proposals will take place in late January 2009. This will be after the County Council Cabinet has taken a decision on whether the Academy be permanently on one or two campuses at its meeting on 6 January 2009. It is anticipated that the Authority will make a final decision on those legal proposals at its meeting to be held on 7 April 2009.

It was explained that the previous consultation meetings had not considered the possibility of an Academy on two sites, and it was necessary to have that decision before the proposals to close the schools are published. In contrast, the planning of the Academy is carrying on in tandem with the consultation on one site or two. That is undertaken by the management company Mouchel on behalf of the sponsors and the DCSF. They are responsible for consulting on a wide range of issues surrounding the establishment of the Academy, and the work leading up to that is currently underway. Mouchel is working very closely with the sponsors and the existing heads to put together an education brief that will cover the ethos of the Academy, the curriculum, and the staffing structure.

Robert Swales, the Head of Parkview School, informed the staff that the intention is that the draft details of that education brief will be made available on 18 November. He intended holding a meeting for parents on 19 November, which would allow them two days to submit a response to these consultations. It was suggested that there was little point in delaying the receipt of responses as that may delay planning for the Academy opening in September 2009. The education brief does not cover key issues, such as the admissions policy and how students would be allocated to which site.

#### Time of opening September 2009 or September 2010

One teacher was concerned that the whole business was being pushed through in haste for September 2009, and asked 'why was it not being delayed'? He referred to the reported troubles at the Carlisle Central

Academy. It was suggested to him that these reports had been exaggerated and they had been no more than teething troubles and that he should look at the other two Academies that were created in Cumbria on the same day, where there were few problems. Their planning process had the same, if not less, time than that currently available for the proposed Barrow Academy.

#### Reason for Consulting Again

It was explained that the decision to consult on whether or not the Academy should be permanently on one or two sites was taken following discussions with Government representatives. They had assured the Authority that they wished to support and fund whichever option is chosen locally, provided they stick with the September 2009 opening date. It was clear that they wanted change sooner rather than later and were keen to have the transformation process start as quickly as possible. In addition, concerns have been expressed that to prolong the opening to September 2010 would put strain on staff over a much longer period.

#### Appointment of the Principal

One member of staff asked 'was it not Government policy that the Principal should be in place for five terms before the establishment of Academy'? It was suggested that while there were Government guidelines on this, the Government had dictated the pace of the opening of the proposed Academy in Barrow. The intention is for the Principal to be appointed this term, and that person be in post full time from 1 April 2009 with the hope of some part-time involvement before that date. It is not the Principal's role in an Academy situation to put together the education brief. That is done by the Board of trustees (i.e. the sponsors) who set out the education brief for the Principal to put it into action.

The Academy is required to follow legal procedures, particularly relating to admissions codes, exclusions codes, and special educational needs codes.

The situation, with three local education sponsors, is said to be unique in the country and is likely to offer a greater feeling of security to staff. It was reported that the education brief is about to be made available, and it draws strongly on the work that was undertaken at the start of term with the staff in existing schools. When the draft education brief is made available, then Governors, staff and others will be involved in its further development.

#### Staffing Issues

Application of the TUPE regulations means that any permanent member of staff in one of the existing schools at the date of closure, currently planned for 31 August 2009, will transfer into the proposed Academy on 1 September 2009 (assuming it opens on that date) on their existing terms and conditions of employment. The Academy, like any organisation, can start to renegotiate those conditions after that date. However, the sponsors are keen to retain good staff and are unlikely to precipitate action that would result in their loss. Generally speaking, the longer that it takes to open an Academy the longer the period of uncertainty and more staff are likely to leave.

Those staff on temporary contracts would need to have them looked at as there is no transfer across if they terminate prior to the date the Academy is established. Each temporary contract will need to be examined to determine whether they are eligible to be put on the list of staff eligible to TUPE transfer.

### Alfred Barrow

The likelihood is that the decision to close all three schools will be taken in April 2009. Alfred Barrow will be treated no differently with regard to the staff or the students than in the other two schools. A decision needs to be taken with regard to which children are educated on which site and careful consideration is already being undertaken, although no firm decisions have been provided by the sponsors.

### One Campus or Two

A view was expressed that advantages for a two site option were based around community issues and that all those against two sites were educational in their origin. Education was considered to be likely to be better on one site. Concern was expressed that the two sites option will be preferred by parents as they will look no further than how their children will get to school and give little thought as to how the education could be delivered over the two sites, for example, how to manage a particular school subject across two sites. An opinion was expressed that the document was written in favour of the two site option and not in support of the one site possibility. It was explained that the document was aimed at a range of different audiences and by listing the advantages for and against both the single campus option and the two campus option an attempt had been made to balance the content.

### Movement Between Sites

It was explained that the aim is to provide a timetable and curriculum which will ensure that nearly all of the Key Stage 3 children will stay on one campus for their education. At Key Stage 4, however, there will be some movement between sites, as there will be between all schools, to enable a personalised learning and range of options to be accessed by the students. It is likely that the timetables will be organised in such a way that, as far as possible, parallel lessons will be taught on each campus. The responsibility for Health and Safety and the loss of any time in transferring between sites during the school day will be one for the Academy to consider. Whereas, as now, the responsibility of getting pupils to and from school will be that of their parents.

### Academy Size

Currently the Academy is being planned for 1,200 pupils. If the two campus option is pursued there will be 600 on each site. At the same time it is planned to increase the student population at Walney up to 900 students and at St Bernard's up to 1,000 students. The consultation document had suggested that one possible advantage of the two site option could be that expanding two sets of buildings could be easier if required in the future and that the Academy in that situation would not be seen to be "too large".

### Learning Village

Concern was expressed that the idea of a large education Learning Village on the Parkview site had been lost in the discussions on one site or two sites. Joined-up thinking around the possibility of that should not be lost. In response it was suggested that as the Post-16 education in Barrow is seen as good, there were few who wished for the Academy to cover the age range up to eighteen. The issue of co-location of primary education on the Parkview site has not been discussed in any meaningful way and is no more than a possible aspiration at some future date.

### Admissions in September 2009

The published admission numbers for all the secondary schools in the Barrow area remain the same as they were for admission in September 2008. There are sufficient places in Thorncliffe and Parkview School buildings to take all the pupils from those schools and Alfred Barrow, including the new incoming Year 7. Once parents are allocated a place to one of the predecessor schools then they will be guaranteed a place at the Academy. However, which site they will be educated at has still to be determined, although parental wishes are likely to be one of the factors considered in determining that. The whole position with regard to the transfer of students to one of the two sites (for at least the first three years) needs to be carefully thought out and it is likely that it will not be a simple matter of transferring all the Alfred Barrow School students to the Thorncliffe site. While there are some merits in keeping the children together it is important to consider educational needs and parental preferences before a decision like that is taken.

It was noted that the heads of the three schools and the head of Walney were meeting on 3 November to look at the transition arrangements and plan out where children will be going in September 2009 and the arrangements for determining that.

### Site Development

It was accepted that the Parkview site could be developed without interfering with the education process. However, the Thorncliffe site presented much more of a logistical problem, although the Authority had been assured that this could be achieved successfully.

### What Prompted the Two Site Consultation

At a meeting held with Government representatives and those of the Local Authority the Government made it clear that they would be prepared to consider an Academy based on two sites as that was an appropriate response to local concerns. The Government had originally indicated that they were only prepared to fund a single Academy on one site with 1,200 pupils but had now indicated that they would be prepared to fund one on two. Rather than lose the possibility of any funding for an Academy the Local Authority agreed to consult on the possibility of the Academy being established on two sites. The Government and the sponsors have agreed to support the decision whether one or two sites was the preferred way forward.

To conclude those present were requested to send in completed questionnaires, as these were likely to be one of the major influencing factors when the County Council takes its decision on the outcome of the consultation in January 2009.

### Parkview School Governors Meeting

#### Introductions

After initial introductions, Jim Mitchell informed the four governors present that they had met the students and staff of the school earlier in the day and it was now the turn of the Governors to reflect on the consultation document. He informed them that the main purpose was to concentrate on the issue of whether the proposed Academy should be situated permanently on one campus or two; although that would not preclude discussion of the broader

issues associated with the establishment of an Academy.

#### Preference for One Campus

The first speaker expressed a clear preference to stay with the original decision to create an Academy on one site. He expressed the opinion that to go to two campuses was a recipe for disaster and did not know how it could be organised. While stating that he did have one or two reservations, one of which was whether 1,200 pupils was a little too large and another whether the experience of the sponsors, who mainly dealt with adults, could be transferred to an education setting dealing with students aged 11-16. His main concern, however, was for the staff and students of the school and the need to ensure that their needs were met. That he believed could only be successfully achieved in a single site school.

#### Site Developments

While accepting that during the development of and building of the Academy there would be a need for a split site operation, a Governor was anxious that the single campus should be on Parkview site which is ideal for its development. There is considerable space to ensure that it could be built without disrupting education. It is centrally based and there is scope for a new entrance and improvements to the access. He believed the size of the site provided a real opportunity for developing with perhaps the re-location of other schools and a concentration of sporting facilities with links with the community park across the road. It was explained that while co-location was a possibility in the future that was not currently on the agenda, although other possibilities could be looked at by the local politicians. One idea that was suggested was for a running track. There are considerable opportunities that could be looked at. Parkview was still the choice of parents in the town and he believed that the good things about it could be successfully transferred to the Academy to make it work for the good of all students. The support of the Governors was for a single site Academy on the Parkview site and that remained the case.

As the sponsors are local and want the Academy to be successful, as do the Governors and the local politicians, one Governor believed that remained a strong possibility. He accepted that although Parkview's performance was quite good, the overall performance in providing 11-16 education in Barrow was not as good as it should be. A comment was made that it was up to those who are organising the school to ensure that it works and that any disruptive behaviour was minimised.

#### Why Consultations on One or Two Sites

One Governor asked 'why was there a need to look at the possibility of organising the Academy on two campuses when the decision had already been taken to create it on one'? An explanation was provided that the Government had indicated in response to local concerns they were prepared to fund a two campus option and asked the Local Authority to consider consulting on that possibility. The DCSF were, along with the sponsors, prepared to accept the locally taken decision on whether the Academy should be permanently based on one or two campuses. The Authority is currently undertaking that consultation and would present all the responses to the Cabinet in January. The report would cover the responses and point out the major issues when presenting it to the County Council Members. The officers would not form a view in the report but would stress the major issues that are

raised to enable the County Councillors to come to a decision. One Governor was of the opinion that those in Parkview and Alfred Barrow Schools would support the one site option, whereas those at Thorncliffe would support two sites. In response it was stated that while there was some correlation to that suggestion it was too early to confirm that is what will be the outcome. In response to a question it was confirmed that there were over 500 responses to the last consultation and that represented about 5% of the documents sent out.

#### Funding Arrangements

It was explained that the funding, whether it be for one or two campuses, for the capital development of the Academy will come directly from the Government. In addition, a £2m endowment fund will be set up from financial sponsors that would provide an investment income of around £100,000 each year for additional opportunities for students. The Government had given assurances that they would fund whichever option is decided as the way forward. Concern was expressed that the two campus option would cost more to run as there will be an inevitable overlapping of services and more buildings to maintain. As the revenue funding for the Academy would come direct from the Government it is not known whether or not a "split site allowance" might be appropriate for the two campus option.

One governor was of the opinion that competition amongst students in a larger school leads to success and that would be lost in the two campus option. It was explained that the planned arrangements would mean that 11-16 education would be taught on both sites and that there would be a core curriculum taught throughout, meaning that those in Years 7-9 are unlikely to move between campuses for their education. Key Stage 4 students would inevitably have to move to access fringe subjects and the new Diplomas whether or not the Academy was organised on two sites. What community and after school activities are provided had still to be determined but they were unlikely to be duplicated. It was stated that special needs support may be organised on one campus, however, the sponsors have a lot of work to do to ensure that there is equal status between the two sites and that that continues to be the perception with the community.

#### Timescale for Opening

It was explained that plans were underway for the Academy to open in September 2009. The consultation on whether it will eventually be organised on one site or two has not slowed things down. Unfortunately the management company was only appointed after some delay by the DCSF and that is what has caused some of the problems in answering parents and others' concerns. However, the management company, the County Council, the Governors and some staff all believe that it can be successfully achieved in September 2009. There is a suggestion to take more time over its establishment and delay the opening until September 2010. However, the Government were very keen to get the Academy up and running to ensure that the transformation of education in Barrow happens as soon as possible.

The aim is for the new buildings for the Academy to be open by September 2012, whether that is on one campus or two.

#### Other Academies in Cumbria

Three Academies opened in Cumbria in September 2008, of those two have

got off to a very good start, with no real problems. The third, the Richard Rose Central Academy in Carlisle has had one or two teething problems that were reported in the press. These appear to have been exaggerated by those opposed to the Academy. Given a similar lead-in time for the Barrow Academy as to those three, it suggests it is possible to be successful in creating a good Academy in that time scale.

#### Site Issues

It was confirmed that there were no commercial pressures on the Local Authority to push the reorganisation of secondary education through. There were no plans to sell-off any of the existing sites or parts of them. The only pressure is to transform and improve the education for the students of Barrow as soon as possible.

#### Curriculum Development

It was suggested by the head that the reference in the consultation document that the two sites could provide differences in the curriculum was not how it was now envisaged. He believed that it is more likely that a core curriculum would be offered at each campus, and any variation would be limited.

#### Summary

At the end of each meeting everybody was encouraged to complete and return a questionnaire by the due date of 21 November 2008. The majority of those present at all three meetings supported the option to create the Academy on the Parkview site.

## **PLANNING 11-16 EDUCATION IN BARROW – THE POTENTIAL ACADEMY: ONE SITE OR TWO**

### **NOTES OF STUDENT COUNCIL/STAFF/GOVERNORS CONSULTATION MEETINGS HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2008 AT ST BERNARD'S SCHOOL**

#### Introduction

A series of three meetings were held on 22 October 2008 at St Bernard's Catholic High School as part of the consultation process on whether the proposed academy for Barrow should be situated permanently on one site or two. The first meeting involved the student council of St Bernard's School, the second was with the staff and the third was with the school governors.

A panel of County Council officers was present at all the meetings to respond to questions and comments made. The following is a summation of the responses given to the questions asked at each meeting.

#### St Bernard's Student Council Meeting

##### Introductions

Eight students were present for this meeting. The students were asked to start by focussing on the issue of whether the proposed academy should be situated permanently on one site or two. It was recognised, however, that they would have other questions relating to the Academy and the school organisation changes proposed and how they might affect St Bernard's School.

##### Organisation of the Academy

The first student asked will the academy be organised on an upper and lower sites bases with key stage three students on one site and key stage four on the other. It was explained that the consultation was taking place on the basis that both sites at Thorncliffe and Parkview would have parallel 11-16 provision with eventually 600 students on each site.

##### Staffing

It was explained that it was not known yet who would become the Principal of the Academy. A national advertisement would be placed and the post is subject to open competition. The existing heads, could if they so wished, apply for the post of Principal. The Academy Governors would make the appointment.

With regards to the rest of the staff, all those employed on permanent contracts in the three schools when the schools closed would transfer into the Academy. The staffing structure had still to be determined. The aim would be to create a structure to deliver a curriculum in the Academy that would improve on the current educational standards.

##### Future Use of Sites

It was explained that the Hoops facility at Thorncliffe was a good facility, that it was almost certain to stay and it is likely to be used by the Academy. The Local Authority was committed to retaining the existing playing fields and there were no plans for selling off any of the existing buildings or sites.

It was explained that the changes proposed were not motivated by the possibility of selling off school sites, (with particular reference to the Alfred Barrow site), but were

aimed at improving the education of students aged 11-16 across Barrow. While it is true that the proposed Marina Development is in relatively close proximity to the Alfred Barrow site, which would possibly be used as part of the regeneration of the area, that did not form part of the thinking when the original options were considered and the way forward involving an Academy was proposed.

#### One Academy on one or two sites

It was explained that there would only be one Academy in Barrow. The purpose of the consultation was to determine whether or not that should be permanently based on one or two sites. As one school it will have a single Head/Principal, one Management Team and one Governing Body. The Government had decided that they would only be prepared to fund one Academy. However, officials had indicated that the Academy may be on one or two sites and had asked the Local Authority to consult on that possibility.

#### Costs of One or Two Sites

It was explained that, as the Academy, whether on one or two sites, would have the same number of students, it is likely to have a similar number of teachers. However, it is likely to be more costly to run if based on two sites as there would be two sets of buildings to maintain and some facilities would need to be duplicated. The estimated costs of building an Academy on one site is £30m whereas the two site option is estimated to cost in the region of £40-45m.

#### Student Movement

The plan is for a common curriculum as far as possible for the full age range 11-16 on each site to minimise the amount of movement between the two sites. That will mean that the sports specialism is likely to be integral to the curriculum on both sites. There has, for example, been a proposal for a running track on the Parkview site. It is the wish of the local Sports Council that the existing facilities at Parkview be retained as a community resource. The existing arrangements with Barrow Rugby Club are likely to be retained. It was suggested that the larger school could provide a stronger team. However, having teams from both sites would enable more games between schools to take place as the Academy could put out two teams, one representing each site

#### Catchment Area

It was felt to be likely that the catchment area for the Academy will include the combined catchment areas of the three existing schools. However, the admission criteria are likely to be based to some extent on proximity taking into account parental preference. However, which site the students attend will be determined by the Academy. This is likely to include an element of parental preference.

None of the feeder primary schools will have students who will be guaranteed a place at the Academy. It is not known how many parents will want to send their children there and where they will come from. Those policies have still to be developed.

Current year six pupils they will first apply to obtain a place in the three existing schools. If a place is allocated to one of them then they will be guaranteed a place in the Academy if it opens in September 2009. Parents are likely to be asked to express a preference for the site they wish their child to attend. The sponsors are keen that that happens as far as possible in line with those preferences, although educational needs may also figure in decisions. Safety issues such as avoiding having to cross Abbey Road could also possibly be used.

### Why Not Just Modernise?

One student felt it would be a better use of the available finance to just modernise the existing buildings. It was suggested that most of the buildings were built a long time ago and were no longer suitable. While part of the Parkview buildings had some external architectural features that were quite nice, internally they were out of date and certainly did not have any easy access for students with physical disabilities. At Thorncliffe there is a road running through the middle of the school site. Clearly any new buildings there would need to be built on one side only.

### Special Needs

One student felt that the two sites offered an easier opportunity to monitor and maintain good behaviour and look after vulnerable pupils. It was explained that it was important to address the needs of each child and ways were being looked at to ensure that vulnerable pupils were looked after in the changeover.

### Links With Other Schools.

It was stated that the Academy would be part of the family of schools in Barrow and collaborate fully in the provision of courses and other aspects of education, to the benefit of all the students in Barrow.

### Transport

The Authority intend talking to Stagecoach to see if additional services between the two sites could be available. As most of the children attending the existing schools live in Barrow, very few would be eligible for free home to school transport under the Authority's current transport policy.

One advantage of the two sites option was felt to be that parents would have a choice as to which site they preferred their child to be educated at. However, there will still be a reduction in the numbers of schools. It was stated that currently 50% or so of students attending schools in Barrow attend a different school to that of their catchment area.

### Increase in student numbers at St Bernard's and Walney

There is a planned increase in the number of students that will be attending St Bernard's and Walney School. To enable that to happen there will be more facilities at those two schools and it was accepted that the Heads and Governors of them would not have supported the proposed changes without the promise of additional facilities.

### Conclusion

On being asked, the majority of the students present supported two sites over one site.

### St Bernard's School Staff meeting

#### Introductions

After initial introductions the ten staff present were asked whether they had any observations or questions on the possibility of the Academy being established on one site or two.

#### The Academy

The first questioner asked for clarification on the scope of the consultations. It was explained that this was solely on whether the 1,200 pupil Academy should be permanently situated on the Parkview site or whether it should be split 600 pupils on

each on the Parkview and Thorncliffe sites. There was no suggestion or thinking around expanding the student numbers at the Academy, whether on one or two sites. Any change along those lines would almost certainly require additional consultations. It was explained that the DCSF were keen that the changes should happen sooner rather than later i.e. in September 2009 with the Academy opening in the existing school buildings and numbers attending it reduced over a period of years.

#### Sponsors and Project Management Company

It was explained that the sponsors of the Academy are Furness College, Barrow Sixth Form College and the University of Cumbria. The Local Authority with up to £1m and BAE Systems with £500,000 were the financial sponsors. That £1.5m would contribute to the endowment fund of £2m which needed to be established over a period of ten years. It was hoped that the shortfall in the endowment funding would be through sponsorship from local firms.

A Project Management Company, Mouchel, was working with the sponsors to draw up an education brief for the academy which would include curriculum and staffing models. The aim is to appoint the principal before the end of this term so that he/she is in post full time by 1 April 2009.

One member of staff asked that if the main objective is to reduce the number of places in line with falling school rolls and the cost of maintaining places is high, why is the Authority proposing two sites which clearly will be more costly than maintaining one. It was explained that the advantages and disadvantages were as summarised in the consultation document. One of the advantages of the two site option is seen to be the degree of choice for parents and was a response to the public's views expressed during the last consultation. While the removal of surplus places was part of the reason for the proposed changes, the wish to improve education standards across the town and concern over the viability of one of the existing schools were also key motivators. The existing plan was the preferred option of most of the education providers in the town as well as the Local Authority and other stakeholders. It is a theoretical possibility that expanding the two sites could be looked at. However, the plan is currently to expand St Bernard's and Walney Schools.

#### St Bernard's

It was explained that the funding for the development of St Bernard's School comes from the Local Authority and is not associated with the money available to develop the Academy. These developments are part of the overall plan which included the expansion of St Bernard's School. Planning is now underway to provide that extra accommodation and it is anticipated it will be there in time for those pupils. Clearly additional students means additional revenue funding for the school. The overall plan conceived by the leaders of education in Barrow required an improvement to the buildings of all the remaining schools. The Academy will be primarily new-build. The idea however, was to create an element of parity between the remaining schools through the expansion of St Bernard's and Walney Schools. It was stated that St Bernard's had no real issues with whether it should expand or not and were in general agreement with the overall model, provided that the new buildings promised are built.

#### Transition Arrangements

In response to a question it was said that there is enough accommodation in the existing buildings on Thorncliffe and Parkview sites to accommodate all the pupils that will be attending the Academy in September 2009. From 2010 there will be a

gradual reduction from a maximum of 1,800 to 1,200 as the number of students admitted is restricted to 240 in each year. The aim is to open the new Academy buildings no later than September 2012. It was explained that the Local Authority is responsible for procuring the new buildings and site for the Academy. Clearly the decision on whether the Academy will eventually be on one site or two is critical in that planning process. The proposed endowment fund produces interest which is to be used to provide additional education opportunities.

#### Admissions in September 2009

It was stated that as the Academy had yet to develop its admission policy it was not possible to use that for admissions in September 2009. The only way is to use the existing published admission numbers and admission policies of the three schools to determine which students will be allocated a place at them. Once that allocation is made, all those allocated a place at the existing schools will be guaranteed a place in the new Academy. It will be up to the Academy to determine which site students will primarily receive their education on.

#### Staffing

It was explained that all permanent staff in the three schools on the date of closure will transfer over into the Academy on their existing terms and conditions. That will also apply on the same basis to any catering and cleaning staff on permanent contracts employed by the existing schools. Experience of other Academies is that generally there are more posts than staff that transfer in. As the integration of staff is key to the success of any new school, it is felt important to reduce the period of uncertainty for those staff by ensuring the change takes place on as early a date as possible. The process is about retaining expertise and matching that to the curriculum needs. Discussions are already underway with the existing schools to ensure the process progresses as quickly as possible.

While technically the sponsors could enter into discussions to change conditions as soon as the Academy is established, with the lead sponsors coming from an education background the risk of this happening is very limited. However, that does not preclude new posts being advertised on different conditions. These may be attractive to applicants who would apply in the normal manner in full knowledge of the conditions and terms which apply.

#### Capital Availability

Concern was expressed that the two sites would be more expensive to build than a single site and that might impact on the project planned for St Bernard's. It was explained that there is no link between the capital provided by the Government for the building of the Academy and that provided by the Authority to enable St Bernard's and Walney to expand. Even in these economically difficult times, the Government has indicated it is likely to invest in new infrastructure as a means of ensuring that the effects of the recession are minimised.

#### Funding Arrangements

It was explained that the funding for students in the Academy will be essentially the same as that for students in other schools like St Bernard's. There will be a top-up for each pupil that attends the Academy to enable the Academy to buy back services provided by the Local Authority or to pay for those services elsewhere. If academies choose the latter route there may need to be a reduction in centrally employed staff.

## Catholic Ethos

There was some concern that the extra pupils that may attend St Bernard's School could dilute the proportion of Catholics at the school thereby affecting it. However the Governors have so far supported the overall plan involving the expansion of what is currently an oversubscribed school.

## Sites

There was a general opinion that one site was better than two from an educational standpoint. Community preferences need to be considered and the two site option may seem more attractive for that reason.

The possibility of selling off land and buildings had not been considered. The local politicians had already indicated very strongly that they would be in favour of the disposal of any playing fields.

If the new Academy was to be built on two sites, consideration would need to be given through a feasibility plan as to which side of the road the Thorncliffe site Academy buildings should be. There are clearly constraints imposed by the current buildings. Until a decision is taken on the one site/two site option it is not sensible to plan in any detail for that possibility.

## Meeting of St Bernard's School Governors

After initial introductions in which it was explained that the focus of the consultations was to determine whether the proposed Academy for Barrow should be situated permanently on one site or two. It was recognised, however, that the Governors were likely to also wish to talk about how St Bernard's School fitted into the reorganisation proposals for the town.

## Reason for Consultations

It was explained that Government officials had met with Local Authority representatives. They had made it clear that they wished the Authority to consider the possibility of the Academy being permanently based on two campuses. This they claimed was in response to public concerns raised in the last consultation. They went on to state that they would agree to fund whichever option is preferred locally i.e. whether the Academy be on one site or two, provided those consultations could be concluded quickly and the plan put into operation as soon as possible. It was confirmed that it would be a single Academy (a two Academy option was not on the table) with 600 pupils based on two sites or 1,200 on a single site.

## Location of Staff and Students in Two Site Option

It was stated that if it was decided to develop on two sites the Academy would determine which students would be educated on which sites. It is hoped that that decision would be in line with parental preference although education requirements may also be included as one of the determining factors. It had already been decided that a model based on a lower and upper school would not be appropriate although it was accepted there could be educational and other advantages to such a way forward. One Governor was strongly of the opinion that split sites don't work and that one site is the best educational model. He believed that there is little chance of unity and it would split the opportunities for the students attending the Academy. He saw that the only possible argument for two 11-16 campuses could be in providing parents with an element of choice. It was felt that the arguments for two sites could in no way outweigh the educational advantages of a single site. He was of the opinion that the Authority took a decision to pursue an Academy on the basis of a

single site and that should be the way forward. That was more in line with the original wishes of the people in the first consultation. One Governor believed that the public did not understand what was being offered i.e. one Academy and not the retention of the existing Parkview and Thorncliffe Schools. He accepted that there will be a number that preferred the smaller size of the two campus option.

It was stated that examples of two site academies do exist and are successful, most of the better ones are those with upper and lower school organisations. One Governor considered that 600 students is too small for curriculum choice while accepting that above 1,200 is likely to be too large. He was concerned that children should be to the forefront in the decision and clearly one site was the best educationally.

It was explained that if the decision is to go with two sites the Governing Body once it was up and running could possibly change to an upper and lower school organisation. However, currently the sponsors are happy to go with the wishes of the people locally and are unlikely to change from the current 11-16 proposals.

#### Academy Size

It was explained that were there to be a wish to increase the number of 1,200 students at the Academy there would be a need to consult again on that issue or to risk a legal challenge. As both the Government and the Local Authority wish the Academy to open in September 2009 it was felt to be unlikely that the number of 1,200 would change. It was accepted that 750 students on each site may arguably be a better use of resources, however, that is not what the consultation is about. Such an increase in student places could impact elsewhere in the town particularly on Walney which would not see the increase in its student numbers as currently planned and there would be an increase in the overall number of surplus places.

#### Feedback on Public Meetings

The main concerns of the public expressed at the open meetings is their wish for more information on what an Academy will look like before they could be convinced it was good for their children. There was a call to delay the process for a year until information was available. It was accepted that many parents don't want change and believe that the current system provides what they want for their children and it is also what they are used to. Some parents believed that as they feel the education is improving at Thorncliffe there is no need to change the current schools setup. Others stated that as all the staff will be retained and they are the key to improvement where is any more going to come from. It had been explained that change is a catalyst for improvement and that along with up-to-date modern buildings, new and innovative management and so on creates the necessary environment for improvement.

#### Access and Movement Issues

It was agreed that there was a need to improve access at the site(s) that are used for the Academy.

It was explained that movement of students between sites would be minimised by the organisation of the curriculum. It is planned that years 7-9 would not need to move sites to access any of the core subjects.

#### Conclusion

There was a clear message that most of the Governors agreed that one site was much better educationally. Concern was expressed that there was a wish to delay the process by another year. They believed the continued uncertainty would result in

the schools losing good staff and adversely affect the education of the existing students.

### Summary

There were mixed views on the question of whether the Academy should be situated on one site or two. Most students favouring the two site option while the majority of staff and most, if not all of, the Governors favoured one.

## **PLANNING 11 16 EDUCATION IN BARROW THE POTENTIAL ACADEMY : ONE SITE OR TWO**

### **NOTES OF STUDENT COUNCIL / STAFF / GOVERNORS CONSULTATION MEETING HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2008 AT WALNEY SCHOOL**

#### Introduction

Three meetings were held on 23 October 2008 at Walney School. These formed part of the consultation process relating to whether the proposed Academy for Barrow should be situated permanently on one campus or two campuses. One meeting involved the students of Walney School, the second took place with the staff, and the third with Governors as attendees.

A panel of County Council officers were present at all the meetings to respond to questions and comments made.

#### Walney Student Meeting

Around 40 Walney School students attended this meeting. John Lewis explained that the purpose of the meeting was to listen to the students' views, in particular on whether they had any thoughts on whether the proposed Academy should be situated on one campus or two. However, that did not preclude discussing academies more generally, and the wider secondary education provision in Barrow, and the proposed changes to it.

#### Where will pupils go?

It was explained that all of the pupils currently attending Alfred Barrow, Parkview, and Thorncliffe schools would, if they had stayed in those schools, be accommodated in the proposed new Academy, that will initially be in the Parkview and Thorncliffe buildings, however, the plans were to build new to accommodate only 240 pupils per year from 2010. To enable that reduction to happen Walney and St Bernard's schools will need to grow and better facilities are planned for those schools. Currently the Academy is planned for 1200 students. The overall plan however is to improve education across Barrow and to remove a large number of surplus spaces.

#### Academy Issues

It was explained that across Barrow the standards are not as high as they should be in relation to similar schools elsewhere in the country. The proposed capita money can only be used on a new built Academy, and cannot be used to improve education in other ways. The Government expects an improvement in standards as a result of the establishment of any Academy. It is unlikely that the Government will pull out of the academies programme; in fact the latest response to the economic situation provides a stronger indication of more public building projects as a means of providing work to enable the economy to recover. The cost is estimated as £30m, if the Academy is built on the Parkview site, however if the decision is to build it permanently on two sites that amount increases to £40 - £45m. If an Academy is not established in Barrow, that money will go to fund some other Academy in some other town or Authority.

No decisions have been taken on the name of the new Academy, but the aim is to allow students to have a say in what it will eventually be called.

An Academy is an independent state school with its own policies. The sponsors for the Barrow Academy include Furness College, Barrow 6<sup>th</sup> Form College, the University of Cumbria, Cumbria County Council and BAE Systems. Most of the staff for the proposed Academy will come from the existing school, although some may need to be recruited from elsewhere.

### Walney

Walney will get much needed improvements which will include the long awaited sports hall, although decisions have yet to be taken as to where that will be situated. The plans for the new buildings are currently being considered, and when they are completed, Walney school will be able to accommodate up to 900 students. During the building work efforts will be made to ensure that education goes on as normally as possible. While there may not be as many new buildings as in the Academy, Walney will not be allowed to fall behind in relation to it for example teachers could receive further training to make sure it doesn't.

### Other Issues

No decisions have been taken as to what will happen to the buildings that may be vacated at the Alfred Barrow, Parkview, or Thorncliffe sites. It was not known which site the students will be transferred to next September. However, current year 10 students will be guaranteed that the options they are currently taking will be continued.

It was stated that there is no need to use most of the school playing fields at Parkview and Thorncliffe to build the new Academy. However, depending on the outcome of the current consultations, decisions about how many of the existing buildings if any will be retained and where the Academy will be built cannot be taken.

### Vote on One Site or Two

Only four students out of the 35 or so present believed the Academy should be based on two sites, nearly all of the others present voted for it to be on one site.

### Walney School Staff Meeting

#### Introduction

Jim Mitchell introduced the meeting by referring to the consultation document in which it set out the reasons for the consultation and possible advantages and disadvantages of both the one site and two site options for the proposed Academy. He reminded those present that that was the focus of the consultation. However, he expected that the position of Walney School in the overall proposals for the reorganisation of 11 – 16 education in Barrow was likely to be covered. Jim then invited questions and comments from the 20 or so staff that were present.

#### Funding Issues

It was explained that the Government had informed the Authority that it was prepared to invest in an Academy in Barrow. Whether that was on one campus at an estimated cost of £30m, or two campuses at an estimated cost of around £40 - £45m that funding would be available. In addition the County Council had set aside a sum of money to expand both St Bernard's and Walney School as part of the reorganisation proposals.

While the way forward in overall terms links the projects, spending more money on

an Academy on two sites has no effect on the amount of money available to develop St Bernard's and Walney Schools.

### One Site or Two

One member of staff believed that two sites would be very difficult to manage, although one site with 1200 students he considered to be on the large side. It was suggested that 1200 students is at the top end of the range of student numbers that are likely to produce successful schools. That said, the question was asked, "Why can't the two sites be enlarged?" It was explained that the original intention was to provide three secondary schools in Barrow of broadly equivalent sizes. To enlarge the Academy, even were it to be built on two sites, would not take away the problem of too many places in the town. There is also a real risk associated with Walney remaining a small school. The Authority wants better facilities at St Bernard's and Walney but the only way it can justify spending the amount of money on new buildings is to rationalise the overall provision across Barrow.

### Walney Project

Currently there is no fixed amount earmarked for the Walney School project. It is not finance driven, but based on what is considered to be required. The head is striving to engage in a quality driven enlargement of the school. That said, a new sports hall and specialist facilities, such as a new science lab, are almost certain to be included.

### Students Movement

Concern was expressed that having two sites would result in a lot of movement between the two campuses. It was explained that plans were in hand to ensure that there were two parallel 11 – 16 campuses as far as possible. The timetable would require next to no movement for years 7 – 9. Students in years 10 and 11 would require some movement to enable access to courses irrespective of whether the Academy was based on one campus or two. That is the same for all students of that age in Barrow. The Academy is planned to open in the existing buildings at Parkview and Thorncliffe with the same teachers from the 3 schools. A lot of work has already taken place in developing the education brief including the curriculum. It is that that will determine which staff will be employed initially on which site, and also if the two site option is to be agreed, on a longer term basis.

### Why a Two Site Option?

It was explained that the Government in the form of Lord Adonis responding to local concerns about a larger Academy on a single site indicated to the Authority that he was prepared to fund a two site Academy were that to be the wish of the people of Barrow. At meetings held between local politicians, officers, and Government representatives it was agreed that consultation should take place on whether the proposed Academy for 1200 places should be permanently situated on one site or two, with an opening date in September 2009. Not to consider the possibility of an Academy on two sites may have risked the whole reorganisation process. It was generally accepted that the education benefits of a two campus option are difficult to understand as experience of split site schools has not been good. However, the offer of two smaller academies for Barrow has never been a possibility.

One teacher suggested a two campus Academy, one for years 7, 8, and 9, and the other for years 10 and 11 would be more beneficial. He felt that having two 11 – 16 parallel campuses could restrict student choice. He did, however, accept that the trend to more personalised learning and wider options has resulted in more

movement between schools, and to the colleges to enable older students to access courses.

#### Plans for School Sites

It was explained that the intention is that the Alfred Barrow site will be vacated soon after a new Academy is established, and that once the transition phase to the new buildings is completed there will be no real use for those buildings or the site., It is likely that it may be available for other purposes, and that it could possibly be included in the regeneration plans for the town. Currently there are no plans to sell it off. Similarly there no plans dispose of all or part of the Thorncliffe or Parkview sites.

#### Timescale

The decision on whether the Academy will be developed permanently on one or two site will be taken by the Cabinet on 6 January 2009. After that the legal proposals to close the 3 schools will be published. In the interim, plans are underway to organise the transition leading up to the Academy opening in September 2009. The Academy planners will also look at the arrangements for it operating on two sites in existing buildings for at least the first three years. The process has already started to bring together staff and students with things like a joint school council between the 3 schools being set up. There will be a need to include Walney school in certain aspects of the transition arrangements, and it may be that the student council is the forerunner of a Furness wide student council.

#### Admissions

It was explained that currently there are far more places in Barrow than are needed now, and into the future. It is uncertain what parental preferences are likely to be both for this year and beyond. However, there are more places than are likely to be required in the existing Parkview and Thorncliffe buildings for an Academy opening in September 2009. Currently the year 6 parents are making a choice for next September based on the existing schools. Any child offered a place in one of the 3 schools Alfred Barrow, Parkview, and Thorncliffe, will be guaranteed a place in the Academy if it opens in September 2009. The choice of which site students will attend from that date will, the sponsors have indicated, be partly determined through parental preference. From September 2010 only 240 pupils would be admitted to the Academy. This will mean that a number of pupils living in Barrow would need to obtain a place at one of the two other schools St Bernard's or Walney which are to be enlarged, or as currently happens go to Dowdales. No investment is planned to enlarge Dowdales School, however, as student numbers fall overall there are less students living in the Dowdales catchment area and more opportunity for students in Barrow to obtain a place there.

It is not known which site the current students at Alfred Barrow, Parkview, or Thorncliffe will attend from September 2009. Those currently starting GCSE and other courses will be able to finish them with their current teachers as far as practicable. However arrangements are underway to identify vulnerable children and the sponsors are working hard to develop strategies to avoid problems arising from the integration.

It was stated that the project steering group, including the sponsors, along with the management company Mouchel, with support from the local Authority and DCSF will be involved in a wider engagement with all the stakeholders as the Academy

plans are developed.

### Admissions Policy

The Academy has to adhere to and participate in the coordinated admissions policy, in which the local Authority has an overseeing role in. The admissions policy will lay down amongst other things the over subscription criteria. The national code of practice for admissions means that the Academy will not be allowed to discriminate or operate a selection policy. The criteria adopted are likely to be geographically based. As the sponsors are the Furness College, Barrow 6<sup>th</sup> Form College, and the University, all of whom are involved in the Furness Education Consortium, they are unlikely to adopt a policy that would in any way prejudice the cooperation between the schools in the area.

### Sponsors

There is no time limit to the involvement of the sponsors; however, given who they are they are unlikely to withdraw. The sponsors currently have to draw together an endowment fund of £2million built up over a 10 year period. To date, BAE Systems have promised £0.5m and the County Council up to £1m. The aim of the endowment is to provide an income stream to broaden the educational opportunities for the students in the Academy.

### Size

The Academy as currently planned will have new buildings which can only accommodate 1200 students. During the first three years there are enough existing buildings on the Parkview and Thorncliffe sites to accommodate the reducing number of students in the Academy. It would be very difficult to increase the numbers admitted without objections or indeed to fit them in to the new buildings.

### Transport

Once decisions have been taken as to the future sites and numbers on each, the Authority intends talking to Stagecoach to see if they would be prepared to reflect the changes in school organisation in the services they provide. Very few students in the proposed new Academy will be entitled to free home to school transport.

### Uniforms

There will be a new uniform for the Academy and those currently attending the three schools and the first year's intake will get some help towards the cost of it. The funding for this generally comes as part of the Government support to enable the successful establishment of academies.

### Staffing

The curriculum design and management structure is still being considered. The aim during its development will be to recognise the existing expertise and to utilise it to best effect. All staff on permanent contracts employed in the three schools at the date of closure will be transferred into the Academy on the same terms and conditions, utilising the TUPE regulations. Concern was expressed that this may influence their preference in favour of a two site option. It was explained that experience elsewhere when new academies open is that there have been no redundancies, and in fact, posts have needed to be advertised as there were generally insufficient staff available for transfer to fill them.

## Walney School Governors Meeting

### Introduction

After introductions between the 5 Governors and the officers present, Jim Mitchell began the meeting by explaining that the focus of the consultations was to be on whether or not the proposed Academy should be based on one campus or two. He recognised that they would wish to discuss the position of Walney School in the overall proposals for 11 – 16 education in Barrow.

### One Site or Two and Its Possible Effects on Funding.

The first speaker said that the main concern of those present was the provision at Walney School, and their wish to see that maintained and improved. Clearly a key feature of the overall plan was an expansion of Walney School, however, he went on to state that were an Academy to be established, he favoured two sites rather than one. However, he was concerned that funding for the development at Walney School could be effected by that decision. It was explained that there was no relationship between the capital development for the Academy which came directly from the Government and that provided through the local Authority to expand St Bernard's and Walney Schools. He believed that the Governors supported the efforts to raise standards across Barrow, and if the Academy was the way to do that they would support it assuming no reduction in resources to Walney School. It was accepted that the capital development were disproportionate between the Academy and the other schools, although BSF funding, were it to come along, could pick up gaps in provision and improvements necessary at that time. Essentially the revenue funding would be the same whether in an Academy or in other maintained secondary schools. The only possible inequalities came from the use of the endowment fund.

In putting together the plan for Barrow it was explained that the aim was to create three broadly equal sized schools, and that the opportunity was there to make that possible. The collaboration within Barrow is good and the Academy is already signed up to be part of it.

### Transition Arrangements

Concern was expressed at the lack of clarity as to who was involved in developing them. There was a need for Walney School to be involved at the appropriate time.

### Transport

It was suggested that there was a need for more transport between the town and the Walney School, if more pupils were to attend it as planned through the expansion. It was explained that discussions with Stagecoach would take place when it was clearer on the details and timescales of the proposed reorganisation.

### Effect on Walney

It was stated that it didn't really matter whether or not the Academy was permanently situated on one site or two as it would have little effect on Walney School. As long as uniformity of resources and equality of access is retained across Barrow then that is the Governors wish. As the sponsors come from the Furness Education Consortium it is believed that is likely to be the situation. Overall the views of the Walney Governors had not changed since the earlier consultation. It was accepted that there needed to be a dialogue between the Academy developers and Walney School on admissions, and how the policies adopted would affect both schools.

### Pupils Numbers

It was explained that the suggested capacity for the secondary schools in Barrow and the future projection of student numbers allows some flexibility for parental preference. The opportunity is there to attract children, if Walney School so wished. There will be a continued reduction in the number of secondary aged students in the area in the next ten years irrespective of any possible increases that may result from regeneration. This reduction in student numbers will require the management of staff numbers during that period. The aim is to provide around 10% unfilled places to allow parental preference. More than that could lead to popular schools creaming off pupils, leaving others with liability problems, such as currently being experienced at the Alfred Barrow School. There are no rules as to where action has to be taken to reduce unfilled places, but those situations are generally self evident.

### Conclusion

There was a recognition that a period of uncertainty was inevitable, however, the quicker clarity could be provided and decisions taken as to what provision will be in place now and in the future the better for all concerned.

### Summary

It was clear from all three meetings that there was a lot of support for Walney School and a wish to be involved in the changes provided that school was not adversely affected by them.

## **PLANNING 11-16 EDUCATION IN BARROW - THE POTENTIAL ACADEMY : ONE SITE OR TWO?**

### **NOTES OF PRIMARY PUPILS CONSULTATION MEETING HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2008 AT FORUM 28**

#### Introduction

Invitations were sent to all 25 primary schools in Barrow to send two or three student representatives from their school to a meeting which took place on the morning of 23 October 2008 in Forum 28. Only seven schools responded by saying that they would attend session. In the event, only five schools turned up on the day. These were as follows: Barrow Island Primary School, Cambridge Primary School, St Paul's CE Junior School, Victoria Junior School and Yarlside Primary School.

#### Presentation

Sandra Wearden led the session by introducing the topic using a powerpoint presentation. The slides of this presentation are given as Appendix Ci. All of the pupils present claimed to be aware that there was a proposal to create an Academy in Barrow. They were then invited to provide their ideas on whether that Academy should be situated on one place or two places. One pupil suggested that it would be better if the school was based on one site but split into two with an upper and lower school. Another pupil preferred the two site model, as the one site option would create a big school that would be a bit scary. After this initial discussion each student was asked to right down 1) if they believed the Academy should be on one site or 2) if they believed it should be on two sites. The voting came out at six for two sites and four for one site.

#### What Will the Schools Look Like?

The pupils were invited to think about what a school could look like in the future and to imagine what they would like to take with them into a new school and place it in a time capsule. A list of the items in no particular order suggested for taking with them is given in Appendix Cii. They were then invited to write down what they would like to leave behind and again their ideas are listed in Appendix Cii. The presentation ended with the pupils being shown some pictures of other Academy buildings and they were asked to say whether or not they liked them. There were very mixed views on whether they liked them or not.

#### Question & Answers

The children present then proceeded to ask a range of questions which were answered as follows.

It was explained that the money available for new buildings from the Government could only be spent on building a new Academy and could not be used to update the existing schools.

The new Academy would have a school uniform but it was not yet decided what it would comprise of. The intention is that students, and that could include primary aged students, would be asked what they felt it should look like. It was said that it is likely that money will be available to enable existing students and the new Year 7 students to help pay for the new uniform.

It was explained that if the money was not spent on building an Academy in Barrow it would go to somewhere else that wanted one.

In response to a question, 'why do we need an Academy'? It was stated that the government had looked at the standards and performance of all the schools across the country and that in comparison with others those in Barrow were not as good as elsewhere. While there have been some recent improvements they are still not good enough. The Government believes that building and creating new Academies will help to raise standards. In addition, there are currently too many school places for students aged 11-16.

The new Academy, if it were to be created on two sites, would use the Parkview and Thorncliffe sites.

It was said in response to a question 'why not just close one of the schools'? it was said that would mean no new buildings and there is no guarantee that standards would improve anyway.

One student was concerned that there was rivalry between schools and asked how trouble could be avoided? It was said that a lot of work was to be undertaken to bring the schools together by having joint activities with both the students and the staff. One thing that is likely to be done is to create a joint school council.

One student asked 'who will be the new head'? It was explained that a national advertisement would be placed for the Principal of the Academy. It remains to be seen whether one of the existing three heads would be successful in obtaining that post or whether it would be someone new. Other than that all the permanent staff in the three schools at the date of closure will be transferred into the Academy. It is hoped that by having the new buildings and changing the staffing structure that this will help to improve the education for the students.

There was currently no new name for the Academy. The sponsors have indicated that they would ask the students for their ideas on what it should be called. The sponsors for the Academy are currently the Barrow Sixth Form College, the Furness College and The University of Cumbria with BAE Systems and Cumbria County Council.

There may be some money coming from the Authority to improve school buildings in the future. However, as most of those involved in education wanted to improve things now the only way that that could be achieved would be through the establishment of an Academy.

At the end of the question and answers session it was agreed that the sponsors would be asked to look at primary school children's ideas on what the Academy should look like, what the uniform should be and involved in naming the new Academy.

A vote was then taken on whether there should be an Academy or not. There were five votes for an Academy and five votes against an Academy. On the question whether that Academy, if created, should be on one sites or two. There were four votes for one site and six votes for two sites.

## Building Schools for the Future

Potential new Academy school in Barrow  
One site or two?  
Talking to Primary School Children  
23 October 2008

Building pride in Cumbria 

What we're going to be doing this morning

- Talk to you a little bit about why you've been invited here today
- Give you a chance to answer an important question
- Give you a chance to talk about your school and what schools might be like in the future

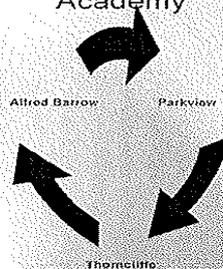
Building pride in Cumbria 

### Did you know?

- Barrow might be getting a new Academy school
- You might go to this new school in Year 7
- All the people talking about the possibility of a new school want to know what you think

Building pride in Cumbria 

At the moment there are 3 secondary schools involved that might become the new Academy

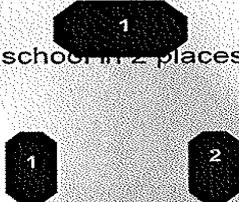


Alfred Barrow Parkview  
Thorncliffe

Building pride in Cumbria 

In the future we don't need as many secondary school spaces so we could either have 1 school...

- In 1 place for everyone
- or 1 school in 2 places



Building pride in Cumbria 

### What do you think?

In groups talk about what you think and then on your piece of paper

- put a number 1 if you think 1 school in 1 place would be better
- Put a number 2 if you think 1 school in 2 places would be better



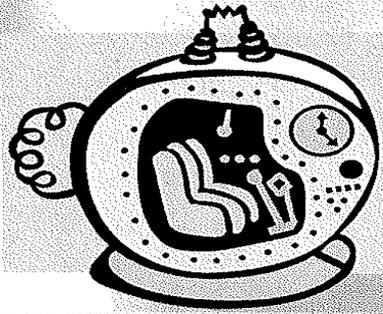
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### What will schools of the future look like?



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### Imagine you could travel through time...



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What would you take with you through time to your new school?

Write down what you think and put it in your time capsule



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What would you leave behind?

Write down what you would not take with your school today & put it in your time capsule



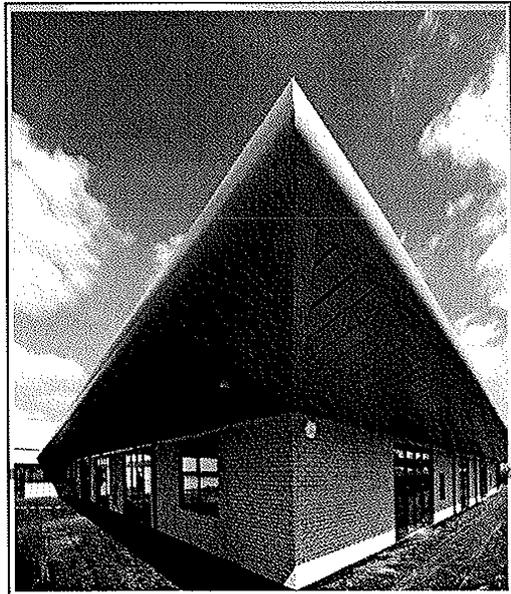
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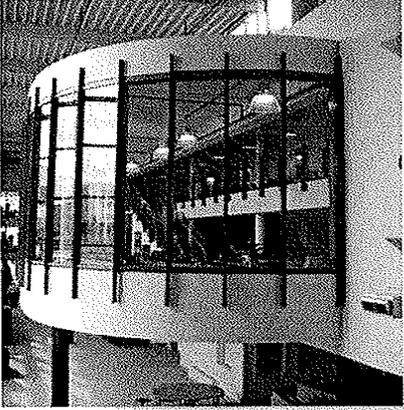


Here are some pictures of recently built new schools

What do you think about them?

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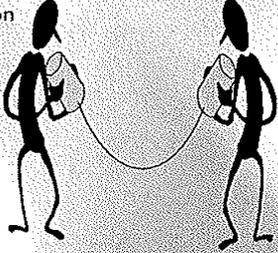

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County Council

Have you got any other thoughts or ideas to pass on?

Pass it on



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## What happens next?

- All the people involved will look at what you've said and include it with what other people have said
- A decision will be made soon about the possibility of a new school

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# Thanks

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## **Planning 11-16 education in Barrow - The potential Academy :one site or two?**

**Primary pupils' consultation meeting held on 23 October 2008 in Forum 28.**

### **TAKE WITH US LIST (in no particular order)**

PE / Gym Equipment	Teachers
My chair	Pencils
Rulers	Children
Scissors	Rubbers
Favourite food and drink	Playground
Cupboards	Comfy chair / leather chair
Smart boards	A new contract (teacher!)
Punishments	Colleagues (teacher)
Paper	Healthy canteens
School books	Glue sticks
Friends	Family feeling of school
ICT suite	Computers

### **LEAVE BEHIND LIST (in no particular order)**

Concrete playground	Broken things that can't be fixed
Grass you can't use	Dirty toilets
School dinners	Religious Education
Layout	Old PE / Gym equipment
SATs	Projects
'Bees' decoration	Old Stuff
Chairs	PE Cupboard
Lack of space	OHPs
Boys	Uniform style
Homework	Yellow walls
Bullys	Jacket potatoes
Curry	Numeracy
Literacy bin	Wooden floor
Old books	