PROPOSED CHANGE OF AGE RANGE THWAITES SCHOOL

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The report provides background to the consultation to be undertaken by the county council on the proposed provision of a maintained nursery at Thwaites School by means of a change of age range from 4-11 to 3-11.

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

2.1 These proposals will be supportive of the Council Plan priority ‘improving life chances’ by allowing children the opportunity to access a broad, high quality education in a sustainable setting.

2.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) (attached as Appendix A) was completed prior to consultation being undertaken. As a dynamic document it will be updated throughout the consultation process and the representation period as issues arise.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That the Local Committee notes the contents of the report and makes a response on the proposal as Members feel is appropriate.

3.2 Note that the Cabinet will consider feedback from the consultation, including any response made by the Local Committee, on 6 June 2013 before deciding on next steps.

4.0 BACKGROUND

General

4.1 There is currently no nursery provision in the catchment area of the school. The nearest nurseries are in Millom or Broughton, both of which are approximately 3.5 miles away. This creates additional journeys for parents with children already at Thwaites School who are seeking nursery places for their pre-school age children.
4.2 Any impact on the providers in Millom or Broughton will probably be limited. Broughton under 5s operates from 7am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and Millom Stepping Stones operates from 8.45am to 11.45am Monday to Friday but also offers afternoon sessions on Tuesday and Thursday. The alternative provision potentially offered by Thwaites would be unlikely to attract Millom and Broughton parents away from the provision in their area and the number of places offered is to be limited to 4.

4.3 Informal consultation, carried out by the school, has taken place with parents, pupils, governors and other Headteachers in the Millom Partnership (all primary schools in Millom/Haverigg plus Captain Shaw’s, Waberthwaite and Broughton in Furness). The majority of responses at this informal stage were positive.

4.4 There will be a significant increase in 3 year olds in Millom by January 2015, approximately 20 higher than the usual levels.

Finances

4.5 School budgets are largely based on pupil numbers. The proposal would be likely to improve the revenue budget through the increased number of children attending the school.

4.6 Current staffing levels would not be materially affected by the change.

4.7 Existing transport arrangements will not be affected by the proposal.

5.0 OPTIONS

5.1 Local Committee Members are able to make a response that will be taken into account before a decision is made on whether to proceed to a public consultation on the change of age range at the school.

6.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The school carried forward a deficit from 2011-12 of £6,774 (2% of budget share), the three year budget plan shows this deficit reducing to £945 by 2014-15. If the school had nursery provision, the three year budget plan shows this deficit as recovered by 2013-14. The NFF lump sum of £70k will see the school benefit to the tune of 6.6%

6.2 Any capital expenditure would be met from the school capital expenditure budget.

6.3 The report indicates that there is no budgetary affect anticipated in respect of other nearby schools, although this is a possibility should those schools see a fall in numbers because of the proposed action.

6.4 There is no direct impact on Local Committee budgets in respect of the recommendations in this report.
7.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The Local Committee may within its constitutional remit comment on this consultation.

8.0 **CONCLUSION**

8.1 This paper covers the background to a consultation to be undertaken by the county council on a potential change of age range at Thwaites School from 4-11 to 3-11 to establish a maintained nursery at the school.

8.2 Any change to a school has the potential to impact on the quality of education on offer, and it is important that the Cabinet is able to take account of local views before deciding whether to proceed. The Copeland Local Committee is invited to take part in the consultation process and its views will be considered by the Cabinet before it decides on the next steps.

*Julia Morrison*  
**Corporate Director – Children’s Services**  
*22 March 2013*
APPENDIX
Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

Electoral Division(s): Seascale and Whicham

Executive Decision

Key Decision

If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?

Yes

Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?

No

If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?

N/A

Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny?

No

Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken?

N/A

Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken?

Yes

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS
[including Local Committees]

None

CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Not considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers

RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER

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