

# 11-19 education in Carlisle

## The future for Morton School

A consultation document



January 2007

## Introduction

As you will probably know, Morton School is facing very difficult circumstances. It has recently been judged by Ofsted to be in need of 'special measures' for a second time.

There is a need for decisive and swift action to address the current problems. In this document that need is explained and justified, and possible approaches aimed at remedying the situation are outlined.

The quality of secondary school provision is crucial in terms of educational achievement and the life chances of our young people. It is very important to get things right for the future in the west of Carlisle and the city generally.

The issuing of this document is the start of a genuine and open consultation process. We would like as many people as possible with an involvement or interest in Morton School, or in secondary education in the area more generally, to contribute their thoughts on what should happen. There is a questionnaire at the end of this document which we would like you to fill in and send back to us.

**If you would like further information on our document and the things it covers, you can find out more by:**

- visiting our website: [www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation](http://www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation)
- ringing the School Organisation Project Team: 01228 606013

The outcomes of today's planning are not just for the benefit of our young people and their future. They will potentially lead to improvements in the area's economy, and this will benefit the whole community. Your responses to this document will make a major contribution in helping to achieve these ambitions.



*Philip Chappelhow*

County Councillor Philip Chappelhow,  
Cabinet Member for Children's Services,  
Cumbria County Council



*Moira Swann*

Moira Swann,  
Corporate Director, Children's Services,  
Cumbria County Council

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## About the consultation document

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The purpose of this document is to provide information and comment on the future of secondary education provision for young people in the west of Carlisle.

We have tried to achieve the right balance covering the most important issues whilst keeping to a reasonable length. The document has been written for parents, school staff, governors, young people and other members of the public, who will have different starting points in terms of knowledge and understanding. We have attempted to take this into account. We also wanted to be direct and relevant and keep things as clear as we could. We hope that we have managed to make the document as easy as possible to read and understand.

Your views will be a great help in reaching a decision on the future for Morton School. We realise that you may want more information to help you form your opinions. Details of meetings we have arranged to discuss the content of the document and how to access additional information or talk over any issues of concern with us are given on page 8.

## Current provision at Morton School

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### The site, buildings, etc

Morton School is what is known as a Foundation School. It was originally opened in new buildings in 1968. The school is located on a large, open site in the west of Carlisle. A location plan is provided as an Appendix on page 10.

Its current pupil capacity range is 852 (minimum) to 947 (maximum). Its published number for admissions into Year 7 is 157. The school caters for young people aged 11-19 and currently has around 530 pupils on roll. It acts as a strategic facility for youngsters who have special education needs of a physical or medical nature.

The school is a very important asset for the local community. The recently modernised swimming pool and gym are managed by Carlisle Leisure and are available for use by local people. A number of Adult Education courses are provided. Parts of the premises are also used by the County Council's Children's Services' Directorate as offices, by the Living Well Trust which is engaged in community outreach work with young people and by the Army Cadets.

### Educational issues

The school was inspected by Ofsted in the middle of November last year. The opening paragraph of the subsequent inspection report states:

***"... this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school"***

When assessing schools, Ofsted looks at eight areas or 'inspection judgments' and gives them a grade from 1 to 4.

The recent inspection of Morton School's operation and provision showed the following results:

Grade	Inspection Judgment
Grade 1 - Outstanding	None
Grade 2 - Good	None
Grade 3 - Satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form</li><li>• Care, guidance and support for students</li></ul>
Grade 4 - Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall effectiveness of the school</li><li>• Achievement and standards</li><li>• Personal development and well-being of the students</li><li>• Teaching and learning</li><li>• Curriculum and other activities</li><li>• Leadership, management and governance</li></ul>

The inspection report does contain some positive statements. For example, it indicates that some teaching is good or better and that the school provides good care for its most vulnerable students. It also points to factors which have worked against the school, like the existence of a large deficit budget for a long period of time. Taken overall though, the report confirms that there is a very serious situation at the school.

A copy of the full inspection report is one of the documents which appear on our website, the details of which are given on page 8.

## Securing improvement

### The need

It is vitally important that the education for Morton School's current and future pupils is improved significantly. It is critical that improvement begins as soon as possible, that improvement accelerates quickly and that the improvement is sustained into the future.

### Possible approaches to achieve improvement

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the local authority has powers to intervene where schools are causing concern, as in the case of Morton School currently. In this situation, these powers suggest three possible kinds of change, and these are outlined briefly below.

#### Change **not** involving school closure

The local authority can provide an extensive package of support and work with the school in question to improve performance. This approach is the one usually adopted when schools are causing concern and is generally successful over a period of time.

It is possible for the local authority to appoint additional governors to the school's governing body. It could do this to fill vacancies on the governing body or to enlarge it.

The local authority could go one step further and completely replace the governing body with an Interim Executive Board. (This would require the approval of the Secretary of State, though this would be very likely to be granted given the circumstances.)

### Closure (without replacement)

Following a consultation process, the local authority could propose the closure of the school with its pupils being educated in the future at other schools. In the Morton context, this would remove entirely secondary school provision from the west of Carlisle.

### Collaborative restart

Again, following a consultation exercise, proposals to close the existing school and establish a new school to replace it on its present site could be made.

This approach was introduced by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) very recently as one of the possibilities to adopt in a situation like that at Morton School. Its key feature is the development of a close working relationship with another local school, which must be a successful school.

## The local authority's position

### On special measures

Morton School was judged to be in need of special measures when it was inspected back in September 1998. By November 2000 the school had improved sufficiently to be removed from special measures and a further inspection in October 2002 found it to be satisfactory. However, these improvements have not been sustained and this has resulted in the school being found to be in need of special measures once again.

The school is one of a very small number of schools nationally which have been judged to be in need of special measures more than once. Moreover, the Ofsted inspection report was very critical of the school's performance. This is a very serious situation indeed. The local authority (Cumbria County Council) has concluded that urgent and more radical action is needed to successfully bring about the degree of improvement which is required.

### On how to secure improvement

The local authority has been considering the best way to secure the necessary improvements at Morton School. The options available are set out above. The local authority is of the view that the measures which do not involve the closure of the school are not radical enough to offer a real chance of achieving the significant change needed and, more importantly, sustaining it. The feeling is that offering more support on top of that already provided, appointing additional governors or even replacing the entire governing body, would not be enough.

That leaves the options involving the closure of the school. Simply closing Morton School, with its pupils being distributed to other local schools, would be possible because there are sufficient school places available. This would, however, be inconsistent with the outcome of the review of secondary education in the Carlisle area, which took place last year. An integral part of the agreed way forward for Carlisle, based on the public consultation carried out, was the retention and development of secondary education provision in the west of the city. This, plus the importance of Morton School's facilities to the community, point to the adoption of the other identified possibility involving closure, a collaborative restart.

Because of the need for swift action, the County Council's Cabinet considered the situation facing Morton School and the options for securing the kind of improvements needed at its meeting on 9 January 2007. The Cabinet agreed, in principle, to seek to do all that was necessary to bring about a collaborative restart

for Morton School in September 2007. Part of the action required to achieve that is consultation with interested and involved parties. This document provides the basis for the consultation exercise involved.

Although the local authority has already come to a view on what it feels would be the best response to the difficulties at Morton School, it does want to know what you think. There is a questionnaire at the end of the document to enable you to let us have your opinions. To help you to do that, the next section of the document provides more information on what a collaborative restart for Morton School would mean.

## More about collaborative restart in the Morton context

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### The school organisation change involved

A collaborative restart would involve the closure of Morton School. This would be followed immediately by the opening of a new school with a new name on the current Morton School site using, at least mainly, the existing school buildings. The new school would cater for all existing pupils of Morton School, for the same age range, with a very similar pupil capacity range and an admissions number of 150. It would have the same catchment area and remain a strategic special needs facility.

What are known as statutory proposals would need to be published to bring these changes about. The processes involved in this are covered in more detail in the 'Next steps' section towards the end of this document.

### The collaborative bit

This involves initially Morton School, and then the new school which is created, entering into a partnership with another local school. That school would be Caldew School at Dalston, which is about four miles from Morton School.

The two schools already work closely together in relation to sixth form provision, which is shared between them. With Caldew School being the larger of the two and having the majority of sixth form students, most of the teaching currently occurs on the Caldew site.

The governors of Caldew School have agreed to their school becoming the collaborative partner for the new school. The head of Caldew School has already been appointed as the executive head of both schools.

Caldew School is both popular and successful. The thinking is that a collaborative arrangement between the two schools will see Morton School, and the newly established school which replaces it, being strongly supported by Caldew School. This will help in addressing the staffing, governance and standards issues and the weaknesses in leadership, management, teaching and learning identified in the inspection report.

There is expertise in Caldew School which can play a pivotal role in turning round the fortunes of secondary education for the Morton area. It is important to stress though, that in helping Morton, Caldew School and its pupils will not suffer as a consequence. There is funding available to ensure that this will not happen.

## Leadership and governance of the new school

As indicated earlier, the head of Caldew School has been appointed as executive head of both Caldew and Morton Schools. It is currently being anticipated that this arrangement will continue until the end of the 2007/08 school year. The intention is to appoint a substantive head for the new school in early 2008. It is envisaged that the new head would work alongside the executive head before taking up the substantive post in September 2008.

With regard to the governance of the new school, there would be a new governing body. Working out the detail of the arrangements for how the school would be governed will be the responsibility of a Project Manager (see the section below on 'Planning for the new school').

## Staffing issues

The members of staff at Morton School are employed by the governing body of Morton School. The governing body of the new school which, like Morton, is expected to be a foundation school, will be the employer of the staff at the new school.

Where one organisation effectively takes over from another and provides the same service to the same people, The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 ('TUPE') apply. Given what is involved in a collaborative restart, TUPE will apply in this situation.

This will mean that staff employed by the governing body of Morton School at the time it closes would have their contracts of employment and statutory continuity of employment automatically transferred to the governing body of the new school.

However, it is envisaged that organisational changes, entailing changes in the workforce, will be necessary and measures will need to be taken to ensure the good performance of the new school. Employees and their representatives will be fully informed and consulted as part of this consultation exercise and as things progress further.

## Planning for the new school

The local authority intends to appoint a project manager to oversee from start to finish the process of planning for the establishment of the new school. One of the first tasks for the project manager will be the formulation of a 'handling plan' which should set out a timetable and identify key milestones for issues like consultation with staff and their unions, putting a governing body in place and the costs of the collaborative restart arrangements over a three year period.

Once the initial planning phase is reaching completion, the executive head will be responsible for developing what the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) calls a Raising Attainment Plan (RAP). The RAP is not a separate plan and should be seen as integral to the improvement plan for the new school. The RAP will need to cover key elements such as a strategy for improving teaching and learning, the design of the curriculum, the approach to behaviour and attendance management, the staffing structure, a professional development plan for staff, the responsibilities of governors for aspects of school management and ways of promoting the school in the community and via the media.

## Financial issues

Morton School got into financial difficulties some years ago, running up a deficit budget of around £1.3m. It was required to reduce the deficit incrementally. That is now down to approximately £600k. Repaying the 'debt' has been, and still is, a significant burden on the school. Trying to maintain and improve educational

standards whilst reducing such a deficit represented a big challenge. This must have been a factor which has contributed to the school's difficulties. When a school closes, budget deficits are wiped out. This would enable the new school to start with a healthy budgetary situation.

Extra financial resources from the DfES are available to support schools formed through the collaborative restart process. These resources are provided over the initial three year period. They will cover the costs of the project manager and will finance the support provided to the new school by Caldew School.

Limited capital resources to refurbish some existing buildings and create additional facilities may also be available. This could supplement the resources for the city-wide reorganisation, some of which will be earmarked to develop accommodation on the Morton site.

## Drawing conclusions

It is important that parents have complete confidence in the school in the west of the city (currently Morton School). We want this school to perform well so that it attracts pupils in its neighbourhood, grows larger, and has a good social mix.

The school reorganisation across Carlisle means that time is short. The improvement must be made as quickly as possible and it must be sustained.

Caldew School is successful and attractive to parents. It has proven good leadership and good standards. Teaching and learning is effective. There is evidence that a collaborative approach between schools could help a new school become a good school too.

Should Morton close and open again under a collaborative restart, there would be a new school, with a new name and a different internal organisation. The budget deficit which has been a major problem would be removed. The difficulties which have beset the school for a number of years could be dealt with.

The young people in the west of Carlisle deserve this. Morton has been unpopular and its standards have been too low. The local authority feels that a new school with a new start must be the answer. We would like you to tell us whether you feel the same.

Please go now to the final section of the document which takes you through the 'Next steps'.

## Next steps

### The consultation period

The consultation is based on this document. The consultation period starts on Monday 29 January 2007. The final date for letting us have your thoughts and comments is **Wednesday 28 February 2007**.

### How to express your views

This consultation document has been widely distributed. It has gone to the parents, staff and governors of Morton School, parents of primary-aged pupils in the Morton area, the staff and governors of Caldew School, all of the County Council's key partners in the provision of education, neighbouring schools, the District Council, voluntary organisations, staff associations and unions, and many others. It is important that we know what you think about the possibility of a collaborative restart for Morton School. We look forward to hearing from you.

### Questionnaire

There is a questionnaire at the back of this document. We would like you to complete it and return it to us. Alternatively, you can complete the questionnaire on-line during the consultation period by following the consultation finder links on the County Council website: [www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/consultation).

### Meetings

A series of consultation meetings will be held on **Monday 12 February**. They will give you the opportunity to express your views and to ask questions. The details of the meetings are set out below:

Date	Meeting For	Time	Venue
Monday 12 February 2007	School Council	1.30pm - 2.30pm	Morton School - Master Classroom
	Parents	2.30pm - 4.00pm	
	Staff	4.00pm - 5.30pm	
	Governors	5.30pm - 6.30pm	
	Parents and other members of the education and wider community	7.00pm - 8.30pm	

The Lead Member for Children's Services, County Councillor Philip Chappelhow, will chair each meeting, which will start with a short introduction on how the session will be run. Then there will be a very brief presentation on the main points in the consultation document. During the rest of the meeting, you will be able to say what you feel about what is said in the document and ask questions of the panel of County Council officers who will be present.

Notes of each meeting will be taken to summarise the points made. These will be made available to members of the Council's Cabinet when they are taking their decision regarding the future for Morton School.

### How can I find out more?

Members of the School Organisation Project Team and other relevant Children's Services colleagues will be more than happy to discuss with you any of the issues covered in this document or anything else related to the schools. You might find this helpful before completing the questionnaire. The number to ring is 01228 606013.

As we said earlier, we wanted to keep this document as short as possible. There is additional information available if you want to read more, such as information on the use of the school buildings by the community and other schools, projected pupil numbers and the most recent Ofsted inspection reports.

The range of documents is available to view or download on our website:

[www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation](http://www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation). If you don't have access to the internet, we can provide you with printed copies. All you need to do is to call the School Organisation Project Team on 01228 606013. Alternatively, requests can be made by fax to 01228 606016, or by post to the following address:

Freepost RRBS - RLBG - GZGL  
CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL  
School Organisation  
18 Portland Square  
CARLISLE  
CA1 1PE

## What happens after the consultation process?

### Cabinet decision

Once the responses to the consultation process have been analysed, a report will be prepared for the County Council's Cabinet. The report will include notes of the consultation meetings, a summary of comments received from individuals and photocopies of the responses from recognised organisations. The report will be a public document, so will be available to the media and on the County Council website.

Although, as indicated earlier, the Cabinet has already come to an initial conclusion on its preferred way forward for Morton School, it will look again at this on the basis of the response to the consultation. It is likely to do this at its meeting on Tuesday 13 March.

### The possible need for a competition to run the new school

Since 1 September 2006 there has been a legal requirement for there normally to be a competition held involving potential providers whenever it has been decided to establish a new secondary school. This is a process which takes around six or seven months and would come after the Cabinet decision in March. The Government's aim in introducing this requirement was to encourage a range of providers of schools in order to "increase diversity and maximise parental choice". In line with DfES guidance, the consultation document will be sent to identified potential providers.

It is possible to apply to the Secretary of State for permission to publish proposals for a new secondary school without running a competition. Given the seriousness and the urgency of the situation facing Morton School, if the decision to pursue a collaborative restart is confirmed by the County Council's Cabinet, the local authority is very likely to request permission not to hold a competition.

### Publishing statutory proposals to bring about change

Whether or not a competition is held, statutory proposals would need to be published to close Morton School and to establish the replacement school. Following publication, there will be a four to six week period in which people can object to or comment on the proposals. If it is the local authority which establishes the new school (rather than an alternative provider), it is likely to propose that it will have foundation status, as is the case with Morton School currently.

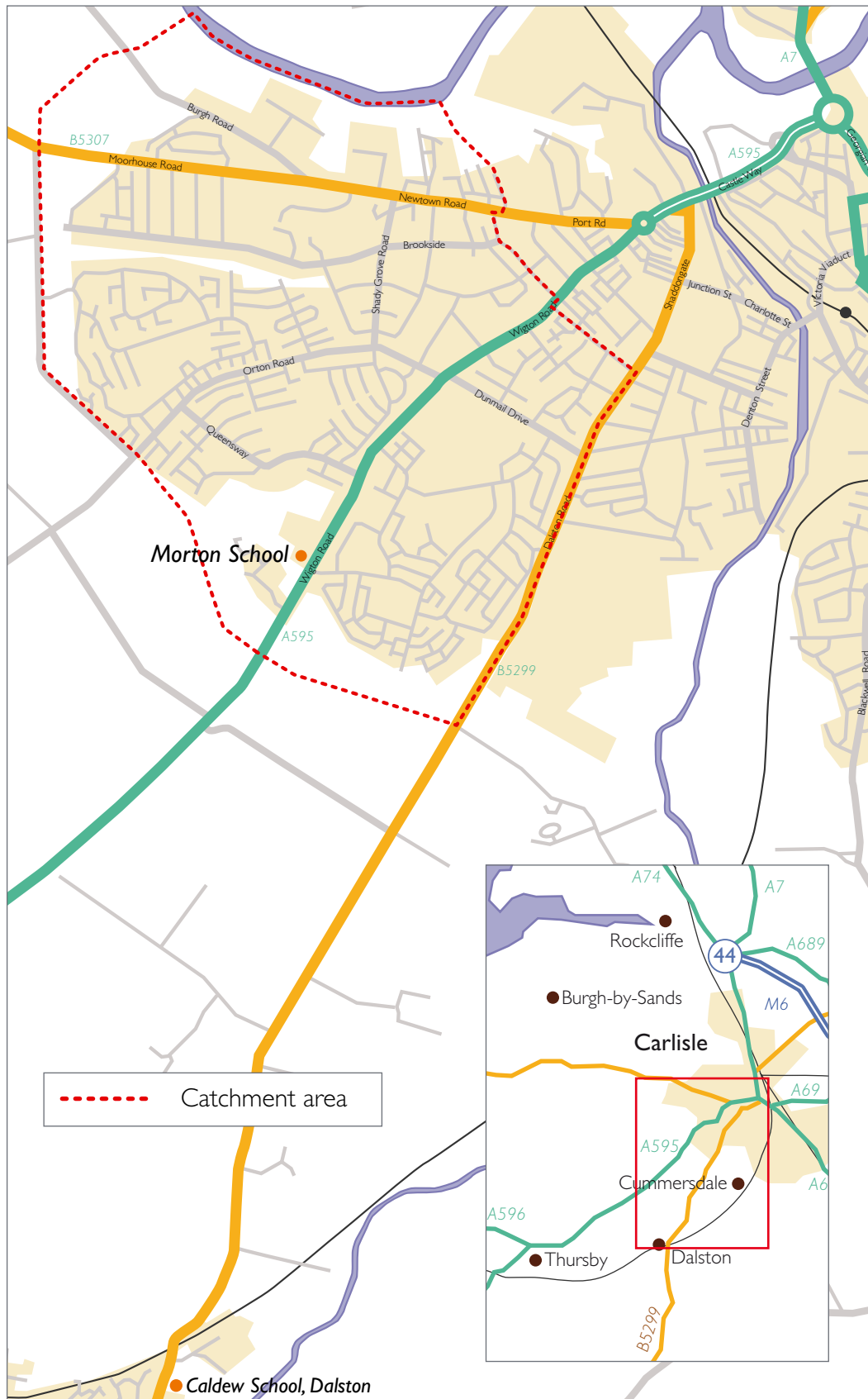
### The final decision

If the local authority makes the statutory proposal to establish the new school, the decision on whether to approve it would be taken by a Government appointed school adjudicator. If the proposal were to be published by another potential provider, the decision maker would be the local authority.

The aspiration is to open the new school in September 2007. If there has to be a competition, this timescale will not be possible and the opening of the new school will be delayed by a term or longer. Although it is felt to be unlikely, the outcome of any competition process may also work against a collaborative restart solution. Irrespective of when it might prove possible to introduce the technical school organisation changes involved (ie closing the existing school and opening the new school), the serious issues facing Morton School are starting to be addressed now. With support from the collaborative arrangements with Caldew School, further significant input from the local authority and the deployment of additional resources the improvement process will accelerate quickly.

**We have provided a range of information and explained the situation for you. We have told you what the local authority thinks about the future for Morton School. Now it's over to you. We want you to tell us what you think.**

# Appendix: location plan



# Questionnaire

## 11-19 education in Carlisle: the future for Morton School

This questionnaire is to help you put your views, comments and suggestions in writing. All views will be made available to those taking decisions. Please continue on a separate sheet if required. Alternatively, complete your questionnaire online at [www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/consultation).

Please complete, tear out and return to the address overleaf. The last date for responses to be received is **Wednesday 28 February 2007**.

**Q1** Given the current situation, and the information contained in this document, do you think that radical action is needed to address the issues facing Morton School?

- Yes .....  1
- No .....  2
- Don't know .....  3

**Q2** Cumbria County Council believe that a collaborative restart is the best way forward for Morton School. Do you agree with this?

- Yes .....  1
- No .....  2
- Don't know .....  3

**Q2a** If you agree with the County Council and believe that a collaborative restart is the best way forward for Morton School, please give your reasons and any additional comments you wish to make below.

**Q2b** If you disagree and do not believe that a collaborative restart is the best solution for Morton School, please give your reasons, comments and any alternative ideas you may have below.

**Q3** Please provide below any further comments you wish to make on the content of this consultation document or more generally.

**Q4** Please tell us the nature of your interest in the process, and which schools you are connected to. Please tick all that apply.

Interest	✓	At which school(s)?		
		Morton School (✓)	Caldew School (✓)	Other (please state)
Student	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Parent/Carer of current school pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Member of support staff	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Member of teaching staff	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Governor	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Pre-school parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	.....		
Local resident	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>			

**Q5** Name .....

**Q6** Address .....

.....  
 ..... Postcode .....

**Q7** How old are you?

Under 20 .....  1    20-39 .....  2    40-59 .....  3    60+ .....  4

Signature .....

Thank you for completing this consultation questionnaire.  
 Please now return it to the FREEPOST address below:

Freepost RRBS - RLBG - GZGL  
 CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL  
 School Organisation  
 18 Portland Square  
 CARLISLE  
 CA1 1PE

## Translation services

### **English**

You can get a copy of this document in different formats such as large print, braille, audio, or in a different language by calling 01229 894401.

### **Bengali**

আপনি। 01229 894401 -এই নম্বর ফোন করে, বিভিন্ন ফরম্যাট যেমন বড় প্রিন্ট, ব্রেইল, অডিও বা একটি ভিন্ন ভাষাতে এই নথিটির একটি কপি পেতে পারেন।

### **Portuguese**

Pode obter uma cópia deste documento em vários formatos, como por exemplo em Braille, áudio, ou numa outra língua. Para tal ligue para o 01229 894401.

### **Cantonese**

如果您想获取该文件的不同版本，如：大字体印刷、盲文、音频或不同语言版本，请致电：01229 894401。

### **Lithuanian**

Paskambinę telefonu 01229 894401, galite užsisakyti šio dokumento kopiją įvairiais formatais, pavyzdžiui, atspausdintą dideliu šriftu, Brailio raštu, užsisakyti garso įrašą arba gauti dokumentą, išverstą į norimą kalbą.

### **Polish**

Aby otrzymać kopię tego dokumentu w innych formatach, takich jak duży druk, druk Braille'm, audio, lub w innym języku proszę dzwonić pod numer 01229 894401.

### **Turkish**

01229 894401'u arayarak, bu dokümanın bir kopyasını büyük puntolu, körler için kabartmalı, ses dosyası gibi değişik formatlarda veya farklı bir dilde edinebilirsiniz.



**School Organisation Project Team**

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[www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation](http://www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/childrensservices/school-organisation)