



# **Outcomes of the scrutiny enquiry of Pupil Attainment (2018)**



## Background

At their meeting on 11 July 2017 the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CSOSC) requested a review of pupil attainment within Central Bedfordshire in light of concerns raised by Members. The purpose of the enquiry was to determine the best possible solutions and support with regards to improving pupil attainment across the region and improve the long term life chances of children and young people within Central Bedfordshire.

The enquiry involved Cllrs T Nicols (Chairman), T Swain (Vice Chairman), B Saunders, J Chatterley and Parental Co-optee G Deans and throughout the course of the review gathered evidence from a range of sources including officers in the Council's Children's Services directorate, Governor Training, Planning, Partnerships and Performance and Data Management. Evidence was also received from other Members, schools, head teachers and Governors, with national data and best practice processes and procedures researched in order to support the enquiry findings.

Central Bedfordshire has a very mixed economy by way of school structure with a range of local authority maintained schools, academies, lower, middle and upper schools, along with primary and secondary schools. Members were cognizant of the challenge this presented, but from the outset of the enquiry were keen to understand how the relationship between the local authority and all schools could be strengthened.

Members initially agreed that the scope of the enquiry be broken down into 4 separate elements, each of which would be investigated in turn, acknowledging the cross cutting nature on occasion. These were:-

- Minimising the impact of deprivation on children, specifically speech and language difficulties and the use/management of the pupil premium.
- The recruitment and retention of good quality teaching staff.
- Governor training.
- The educational journey of the child in Central Bedfordshire. As the enquiry commenced Members were advised that a wider piece of work was being undertaken by the Council, supported by consultants Openbox and so the panel agreed to allow this come to its conclusion and instead focus on the other 3 areas of scope in order to minimise any duplication. Members agreed that they would support whichever mechanism the Executive adopted in order to address the future landscape of education within Central Bedfordshire, stressing the importance of ensuring schools were fully supported in any transition they chose to implement.

The table below highlights the performance of Central Bedfordshire schools over the past 3 academic years. Although there are several schools within the region performing at or above the national average, overall Central Bedfordshire has remained in the third quartile nationally at Key Stage 4.

**(Table one) Key stage 4 - Average achievement of pupils in GCSE (or Equivalent) qualifications**

<b>2015 (5 A*-C including E&amp;M)</b>	<b>2016 ( Attainment 8 Score)</b>	<b>2017 ( Attainment 8 Score)</b>
58.3% - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quartile	49.3- 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile	45.5- 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile
Stat Neighbour rank: 8/11	Stat Neighbour rank: 10/11	Stat Neighbour rank: 10/11
National Rank: 57/151	National Rank: 90/151	National Rank: 88/151

The disparity between Key Stage 1 and Key stage 2 results was an element Members were keen to understand, particularly given the desire to close the attainment gap in disadvantaged pupils. In 2016, only 29% of disadvantaged children achieved the expected standard in KS2 compared to 57% of other children across Central Bedfordshire. Gaps between pupils registered for free school meals (FSM) – a proxy for social deprivation – and other pupils are wide at every stage of education and by the end of Key Stage 4, FSM pupils underperform by 1.5 grades relative to other pupils in every subject they take at GCSE.

In addition, Central Bedfordshire schools have historically received good or outstanding OFSTED ratings due to robust teaching methods and pupil progress which conflicts with the attainment outcomes at Key Stages 2 and 4, so this was another element Members of the panel were keen to explore.

A number of Head Teachers contributing to the enquiry findings stated that the current structure of schools within Central Bedfordshire brought some unique advantages but also some challenges in relation to pupil progress and Key Stage results due to individual schools unable to take full responsibility for the educational journey of the child. There were also challenges in keeping up with myriad changes to exam structures and assessment procedures, particularly in recent years and so Members acknowledged the difficulty in making a robust assessment of the performance of any Local Authority. However it was recognised that many areas nationally faced the same challenges as Central Bedfordshire but still performed at or well above the national average so Members were keen to understand why this was not the case locally and the possibility of structure affecting overall performance.

In its most recent report 'State of the Nation 2016: Social Mobility in Great Britain', the Social Mobility Commission stated:-

'...Meanwhile, ten local authorities now account for one in five of the country's children who are in failing schools: Blackpool, Knowsley, Northumberland, Doncaster, Reading, Stoke-on-Trent, Oldham, Bradford, Telford and Wrekin and Central Bedfordshire. A new approach is needed in those parts of the country where educational disadvantage is most concentrated, building on the recent Government decision to create Opportunity Areas.'

It became clear to the panel throughout the course of the enquiry that concerns which had been expressed over a number of years merited further exploration. It was also

apparent that there was no one solution to improving the educational outcomes of children in Central Bedfordshire, instead a range of measures, in partnership with schools, parents, healthcare and other professionals, charity and volunteer groups and learning from national best practice would provide short, medium and long term measures to increase attainment for pupils within our region.

## **Minimising the impact of deprivation on children, specifically speech and language difficulties and the use/management of the pupil premium - National context**

Following the introduction of the Pupil Premium (PP) in 2011, nationally the gap between pupils on free school meals and other pupils reaching the expected standard had been closing at Key Stage 1. Recent data<sup>1</sup> released in 2016 suggested that the gap had widened again to 18% in maths.

The increase in difficulty of the key stage tests has been cited as a cause for a decrease in overall results. However, that this difficulty should have disproportionately affected disadvantaged children is a worrying trend.

National Audit Office (NAO)<sup>2</sup> data suggests that 47% of schools were using the Pupil Premium to support pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN), including those with speech and language difficulties. The NAO suggests that the Pupil Premium is replacing, rather than supplementing funding for Special Education Needs (SEN). Up to 77% of schools were using some of the Pupil Premium funding for activities which supported all pupils rather than just those who were disadvantaged, including the employment of extra teaching assistants which is recognised as a costly option, only effective when resource is used appropriately.

It is not the case that all disadvantaged pupils fall behind their advantaged peers, with poverty having a varying effect on different communities. According to the Sutton Trust's research<sup>3</sup> Chinese, Bangladeshi and African pupils' GCSE results have improved by 20 percentage points since 2006, despite English as a second language to many of those pupils. For pupils with a Chinese background there is only a three percentage point difference between the GCSE results of disadvantaged and advantaged pupils. This contrasts starkly with that for white working-class<sup>4</sup> pupils whose score is the lowest of all

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.headteacher-update.com/best-practice-article/pupil-premium-a-gap-thats-proving-hard-to-shift/149691/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmpubacc/327/32705.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.suttontrust.com/research-paper/class-differences-ethnicity-and-disadvantage/>

<sup>4</sup> *The Government has expressed difficulty in defining 'working class' and has agreed that those in receipt of free school meals broadly meet the definition when assessing attainment within different ethnic groups*

ethnic groups along with Gypsy and Traveller pupils. Nationally only a quarter of White working class boys and a third of White working class girls achieved five good GCSE's.

In 2017 the Education Policy Institute<sup>5</sup> highlighted within its report 'Closing the Gap' that overall, disadvantaged pupils were the equivalent of 18.9 months behind their non-disadvantaged peers by the end of Key Stage 4, however in Central Bedfordshire pupils were on average 22 months behind their non-disadvantaged peers by the end of KS4.

### **Best Practice**

The 2016 National Pupil Premium Awards saw a range of schools from across the country recognised for their work in closing the gap for disadvantaged pupils, outlining a range of initiatives to ensure the most effective use of the funding. These included raising the profile of reading, the effective tracking of disadvantaged pupils, provision of targeted support in all key stages, employment of specialist teachers within the curriculum, Mathematics and the use of other online assessment tools and employing speech and language therapists via charity funding.

The winning finalist highlighted the focus on the emotional and psychological welfare of their children in addition to their educational provision, employing a family support worker to help support parents, carers and families, engaging them in "family learning" sessions where the children and parents completed courses together such as phonics, story-telling, cookery, art, healthy eating, improving sleeping routines for children and card-making. Emotional and psychological needs were also met through specialist counsellors, play therapists and learning mentors with counselling, behavioural and emotional support also offered to parents and carers.

As a result of the approach two disadvantaged pupils from the school received targeted support and subsequently passed their 11-plus in 2015 resulting in their acceptance into grammar school. In comparison during the previous year no children from a disadvantaged background had passed the exam.

Transforming the aspirations of children and their families was cited by the award winning school as the biggest driver to academic success, with the effective use of the Pupil Premium supporting this outcome.

## **Findings of the enquiry**

### **The Local Picture**

The enquiry heard evidence from Central Bedfordshire Head Teachers which echoed the national challenges in relation to a lack of parental engagement with schools, school

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<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/inquiries/parliament-2010/white-working-class-underachievement/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://epi.org.uk/report/closing-the-gap/>

readiness, the impact of exclusions, low aspiration, the lack of funding for those with English as a second language, the increasing impact of psychological and mental health needs in pupils and the need to promote reading outside of school.

Head teachers advised that difficulties in language barriers were rising within secondary age pupils due to recent influxes from Eastern European (EEA) countries, but unlike many of their British peers, EEA families were often very aspirational, with pupils achieving well above average once the language barrier had been overcome.

Particular schools experienced pressures due to the lack of funding received for many Gypsy and Traveller children due to an absence of the relevant parental paperwork and documentation. The absence of this documentation meant that they appeared not to be eligible for additional funding despite meeting the necessary criteria. Council officers continue to work proactively with all schools to ensure funding is applied for and used appropriately for every cohort and notwithstanding the impact on those schools experiencing difficulties, it was recognised that these particular challenges were generally isolated to certain schools and it was not a widespread issue across the region.

Latest national Census data indicated that the highest proportion of residents identifying as Gypsy and Irish Traveller were located in the South East of the UK with Basildon, Maidstone, Swale, Fenland and Ashford each having 0.5 percent of their population identifying with this ethnic group. Central Bedfordshire is a unitary authority serving a population of around 274,000 with Gypsies and Travellers accounting for 0.2% of the Central Bedfordshire population (478 people) which is slightly higher than the England and Wales average of 0.1% and Central Bedfordshire's regional neighbours Hertfordshire, Bedford and Luton also at or below 0.1%. School cluster data indicates that there are 302 pupils within Central Bedfordshire identifying with this ethnic group which equates to 1.08% of the overall pupil cohort. The highest proportion of these pupils are located within the Dunstable cluster of schools (1.94% of all pupils within that cluster), LC2 – Leighton, Linslade, Woburn and Woburn Sands (1.18%) and SB – Sandy, Biggleswade (1.17%). Members were keen that in addition to the pupil premium, local schools access other national funding available to them including the Vulnerable Children Grant and The Children's Fund which are both particularly useful in providing innovative support to those Gypsy and Traveller children and families who are at risk of educational and social exclusion. Due to the challenges facing some local schools Members expressed the importance that the new school improvement team proactively ensure targeted support in securing the funding available for those schools experiencing difficulties in this regard.

The Council continues to enforce attendance through national measures available to them, including the robust sanctioning of those parents whose children regularly miss school. With a clear correlation between school attendance and attainment, as demonstrated in the table below and with evidence suggesting that disadvantaged children were more likely to be absent from school than their non-disadvantaged peers, ***Members recommended that the school improvement team encourage schools to regularly publicise school attendance data to parents at half termly intervals in order that the impact of poor attendance be understood and that all schools within their respective clusters be encouraged to apply a consistent and robust approach regarding school attendance.*** In addition ***that any***

***sanctions in relation to school attendance levied via the Council be reported via quarterly performance monitoring reports.***

**(Table two) School attendance – summary findings:-**

<b>2014 Key Stage 4 results by Attendance Bands</b>		
<b>Pupils attendance record:</b>	<b>5+ A*-C inc. English &amp; mathematics</b>	<b>5+ A*-C Grades</b>
100% Attendance Record	78.0	87.8
95% or more Attendance Record	70.4	80.1
90% or more Attendance Record	51.7	62.9
85% or more Attendance Record	37.8	45.7
less than 85% Attendance Record	19.2	23.5
<i>Unmatched</i>	3.3	6.6
<b>Central Bedfordshire Total (of pupil attainment overall)</b>	<b>57.1</b>	<b>66.3</b>

**(Table three) School attendance – summary findings:-**

<b>2016 Key Stage 4 by Autumn 15/Spring 16 Attendance</b>		
<b>Pupils attendance record:</b>	<b>Number in Cohort</b>	<b>Average of Attainment 8 score per pupil</b>
100% Attendance Record	313	56.3
95% or more Attendance Record	1367	53.2
90% or more Attendance Record	526	47.9
85% or more Attendance Record	160	41.3

less than 85% Attendance Record	156	30.8
<i>Unmatched</i>	74	12.8
<b>Central Bedfordshire Total (of pupil attainment overall)</b>	<b>2596</b>	<b>49.3</b>

**(Table three) Penalty Notices for irregular school attendance**

Academic Year	Number of referring Schools	Penalty Notices Issued for Unauthorised Holidays	Penalty Notices issued for general unauthorised absence
Academic Year 15/16	63	456	348
Academic Year 16/17	65	815	428
Academic Year 17/18 (to date)	73	571	282

Schools and Academies may request that Local Authorities issue Penalty Notices on their behalf in cases of Unauthorised Absence in line with their school Attendance Policy. The only person who can decide to authorise an absence from school is the Headteacher or someone they designate to do so. Parents can supply evidence to support the Headteacher in making this decision such as an appointment card, hospital letter etc. Not all schools choose to issue Penalty Notices as part of their school attendance policy.

**(Table four) Legal Action**

Academic Year	Prosecution Cases Initiated Re Non School Attendance by Access and Inclusion Services
Academic 15/16	185
Academic 16/17	224
Academic 17/18 (to date)	142

The above are cases which occur where either parent have chosen not to pay a penalty notice for the following reasons

- Casework by an School Attendance Officer (SAO) has been unsuccessful or
- The child does not appear to be being educated and parents have failed to comply with a School Attendance Order.



The enquiry panel discussed the various mechanisms whereby school readiness could be strengthened in order to minimise the attainment gap in disadvantaged children. Head Teachers expressed the view that where schools were within an effective pyramid structure, incorporating schools from a range of lower, primary, middle, upper and secondary schools, therefore offering 0-19 education provision within a single model, there was a clear and traceable pathway, with all schools taking joint responsibility for the educational journey of the child. In addition, those schools which had taken the decision to widen their early years provision, it had aided school readiness and the speech and language development of very young children, reducing the need for additional and costly intervention at a later date. Notwithstanding the ongoing work of the Health and Wellbeing Board in relation to school readiness and a review of children's centres in Central Bedfordshire, **Members recommended that all schools be supported to strengthen their pyramid structures in order to enable the seamless transition of pupils through the different stages of education, also ensuring clear accountability in relation to pupil progress and attainment.** In addition **that schools be supported where possible to increase their age range to include 2 year olds and early years provision, taking into account any financial implications and capital investment requirements, particularly with regards to new school builds.**

National and local evidence supported the need to promote reading outside of school as many children only had the opportunity within the classroom. Head teachers advised that these children often fell significantly behind their peers who regularly read and were read to outside of school, widening the attainment gap further. Members were advised that many schools within the region had additional funding to support reading outside of school but did not have the resource or staff capacity to deliver extra sessions during the school holidays. It was recognised that much more could be done to actively market and enhance the existing offer available to schools and as a result **Members recommended that schools be supported by the Council to engage with charity and volunteer groups<sup>6</sup> in order to promote reading challenges and activities during the school holidays, effectively utilising social media and online platforms in partnership with schools to support the promotion of these events.**

During the course of the enquiry Members were appraised of the online Maths App Flurrrish<sup>7</sup> which had been used with great effect at one local school, enabling a 100% pass rate at Key Stage 2. Keen that this was a demonstration of best practice as recognised nationally, **Members recommended that all schools within the region be supported to roll out and promote the use of appropriate online tools and apps in order to support higher pupil attainment in Maths.**

Members were appraised of the mechanism whereby those children requiring a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN) were assessed. It was the responsibility of schools to complete the requisite paperwork in order for an assessment to be undertaken, but in the interim many children were often presenting with violent and disruptive behaviour towards staff and other children, which for some led to temporary

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<sup>6</sup> schoolreaders.org being a national organisation accessible to all schools <http://www.schoolreaders.org/>

<sup>7</sup> [www.FlurrrishEd.co.uk](http://www.FlurrrishEd.co.uk).

and permanent exclusions. In order to minimise any delays in the assessment process ***Members recommended that special educational needs coordinators (SENCO's) be further supported in their role to work proactively with schools in order that the necessity of completing the relevant paperwork at the earliest opportunity be understood, reducing the need to exclude pupils and that progress and improvements be scrutinised via quarterly performance monitoring reports.***

It was also the view of many Head Teachers that some, particularly very young children, often presented with challenging behaviour due to a lack of school readiness and behavioural boundaries outside of school. An emergence in recent years of exclusions in very young children had increased at an alarming rate and so in order to combat this several pilot initiatives had been introduced. Some schools had identified a safe and quiet space on the school site in order to support those children presenting with challenging behaviour and in many instances this had resulted in minimising disruption in the classroom, allowing pupils to remain on school premises, in education and preventing permanent exclusions. The impact on staff resourcing was high due to a lack of additional funding to support this approach but all Head Teachers involved in the enquiry agreed that the outcomes were worth the additional effort. Members considered whether it would be possible to include this element at the design stage of any new school development, however it became clear that any additional building works would need to be sourced out of developer contributions and could potentially impact the levels of funding available for education. As a result ***Members recommended that schools be encouraged to identify a range of interventions in relation to minimising exclusions in very young children, including where possible an appropriate annex or building in order to provide a safe and quiet area on school premises, taking into account any impact on funding for education.*** In addition ***that schools be encouraged to replicate recognised national best practice and utilise the Pupil Premium to employ family support workers or pastoral staff in order to support those children identified as requiring additional intervention.*** With the effective use of the Pupil Premium, the wider school's budget would not be affected by employing extra staff.

Given the reported lack of aspiration in some areas, poor parental engagement with schools and a lack of school readiness in some children which many professionals felt had a detrimental impact on early years progress and pupil attainment, Members, Head Teachers and Officers felt that a wider piece of work was required which would benefit from a focus from a social care, children's health and early years perspective and currently outside of the scope of this task force. With the timely delivery in 2018 of The First 1001 Days of a Child's Life to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CS OSC), as part of the wider Children and Young People's Development Plan, Members were keen that the Committee seek information from Executive Members on those areas specified and that ongoing measures be monitored in order to address these challenges. Head Teachers contributing to the enquiry also stated that a closer working relationship between schools and children's centres would be beneficial in supporting improved parental engagement and school readiness and so Members of the task force were supportive that the CS OSC include this element as part of their scrutiny of this area of work.

## The Recruitment and Retention of teachers - National context

The national challenges in teacher recruitment and retention are widely acknowledged, with excessive workload and pay disputes cited as driving away teachers and deterring new recruits according to the National Union of Teachers (NUT). Initial Teacher Training (ITT) figures<sup>8</sup> for 2016/17 show a decrease in the overall number of recruits compared with 2015/16, with only 93% of places being filled.

In 2016/17, the only subjects where the recruitment target was met were biology, geography, history and PE. All other secondary subjects were under-recruited, with the greatest problem areas in Maths, science and English.

Large numbers of pupils are being taught by teachers who do not have a relevant qualification in the subject and in November 2016 there were 1400 more teachers in service without qualified teacher status than there had been the year before. DfE figures<sup>9</sup> show that in the 12 months to November 2016 over 50,000 qualified teachers in England left the state sector and the Government confirmed that nearly a third of teachers who joined the profession in 2010 had left teaching within five years.

### **Best Practice**

Nationally it is agreed that there are several elements which can enhance the recruitment and retention of teachers, with no one aspect providing a single solution. Members were keen to understand whether areas of best practice could be implemented locally and these included continuous professional development and support for teaching staff, the local teacher training provision, along with key worker housing, acknowledging that teachers were not the only professionals who would benefit from this support.

The enquiry heard evidence of Luton's offer to teachers, which included information publicised on their website regarding how to access affordable housing and information guidance on the government's HomeBuy Direct (mortgage) Scheme which directly benefits key workers<sup>10</sup>. A key worker housing scheme offered by Islington Borough Council<sup>11</sup> whereby 15 one bedroom flats were available every year for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT's) working in the immediate area had increased teacher recruitment and

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/initial-teacher-training-trainee-number-census-2017-to-2018>  
<https://www.teachers.org.uk/edufacts/teacher-recruitment-and-retention>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/newly-qualified-teachers-nqts-annual-survey-2016>

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[https://www.luton.gov.uk/Education\\_and\\_learning/Teaching/TeachersPack/Benefits%20for%20teachers%20in%20Luton/Pages/Key%20worker%20housing.aspx](https://www.luton.gov.uk/Education_and_learning/Teaching/TeachersPack/Benefits%20for%20teachers%20in%20Luton/Pages/Key%20worker%20housing.aspx) <https://jobs.luton.gov.uk/nqt/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.islington.gov.uk/housing/finding-a-home/housing-options-for-key-workers>

retention and Members were keen to explore how both of these offers could be replicated in Central Bedfordshire.

A case study carried out at Neale-Wade Academy in Cambridgeshire<sup>12</sup> highlighted continuous professional development (CPD) as a vital and effective method for recruiting and retaining good quality teachers, with the school's CPD procedures leading to significant appointments and rapid career progression. Additional measures included positive relationship building, ensuring clear outcomes, succession planning and identifying strong future leaders.

### **The Local Picture**

Forty five schools responded to a teacher recruitment survey carried out by Central Bedfordshire Council in 2017 and were from a range of Head Teachers from lower, primary, middle, secondary and upper schools. A summary of responses indicated that 78% of respondents had experienced difficulty in recruiting good quality teaching staff during the past three years and that during that same period 48% asserted that the quality of recruited appointees had deteriorated.

During the academic year 2015-16 46% of respondents did not manage to recruit to a particular specialism with the primary challenges in English, Maths and Science and although in 2016-17 this had improved to 36%, the challenges remained in the same subjects.

Whilst it became clear that each school had its individual challenges to consider due to location, cohort and structure, each Head Teacher who contributed to the enquiry agreed that teacher recruitment and retention was influenced by the national challenges affecting the profession, along with local issues. This included good quality and qualified teaching staff, the need for continuous professional development, the offer to attract teachers into the area and a lack of information and support via the Council's website, outdated and cost prohibitive methods of advertising teaching posts, the lack of general 'profile' of Central Bedfordshire both online and in the wider public domain and the overall school structure within the region. Head teachers stated that many Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT's) chose to apply for schools in Luton, Hertfordshire and the surrounding area despite having completed their training in Central Bedfordshire.

In 2010, Central Bedfordshire Council, noting the level of subsidy for services, made a decision to reduce the level of traded services offered to schools, delivering instead only those statutory functions required of the local authority and staffed those services accordingly. This resulted in many areas, including HR and payroll, being contracted separately by each individual school or group of schools to commercial providers or via neighbouring authorities. Members of the task force were keen that this decision be revisited in order to enhance the relationship and partnership working with schools in the region but were cognizant of the cost implications and resource requirements needed in order to market the Central Bedfordshire brand and work with schools to

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/case-study-recruitment-retention-and-cpd/>

transition them back to the Council if that was their preference. It would require a substantial investment in time and staff resource along with work to ensure the cost modelling of traded services was accurate to prevent the historic situation of significant subsidy. As part of the ongoing SAP optimisation programme, HR services are currently upgrading their existing payroll system. Offering HR services including payroll to schools at the present time would lead to a notable increase in development costs as the existing payroll system would require technical development given that the contract retendering process for an implementation partner for the upgrade was focused only on those existing staff on payroll and not the wider schools staffing pool within Central Bedfordshire. Any addition of staff would result in a change to the tendering scope as it would be outside of the agreed parameters and would lead to additional programme costs for the development of the new systems and its implementation. Members were advised that any consideration to bring HR and payroll services to schools back within the remit of Central Bedfordshire Council be revisited after April 2019 when the current exercise came to its conclusion and when a more thorough options assessment could be explored. As a result ***Members recommended that the Executive include a review of traded services to schools and academies within their work programme during 2019/20 in order to specifically assess the implications of re-introducing HR and payroll services to schools.***

The Children's Services directorate are currently expanding resources in the school improvement team which had been reduced in previous years. It is envisaged that the introduction of three school improvement advisers and a Head of Service will support improvements and enhance the Council's relationship with all schools. It became apparent during the course of the enquiry when reviewing comparative data that the school improvement team had been under capacity since the inception of Central Bedfordshire Council, with surrounding authorities continuing to benefit from a full quota of staff. Head Teachers contributing to the enquiry highlighted the definitive change in support services offered to them at the time of the reported changes to staffing levels within the school improvement team and expressed the view that it had resulted in a deterioration in the relationship between the Local Authority and schools. They welcomed any increase in support services in the near future and felt that it would enhance and rebuild partnership working between the Council and schools.

The current budget allows for the extra school improvement provision for a period of two years, after which a review of the service will be undertaken. Members were clear in their assessment that they would not support a future reduction in the school improvement team as it was deemed a necessary and critical resource in the support of schools and improved educational outcomes. Two years was not considered by Members a sufficient period of time to realise significant change and instead they asserted that a longer term model for a period of up to five years would be more appropriate. As a result ***Members recommended that through the Medium Term Financial Planning process, the Executive support the retention of the current school improvement capacity for five years instead of two, only reducing it after that period with a clear business case setting out an evidenced rationale behind any such decision.***

All those Head Teachers who contributed to the enquiry supported the ethos of mentoring and developing staff but it became clear that methods were inconsistent across the region, with some schools supporting staff development much better than

others. It was also clear that support was required in order to ensure schools evaluated the training requirements and use of their teaching assistants, particularly for pupils requiring additional support. ***Members recommended that the new school improvement team work proactively with clusters to evaluate the skills, use and impact of Teaching Assistants and mirroring recognised best practice in the continuous professional development of all teaching staff<sup>13</sup> which would support recruitment and retention.***

In relation to Central Bedfordshire's reported lack of 'profile' within the immediate and surrounding area, Head Teachers stated that it was difficult to attract teachers who knew nothing about the region and what it had to offer. Although some schools were proactive in attracting new recruits, it was acknowledged that traditional and often cost prohibitive methods of advertising such as via newspapers were no longer effective. Recently a neighbouring local authority had embarked on a teacher recruitment drive by hosting a recruitment fair, the outcomes of which had yielded some quality candidates, many of whom had subsequently secured teaching positions within that region. Members were keen to replicate this but were aware of the complexities around the extent to which the local authority could host such events given that unlike many other local authorities the responsibility for recruiting teachers within Central Bedfordshire fell solely under the remit of schools, with HR and the wider support of schools and teachers historically outsourced to other local authorities and private contractors. However it was acknowledged that close partnership working and the support of recruitment events was necessary, as was a full rebranding of Central Bedfordshire in relation to the recruitment of teachers and so ***Members recommended that the school improvement team work closely with all schools to actively participate in recruitment events and that the promotion of such events be publicised via the council's website, social media outlets and in partnership with schools.*** Members felt that this approach would strengthen the promotion of the Central Bedfordshire brand and profile, recognising that the broader marketing of the Council would benefit other areas of the organisation.

Research also highlighted that presently there was no information, guidance and support for teachers or other key workers available via the Local Authority in relation to those housing and mortgage schemes available to them, nor any information regarding the schools in the region. Head Teachers unanimously agreed that far more was required in relation to the support packages available to teachers and that any provision with regards to housing options would have a positive effect in the recruitment package available to teachers, also highlighting the benefits of working in Central Bedfordshire schools, with 89% of them rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. The rural location of much of Central Bedfordshire would be an attraction to many professionals and again this was something which Members and outside contributors agreed required 'selling' via the website and other channels, in collaboration with schools. As a result ***Members recommended that those national mortgage and housing schemes available to teachers be publicised via the Council's website at the earliest opportunity, mirroring and expanding upon the information provided by other local authorities in order to support the vision that Central Bedfordshire was a 'Great Place' by highlighting the***

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/case-study-recruitment-retention-and-cpd/>

***excellent schools within the region and the attractive location.*** This recommendation would provide a cost neutral support platform to encourage more teachers to work within Central Bedfordshire schools and could be implemented with immediate effect.

Officers from the Council's Planning department confirmed that there were no direct key worker houses available within Central Bedfordshire and that any such initiative would include those wider professions defined under the title of 'key worker'. Members acknowledged that whilst many upper or secondary school teachers may not necessarily wish to live within the immediate catchment area of their school, any offer of affordable housing would be welcome. Head Teachers expressed the view that teachers of lower and primary school children would be more inclined to welcome the addition of housing in the immediate vicinity of the school and Members were keen to understand whether modular housing could be provided at the design stage of any new school build and in identified areas of growth. Officers from the Council's school planning team confirmed that in order to propose key worker housing on school sites it would require the Executive to agree for Education to secure over and above current BB103 land requirements. A challenge may be presented from developers in terms of financial viability, but if the school site was able to meet the Section 106 requirements for social/key worker housing then it may appear more attractive. It was anticipated that any safeguarding issues could be easily overcome.

The Education Act 2011 changed the arrangements for establishing new schools and introduced section 6A (the free school presumption) to the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Where a local authority thinks there is a need for a new school in its area it must seek proposals to establish an academy (free school). Section 6A came into effect on the 1 February 2012 for new schools other than pupil referral units and on the 1 September 2012 for new pupil referral units. Any on site housing leased to an academy would be the same way as for maintained schools (125 years) provided it was within the red delineation of the site and once the academy used the accommodation legally they would be entitled to it for the entire lease period. In order to prevent a change of use, a clause in the lease could be introduced that no alternative use would be considered unless specifically made in writing.

The Government provides a list of identified key workers which local authorities can use as a guide in order to support those living and working within their areas. It is not a prescriptive list and Councils have autonomy in selecting those they feel require housing support under the title of key worker and prioritising those professions where there is an identified need for recruitment. Members of the task force were keen that an agreement be reached with regards to a local list of key workers at the earliest opportunity, using research to indicate the highest areas of need. Given that educational attainment was so low within Central Bedfordshire the task force findings could evidence that the Council was not meeting its Five Year Priority of improving education and skills, so in order to strengthen the offer to teachers and attract the best quality staff, Members expressed the view that teachers should be placed on the key worker list as a matter of priority. As a result ***Members recommended that the Executive agree a definitive key worker list as a matter of urgency, prioritising those professions which evidence suggested required the most support in relation meeting the priorities within the Five Year Plan.*** In addition and recognising that housing is a key issue within Central Bedfordshire, ***Members recommended that due to the timely delivery of the Local Plan, the Executive explore***

***ways in which affordable and designated key worker housing could be delivered within the Housing Strategy.***

In relation to a wider approach to key worker housing Members were advised that in order for any such approach to be of minimal risk to the Council it would need to be cost neutral in the long term. The Council could borrow to finance key worker housing at low interest rates with the capital and interest covered fully by rental payments. Land would ideally need to be within the Council's current ownership with good links to the transport network and leisure facilities in order to attract teachers to the area. A current project is underway whereby land owned by the Council is being assessed for modular housing, a proportion of which could be used for key worker homes. Members of the task force expressed the view that the progress of this initiative continue to be monitored via the Children's Services and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees over the coming months.

Members considered whether the Executive could reconsider the lettings plan within the housing allocations policy in order that key worker housing could be provided, delivering direct lets to teachers where there was an identified need. Officers stated that due to existing challenges in meeting demand, placing teachers within the pool accessing social housing would increase current pressures and their view was that promoting a shared ownership approach would be a more effective way of meeting housing demand for teachers and the wider key worker community. However ***Members recommended that the Executive reconsider the lettings plan within the housing allocations policy in order that key worker housing could be provided, with any pilot scheme to be targeted in the most deprived areas in the region, with a view to incentivise new teacher recruits.***

Officers from the Council's planning department highlighted several options which would enhance the key worker housing offer, with the Rent Plus Scheme providing the opportunity to rent a property for up to five years at the local Housing Allowance rate, with an option to purchase the property at the end of that period. Many mortgage lenders were supportive of the scheme and case studies showed that this approach had been successful in both Plymouth and Bicester<sup>14</sup>. An online Facebook poll carried out by Rent Plus indicated that 65% of Central Bedfordshire respondents were supportive of any offer of affordable housing, with many contributors identified as nurses, teachers, health professionals, fire fighters and police officers, therefore meeting the Government's broad definition of key worker. Members expressed the view that this scheme would not only support New Qualified Teachers (NQT's) but also those still progressing their career and due to its structure would not put additional pressure on current social housing demand as it was a wholly separate scheme. As a result ***Members recommended that the Executive endorse the Rent Plus scheme in order that Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT's) and a wider pool of identified key workers had access to affordable housing, providing an attractive recruitment package to those considering working within Central Bedfordshire.***

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<sup>14</sup> Case studies contained within <http://centralbeds.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=650&MId=5602&Ver=4>



### Historic pupil funding and statistical neighbour comparisons:-

In April 2006, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to develop a single "statistical neighbour" model. This single model aimed to enable local authorities to identify other authorities similar to themselves in terms of the socio-economic characteristics of their area. The 10 Councils that have the "closest" averages to Central Bedfordshire are considered neighbours.

Additionally Central Bedfordshire sometimes uses the CIPFA Nearest Neighbour model. The model adopts a scientific approach to measuring the similarity between authorities taking into account a range of economic, social and physical characteristics.

**(Table five) The table below provides details of the Block Unit of Funding per pupil:-**

<b>Schools Block Unit of Funding 'Amount per pupil' received for 2017/18 (as at July 2017)</b>	
<b>Statistical Neighbours</b>	
Leicestershire	<b>£4,623</b>
West Berkshire	<b>£4,348</b>
Essex	<b>£4,347</b>
Cheshire East	<b>£4,340</b>
Worcestershire	<b>£4,319</b>
Central Bedfordshire	<b>£4,314</b>
Warwickshire	<b>£4,293</b>
Hampshire	<b>£4,265</b>
West Sussex	<b>£4,202</b>
South Gloucestershire	<b>£4,190</b>
Bracknell Forest	<b>£4,167</b>
Hertfordshire*Not a statistical neighbour	<b>£4,416</b>
Bedford Borough*CIPFA neighbour	<b>£4,402</b>
Cambridgeshire*Not a statistical neighbour	<b>£4,311</b>

Whilst Members accepted the methodology behind the statistical and CIPFA neighbour models, concerns were expressed throughout the course of the enquiry with regards to Central Bedfordshire's proximity to London and the attraction teachers living in the region would have in securing higher wages just outside of the area and a relatively short commute away. The only other statistical neighbour with such close proximity to London was Essex with comparable house prices and a relative cost of living.

However the block funding per pupil in Essex in 2017-18 was £4347 whilst in Central Bedfordshire it was £4314 meaning that potentially teachers were offered higher wages in that area. Members were also keen to understand the impact of regionally close neighbours and with Bedford categorised as a CIPFA comparator and Hertfordshire, whilst not a statistical or CIPFA neighbour, their extremely close proximity to Central Bedfordshire and the considerably higher block funding per pupil they received meant that they were potentially able to offer higher wages to teachers within the immediate region, along with a school structure new graduates would be familiar with. Many areas within Hertfordshire and Essex also receive the London Weighting Allowance, with some teachers expressly stating when applying for jobs that they could secure higher wages in those areas.

Newly qualified teachers in the Central Bedfordshire region were broadly paid the national minimum of £22917 in 2017/18 whereas in Hertfordshire and Essex they were paid £24018 which included the London Fringe allowance. Teachers choosing to commute to outer London were paid £26662 and in inner London wages started at £28660 and although for the first few years it was acknowledged that any additional funds might be used for commuting costs, career progression for many teachers could be rapid, particularly within the London area with some realising wages in the region of £45000 within just 5 years. Members were aware that this was a historic element affecting the recruitment and retention of quality teachers within the Central Bedfordshire region.

It was anticipated that the new national funding formula for schools being introduced in April 2018 would address the historic disparity between the amount of block funding received per pupil compared with statistical and neighbouring authorities, however some professionals had raised concerns that the new formula could have a negative impact on lower schools. There were also historic issues to consider in relation to widespread under funding for 6<sup>th</sup> form provision, with the need for schools to use a proportion of their overall budget to ensure ongoing support, impacting funding levels for the wider school. As a result of these concerns Members of the task force were keen that the impact of the new schools funding formula be included within the work programme of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity in order to assess its implications.

## Governor Training - National context

The key findings of a 2016 Ofsted report<sup>15</sup> indicated that many Governors across the UK lacked the expertise needed in an increasingly complex education system to hold school leaders to account. Overall it was expressed that governance required improved access to highly skilled individuals who had the educational expertise to help them meet the increased demands of their role, with the recruitment and retention of governors recognised as a serious national challenge, particularly in some of the poorest areas of the country. Weak governance was at risk of going undetected until the school was inspected by Ofsted and clarity was required around lines of accountability, roles and responsibilities of Governors, recognising the essential contribution Governors made to their local schools and wider communities, particularly in areas of deprivation.

School governance is the only mechanism whereby school leadership is held to account, a judgement of which is included within every Ofsted inspection, often impacting a school's rating. Those schools judged by Ofsted to be Good or Outstanding could evidence that recognised best practice governance procedures were in place, that individual Governor skills and knowledge was relevant and that the Governing body could provide assurance of robust processes and challenge to the senior leadership of their schools.

## Findings of the enquiry

### The Local Picture

Central Bedfordshire Council fully acknowledges that Governors play a vital role as strategic leaders to help meet the shared vision and priorities in the Partnership Vision for Education. When Ofsted makes a judgement about the effectiveness of leadership and management, it will consider the role of Governors in discharging their core statutory functions and how committed they are to their own development in order to improve their school's performance.

Central Bedfordshire Council offers a range of comprehensive training packages to school Governors which includes free clerks' support, finance and data training for maintained schools, health and safety, along with improving school attendance and reducing the need to exclude. In addition, there is a comprehensive induction programme for new and existing Governors which sets out their strategic role, holding the head teacher to account for educational performance, safeguarding and child protection, the use of the Pupil Premium and other funding and the support of SEND and vulnerable learners.

Members of the task force were appraised of mechanisms whereby local officers supported schools with scoping audits prior to an Ofsted inspection, with this yielding some very positive results. By the time the official inspection occurred, schools knew

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-governance>

which areas required improvement, methods were implemented soon afterwards, the outcomes of which invariably led to a positive Ofsted rating.

In addition, Ofsted inspectors will recommend an external review if governance is weak. Schools which are in the Local Authority's Red, Amber or Light Green category will receive a governance review as part of the Local Authority's support package to help schools prepare for their next inspection. Schools have found this proactive and recognised best practice approach very helpful in supporting their self-evaluation processes and outcomes have resulted in only a very small minority of schools requiring a formal governance review following an Ofsted inspection.

Bespoke training for a full governing board or clusters of schools and academies can be arranged on request which is designed to support the individual needs of the school and at a time which suits them. There is also a comprehensive e-learning programme available as the time constraints and pressures on Governors is fully appreciated, with many expressing that on occasion ease of access to e-learning packages facilitated training far better than face to face sessions.

In addition, officers are currently in the process of identifying the scope for an online forum for clerks in Central Bedfordshire. This would enable clerks to share their governance queries, best practice and to support each other in delivering effective school governance.

Upon examination of the offer available to Governors, it became clear to Members that despite a full restructure in 2009 which removed the Governor support team entirely, leaving only one officer responsible for commissioning services, the training package and support was still of an extremely high standard with 98% judging the training to be good or excellent. However due to the reduction in the number of officers responsible for the delivery of training and support, very little resource was available to encourage the take up of training, particularly with academies. Given that the Governor role is voluntary and that training is not mandatory, the remaining team have found that at times, although attendance figures were reasonable, the offer of training was not taken up to the extent to which it could be. Officers contributing to the enquiry panel's findings expressed a keenness to improve this as training was considered vital in ensuring robust and high quality governance.

Head teachers contributing to the enquiry expressed the view that whilst their Governors were clearly committed individuals, on occasion they did not feel that the appropriate challenge was presented, particularly around the need for further understanding of the requirements in relation to scoping and skills audits and that additional training would reinforce this area of knowledge. Several Governors from Central Bedfordshire schools contributed to the enquiry with many expressing the view that maximising the time available would increase the potential for participation in training sessions. They also indicated that it would be helpful if it was made clear that training was available to all Governors, not just lead Governors or Chairs, with a suggestion that where possible training sessions were included at the beginning or end of scheduled Governor and school cluster meetings. As a result ***Members recommended that the new school improvement team liaise with schools to enable the delivery of training sessions at the***

***same time as scheduled Governor and school cluster meetings wherever practicable, specifically reinforcing the importance of scoping and skills audits for all schools.***

The local picture reflected national challenges and it was reported that in some areas of Central Bedfordshire it had been increasingly difficult to recruit skilled and committed Governors. Members of the Council were encouraged at the beginning of their tenure to become school Governors however it became clear throughout the course of the enquiry that a substantial number had not taken up a post at local schools which Members of the task force felt needed addressing. In the past senior officers had also been recruited to the role, with many bringing with them the requisite skills required to fulfil their duties effectively, with Members expressing the view that foster carers could also be encouraged to take up roles as Governors, particularly bringing with them skills in relation to additional needs, the psychological support of children and SEN. In addition, available to every local authority was access to SGOSS, a national database of individuals who wanted to become school Governors, the details of which were published regularly in the local circulation, Governors Essentials. As a result of this information ***Members recommended that a local Governor recruitment drive be undertaken at the earliest opportunity, encouraging all Council officers, foster carers and those Members who were not yet Governors to take up a role at a local school and reminding schools of their access to SGOSS in order to improve the numbers and quality of Governors in Central Bedfordshire.***

Expanding the pool of Governors further was an area Members of the task force were keen to explore and assessed whether liaising with local businesses would yield members of the local workforce with the necessary skills to enhance the Governor role. Officers expressed the view that this had had a positive effect in the past and so ***the task force recommended that the Executive Member for Regeneration champion a campaign to engage business partners to encourage their workforce, where appropriate to put themselves forward as Governors, allowing time off work when necessary. A range of communication methods, including the targeted use of social media would support this initiative.***

Due to ongoing difficulties in recruiting clerks to governing bodies, many were already directly employed by schools as administrative staff or in some instances the Head Teacher's PA or secretary which did not support an independent approach. ***Members recommended that the local authority seek to provide a professional pool of clerks for school governing bodies to access, ensuring their independence of the school wherever possible in order to minimise any conflict of interest.***

Members were keen to understand the remit and scope provided to new Governors and whether their roles and responsibilities were always fully understood. It became apparent that despite a definitive 'job description' being made available to new Governors and regularly publicised via Governor Essentials, many still did not understand that which was required of them. It was determined that this was due to some not taking up the offer of training, nor regularly reading circulations and information. Members were keen that the additional school improvement staff resource be used to evaluate how best to enhance and broaden the relationship with schools and Governing bodies,

reiterating the need for them to appraise themselves of their roles and access training which was available to them.

***Summary of recommendations:-***

- 1. Members recommended that the school improvement team encourage schools to regularly publicise school attendance data to parents at half termly intervals in order that the impact of poor attendance be understood and that all schools within their respective clusters be encouraged to apply a consistent and robust approach regarding school attendance.*** (Cost neutral using existing officer resource)
- 2. That any sanctions in relation to school attendance levied via the Council be reported via quarterly performance monitoring reports.*** (Cost neutral using existing officer resource)
- 3. Members recommended that all schools be supported to strengthen their pyramid structures in order to enable the seamless transition of pupils through the different stages of education, also ensuring clear accountability in relation to pupil progress and attainment.*** (Cost neutral using existing officer resource)
- 4. That schools be supported where possible to increase their age range to include 2 year olds and early years provision, taking into account any financial implications and capital investment requirements, particularly with regards to new school builds.*** (Costs to be assessed when proposals are put before the Executive as is standard process)
- 5. Members recommended that schools be supported by the Council to engage with charity and volunteer groups in order to promote reading challenges and activities during the school holidays, effectively utilising social media and online platforms in partnership with schools to support the promotion of these events.*** (Cost neutral using existing officer resource)
- 6. Members recommended that all schools within the region be supported to roll out and promote the use of appropriate online tools and apps in order to support higher pupil attainment in Maths.*** (Cost neutral using existing officer resource although there may be a cost to schools accessing the App)
- 7. Members recommended that special educational needs coordinators (SENCO's) be further supported in their role to work proactively with schools in order that the necessity of completing the relevant paperwork at the earliest opportunity be understood, reducing the need to exclude pupils and that progress and improvements be scrutinised via quarterly performance monitoring reports.*** (Cost neutral using existing officer resource)
- 8. Members recommended that schools be encouraged to identify a range of interventions in relation to minimising exclusions in very young children, including where possible an appropriate annex or building in order to provide a safe and quiet area on school premises, taking into account any impact on funding for education.*** (costs to be assessed as necessary and when new school builds are proposed)

9. ***That schools be encouraged to replicate recognised national best practice and utilise the Pupil Premium to employ family support workers or pastoral staff in order to support those children identified as requiring additional intervention.***  
(With the effective use of the Pupil Premium, the wider school's budget would not be affected by employing extra staff.)
10. ***Members recommended that the Executive include a review of traded services to schools and academies within their work programme during 2019/20 in order to specifically assess the implications of re-introducing HR and payroll services to schools.*** (Additional costs to be assessed at the time of the review, they would be substantial but as yet unknown)
11. ***Members recommended that through the Medium Term Financial Planning process, the Executive support the retention of the current school improvement capacity for five years instead of two, only reducing it after that period with a clear business case setting out an evidenced rationale behind any such decision.***  
(Current staffing costs would increase by x2.5)
12. ***Members recommended that the new school improvement team work proactively with clusters to evaluate the skills, use and impact of Teaching Assistants and mirroring recognised best practice in the continuous professional development of all teaching staff which would support recruitment and retention.*** (Cost neutral using existing officer resource and with schools recruiting to current vacancies as staff progress)
13. ***Members recommended that the school improvement team work closely with all schools to actively participate in recruitment events and that the promotion of such events be publicised via the council's website, social media outlets and in partnership with schools.*** (Cost neutral using existing officer and Council resource)
14. ***Members recommended that those national mortgage and housing schemes available to teachers be publicised via the Council's website at the earliest opportunity, mirroring and expanding upon the information provided by other local authorities in order to support the vision that Central Bedfordshire was a 'Great Place' by highlighting the excellent schools within the region and the attractive location.*** (Cost neutral using existing officer and Council resource)
15. ***Members recommended that the Executive agree a definitive key worker list as a matter of urgency, prioritising those professions which evidence suggested required the most support in relation to meeting the priorities within the Five Year Plan.*** (Cost neutral using existing officer and Council resource)
16. ***Members recommended that due to the timely delivery of the Local Plan, the Executive explore ways in which affordable and designated key worker housing could be delivered within the Housing Strategy.*** (This recommendation would involve capital investment costs assuming that the Council would buy a quota of houses from the developer to manage within its own estate and rent to key workers at an agreed affordable housing rate. Capital costs would be recouped over time from rent paid)
17. ***Members recommended that the Executive reconsider the lettings plan within the housing allocations policy in order that key worker housing could be provided, with any pilot scheme to be targeted in the most deprived areas in the region, with a view to incentivise new teacher recruits.*** (Costs unknown)

18. ***Members recommended that the Executive endorse the Rent Plus scheme in order that Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT's) and a wider pool of identified key workers had access to affordable housing, providing an attractive recruitment package to those considering working within Central Bedfordshire.*** (Cost neutral to the Council with developers and Rent Plus responsible for the cost)
19. ***Members recommended that the new school improvement team liaise with schools to enable the delivery of training sessions at the same time as scheduled Governor and school cluster meetings wherever practicable, specifically reinforcing the importance of scoping and skills audits for all schools.*** (Cost neutral using existing officer and Council resource)
20. ***Members recommended that a local Governor recruitment drive be undertaken at the earliest opportunity, encouraging all Council officers, foster carers and those Members who were not yet Governors to take up a role at a local school and reminding schools of their access to SGOSS in order to improve the numbers and quality of Governors in Central Bedfordshire.*** (Cost neutral using existing officer and Council resource)
21. ***The task force recommended that the Executive Member for Regeneration champion a campaign to engage business partners to encourage their workforce, where appropriate to put themselves forward as Governors, allowing time off work when necessary. A range of communication methods, including the targeted use of social media would support this initiative.*** (Cost neutral using existing officer and Council resource)
22. ***Members recommended that the local authority seek to provide a professional pool of clerks for school governing bodies to access, ensuring their independence of the school wherever possible in order to minimise any conflict of interest.*** (Significant resource implications which will need to be assessed)





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