

Central Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ



please ask for Martha Clampitt
direct line 0300 300 4032
date 17 November 2011

NOTICE OF MEETING

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

Date & Time

Monday, 28 November 2011 at 6.00 p.m.

Venue at

Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford

Richard Carr
Chief Executive

To: The Chairman and Members of the CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM:

School Members:

- Anne Bell, Headteacher, Willow Nursery School
- David Brandon-Bravo, Headteacher Parkfields Middle School
- Jeff Conquest, Head Teacher Woodland Middle School
- Shirley-Anne Crosbie, Headteacher, Glenwood Special School
- Richard Holland, Governor, Harlington Upper School
- Sue Howley MBE, Governor, Greenleas Lower School
- Sharon Ingham, Headteacher, Hadrian Lower School
- Vaughan Johnson, Governor, Edward Peake Middle School
- Mrs A Kentish, Head Teacher Kensworth Lower School
- Ray Payne, Headteacher, Henlow Middle School
- Rob Robson, Headteacher, Samuel Whitbread Collegiate
- Stephen Tiktin, Governor, Linslade Lower School

Non School Members:

- Ian Greenley, Church of England Diocese Representative
- Ali Hadawi CBE, 14 - 19 Partnership Sector Representative
- Bill Hamilton, Roman Catholic Diocese Representative
- Caroll Leggatt, PVI Early Years Providers Representative

Observer: Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services

Please note that there will be a pre-meeting starting **half an hour before** the Forum meeting to enable technical aspects of the reports to be discussed with officers before the Forum meeting begins.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for absence**

To receive apologies for absence and notification of substitute members.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting 19 September 2011 and to receive an update on any matters arising from these.

Proposals

Item	Subject	Page Nos.
3	Use of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport To consider a request to Schools Forum for a £400k contribution from DSG for Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport in 2011/2012. 18.10 – 18.30	* 15 - 38
4	14-19 Practical Learning To note the contents of this update and the proposal to continue with the present 14–19 funding arrangements for 2012/13 due to the potential risks to provision arising from changes to funding. 18.30 – 18.50	* 39 - 40
5	Schools Specific Contingency Budget To consider an update on the Schools Specific Contingency Budget for 2011/12 and to propose a further distribution of unspent funds. 18.50 – 19.10	* 41 - 44

Updates and Feedback

Item	Subject	Page Nos.
6	<p>Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)</p> <p>To receive an update on the new SFVS, the replacement to the Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS).</p> <p>19.10 – 19.20</p>	* 45 - 48
7	<p>Update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and School Funding Reform</p> <p>To note the update on the DSG and School Funding Reform.</p> <p>19.20 – 19.30</p>	* 49 - 56
8	<p>School Forum Budget</p> <p>To provide an update on the School Forum Budget for 2011/12.</p> <p>19.30 – 19.40</p>	* 57 - 58
9	<p>Correspondence to the Forum</p> <p>19.40 – 19.50</p>	*
10	<p>Close</p> <p>19.50 – 20.00</p>	*

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CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM** held at Room 14 - Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford, SG17 5TQ on Monday, 19 September 2011

PRESENT

Jim Parker (Chairman)

School Members:	Anne Bell	Headteacher, Willow Nursery School
	David Brandon-Bravo	Headteacher Parkfields Middle School
	Shirley-Anne Crosbie	Headteacher, Glenwood Special School
	Sue Howley MBE	Governor, Greenleas Lower School
	Sharon Ingham	Headteacher, Hadrian Lower School
	Vaughan Johnson	Governor, Edward Peake Middle School
	Mrs A Kentish	Head Teacher Kensworth Lower School
	Ray Payne	Headteacher, Henlow Middle School
	Rob Robson	Headteacher, Samuel Whitbread Collegiate
	Stephen Tiktin	Governor, Linslade Lower School
Non-School Members:	Bill Hamilton	Roman Catholic Diocese Representative
	Caroll Leggatt	PVI Early Years Providers Representative
Observer:	Cllr Mark Versallion	Executive Member for Children's Services
Apologies for Absence:	Jeff Conquest	Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
	Mrs E Grant	
	Ian Greenley	
	Ali Hadawi CBE Richard Holland	
Officers in Attendance:	Mrs M Clampitt	Committee Services Officer
	Mr P Dudley	Assistant Director Learning and Strategic Commissioning
	Dawn Hill	Senior Finance Manager - Children's Services
	Mr R Parsons	Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning
	Helen Redding	Head of SEN and Inclusion

CBSF/11/11 **Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Central Bedfordshire Schools Forum held on 20 June 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of a letter 'a' to the word 'are' in the last sentence of the 6th paragraph of minute CBSF/11/7.

Matters arising from the Minutes:-

1. It was noted that the request for volunteers in Minute CBSF/11/8 had been overtaken by events and the consultation meeting held on 7 September 2011.
2. A request had been made for a change to the date of the next meeting of the Schools Forum. The original date was Monday 31 October 2011. It was noted that the meeting was to discuss responses to the consultation on the National contribution. The Forum noted that the consultation submission was 11 October and it was not expecting to hear from Central Government by 31 October. Instead an alternate date of Monday 28 November had been agreed. The meeting will be held at Priory House at 5.30pm for a 6.00pm start. The next meeting on 23 January will be held at Watling House in Dunstable at 09.30am.

CBSF/11/12 **Schools Specific Contingency**

The Forum received and considered a report which provided an update on the Schools Specific Contingency Budget for 2011/12 and a proposal for the distribution of unspent funds.

At the Schools Forum meeting held on 7 March 2011, the following budgets were agreed:-

- £500,000 General Contingency plus a further £1,000,000 in anticipation of the cost of redundancies in schools during 2011/12.
- £275,670 SEN Contingency

The total budget agreed for 2011/12 was £1,775,670. There was also a carry forward from 2010/11 of £1,061,537 which was split £845,708 (General) and £215,839 (SEN).

The Forum were advised that Bedford Borough Council had been billed for the Central Bedfordshire sole PRU pupils registered on the January 2011 census. This amounts to £48,000 per quarter. It was proposed that this amount be transferred to the Central Bedfordshire PRU budget for 2011/12.

It was noted that the £1,000,000 would not be required for the redundancies for 2011/12. It was therefore proposed that a one off payment of £25 per statutory pupil registered in the January 2011 census (34,284) be transferred to Central Bedfordshire Schools. It was noted that this payment was for maintained schools as at September 2011.

The SEN Contingency budget allowing for known commitments would not be fully spent by the end of the financial year. It was therefore proposed that the balance of the budget to be set aside to contribute to the cost of Central Bedfordshire children attending other Local Authority schools (Out of County Placements) for 2011/12. It was noted that the cost of pupils attending Bedford Borough schools had increased. The costs per pupil ranged between £5,796.50 (mild learning difficulties) to £18,143.05 (severe learning and behavioural difficulties plus additional needs). These students were not able to be schooled within Central Bedfordshire.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the DSG received from Bedford Borough Council for sole PRU pupils registered on the January 2011 census be transferred to Central Bedfordshire's PRU budget for 2011/12.**
- 2. that an additional £25 per statutory pupil registered on the January 2011 census be transferred to schools be agreed.**
- 3. that the balance of SEN contingency be set aside to contribute to the cost of Central Bedfordshire children attending other Local Authority schools for 2011/12 be agreed.**
- 4. that the Schools Specific Contingency position statement as at 31 August 2011 be noted.**

CBSF/11/13 Virtual School

The Forum received and considered a report which requested an agreement to additional funding for the Virtual School to cover the work supporting vulnerable learners. The ending of both the Area Based Grant and the Standards Fund had resulted in a shortfall on the budget. It was noted that £95,000 was requested from the unallocated DSG for 2011/12.

It was noted that the responsibility of the Virtual School was raising the attainment of children and young people looked after and for ensuring vulnerable children and young people make progress. In addition the remit of the Virtual School had been expanded to assist schools in reducing the gap in performance between different groups of learners. The groups included:-

- pupils eligible for free school meals
- children from service families
- pupils learning English as an additional language
- pupils from black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- pupils with special educational needs
- pupils whose behaviour and/or attendance would be a cause of concern.

The Forum were assured that the funding was being reviewed along with the processes being used by other Local Authorities.

RESOLVED

that the allocation of £95,000 from the unallocated DSG to meet the shortfall in the budget for the Virtual School be agreed.

CBSF/11/14 Reallocation of DSG following the discontinuation of the Dyslexia Provision based at Priory Middle School

The Forum received and considered a report which requested the reallocation of DSG to support Out of Authority placements.

The Executive at its meeting held on 23 May 2011 approved the discontinuation of the dyslexia provision at Priory Middle School from 1 September 2011 (please refer to Minute E/11/11).

The annual budget for the dyslexia provision was £57,960 and during the 2011/12 year would deliver a part year savings of £33,810. This is due to the budget being allocated April to August and five months of the budget would have been spent by the time the provision was stopped.

The Forum noted that the £57,960 savings for the 2012/13 budget should be reallocated to the Out of Authority Placement budget. The Out of Authority Placement occurred only when Central Bedfordshire Schools were unable to meet the needs of the pupil. As of 1 September 2011 there were 18 pupils in Out of Authority independent special schools. No additional students were placed in Out of Authority placement during the 2010/11 academic year. It was noted that three students had been brought back to local placement during the same time period.

The Forum noted that there were staff who were trained over the last eight years to be Dyslexia and SENCO qualified. The Forum were unaware of this information and asked that the information be included in a future Central Essentials to bring the information to all Schools attention.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the £33,810 saving of Direct Schools Grant (DSG) be reallocated to support Special Educational Needs (SEN) Out of Authority placements in 2011/12 be agreed.**
- 2. that the £57,960 be allocated to the out of Authority Placement Budget in 2012/13 be agreed.**

CBSF/11/15 Use of DSG for Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport

The Forum received and considered a report which requested a £400k contribution from DSG for the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport in 2011/12.

The Forum noted that the School Finance (England) Regulations 2011, Schedule 2, paragraph 37(e) allows for expenditure on special educational needs transport costs.

During 2010/11 the total spend for SEN Transport to schools was £3,383,000 with an additional £329,000 on transport to post school provision in colleges.

It was noted that the Home to School Transport Policy 2010/11 and the Post 16 Transport Policy 2011/12 were in the process of being implemented and would provide the eligibility criteria for pupils with SEN. It was noted that the implementation was taking time and that other areas of the SEN transport costs were being reviewed.

The Forum whilst understanding the needs requested that additional supporting information be provided before a decision would be taken. Concerns were expressed about setting a precedent. It was agreed that Officers would provide additional supporting information in a report to the 28 November 2011 meeting.

RESOLVED

that the use of the £400k Headroom in 11/12 to contribute to the SEN transport costs be deferred to the 28 November 2011 meeting to allow Officers to provide additional information.

CBSF/11/16 DfE Consultation

The Forum received and considered three reports which were linked and sought the views of the Schools Forum on the DfE consultation on capital, the Council's draft School Organisation Plan 2011 – 16 and guidance and supporting documents that had been developed to provide a mechanism by which proposals to extend age ranges in Local Authority maintained schools would be managed.

The DfE Consultation on the 'Implementation of the 2010 – 11 Review of Education Capital (The James Review)'

The Forum were reminded that they had received an overview of the consultation document at the meeting of the Schools Forum held on 20 June 2011 (Minute CBSF/11/6 refers) to which the Government published its response on 19 July 2011. The Government's response focussed on three specific recommendation areas that are now subject of further consultation.

- Use of Basic Need and condition data to determine local budget allocations
- Flexible Capital Budgets with Local Decision Making
- National Contracting and Procurement

It was noted that the Government would be preparing to tender a national survey of schools to obtain consistent school condition data.

In addition, proposals to enable local prioritisation of a flexible capital allocation to meet the challenge of new school places and priority maintenance are included in the consultation. This may be a phased implementation starting with ringfenced funds held at local authority level for VA, Academy and maintained school condition issues, plus basic need for new school places.

Options for national, versus local contracting and procurement are being considered.

The consultation concludes on 11 October 2011. The DfE have invited views from Local Authorities, Academies, Diocesan bodies and other responsible bodies.

Draft Central Bedfordshire Council School Organisation Plan 2011-2016

The statutory requirement for the Local Authority to produce a School Organisation Plan (SOP) are no longer in place although the rationale is still valid as outlined in the report.

Central Bedfordshire will be facing significant housing growth over the coming 10 - 15 year period. The SOP attached at Appendix B to the report would ensure that future provision of school places were planned and delivered to match the planned growth.

The Forum noted that the Education Vision referred to in the document was now out of date and that a refreshed vision had been created and will be circulated shortly.

Guidance on statutory consultations on proposals for Schools' change of age range

As a result of the outcome of the Dunstable and Houghton Regis area review there was a need to develop guidance for maintained schools who were considering proposals to make changes to age ranges. Local guidance, mirroring DfE published statutory guidance has been produced. A copy of the guidance was attached to the report at Appendix C.

The guidance also includes a process by which the Local Authority, as decision makers for proposals of this nature, can undertake an initial evaluation against the key factors that it must have consideration of in any decision. The process was detailed at Appendix D attached to the report and a quick reference guide to the statutory provisions for these proposals were included in the flowchart at Appendix E to the report.

The national consultation on the admission code may also greatly impact the Council's ability to undertake strategic evaluations of proposals in future.

The Forum questioned the layout of the forms and why they had to be completed by each individual school rather than one form for each group. It was noted that the forms were part of the statutory process and as such each school had to confirm its intention to change their age range and identify specific issues.

The Forum confirmed that they wanted schools to think of what was best for the students.

RESOLVED

- 1. that the recently announced consultation that has arisen from the DfE sponsored 'James Review' of schools capital, originally reported to Schools Forum on the 20 June 2011, be noted.**
- 2. that the Central Bedfordshire's draft School Organisation Plan 2011 – 2016 and its use as a planning tool for the future prioritisation and allocation of Basic Need funding to the Council be noted.**
- 3. that the guidance document and supplementary documents adapted from the DfE Decision Makers Guidance for making alterations to the upper and / or lower age limit of a maintained mainstream school.**

CBSF/11/17 School Finance Update

The Committee received and considered the report which provided an update on the License Deficit Schools and the Schools Finance Risk Register.

As at 31 August 2011 there were 125 Schools in Central Bedfordshire excluding Academies. The total DSG for Central Bedfordshire for 2011/12 was £151m of which £137m was delegated to Schools.

Each school must submit a budget plan approved by the Governing Body or a Committee of the Governing Body by 31 May to the Local Authority. An approved revised budget Plan must be received by 31 October each year.

Schools may plan for a deficit budget for no more than three years. Unlicensed deficits would be reported to the Department for Education as part of the School's Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) return.

The Forum noted the criteria for allocation of a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating as detailed at Appendix A to the report. The RAG rating assists the Section 151 Officer in exercising his duties under the Local Government Act that every LA makes arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs.

No new 'Notice of Concerns' had been issued during 2010/11 and two were issued in 2009/10 of which one remains under review. It was noted that 8 schools were amber and 1 school was red. All red and amber schools would receive a visit from their School Financial Adviser during the autumn term.

RESOLVED

1. that the update on the License Deficit Schools be noted.
2. that the update on the Schools Finance Risk Register be noted.

CBSF/11/18 Dedicated School Grant

The Forum received and considered a report which provided an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

The estimated DSG for 2011/12 was £172.564m. This was based on 37,046 (fte number of pupils at 01/11) multiplied by £4,658 (Guaranteed Unit of Funding (GUF)). The LACSEG unit per pupil fee for 2011/12 was £37.33 for Primary and £76.09 for Secondary schools which amounts to a total recoupment of £393k for 11 schools as at July 2011.

It was anticipated that a further 24 schools would convert by the end of this financial year which would require a further £276k from Headroom.

RESOLVED

1. that the deployment of the 2010/11 Dedicated School Grant be confirmed.
2. that the application of the 2011/12 Dedicated School Grant be noted.

CBSF/11/19 Verbal update on the 'Consultation on School funding reform'

The Forum received an update on the 'Consultation on School Funding reform'.

The first session to discuss the consultation document was held on Wednesday 7 September 2011. All of the 40 questions had been reviewed and preliminarily answered. The minutes of the session were circulated to members of the Forum.

The second session was to be held on Friday 30 September 2011. This session would be used to provide more detailed discussion of the more contentious questions.

The final response would be submitted to Central Government on Tuesday 11 October 2011.

CBSF/11/20 School Forum Budget

The Forum considered a report which provided an update on the School Forum Budget for 2011/12.

It was agreed at the meeting of the Forum held on 7 March 2011 that the annual budget for the administrative costs be £3,000 and that a further £2,000 be set aside for the commissioning of consultancy and administrative support for the National Funding consultation.

The Forum noted that a carry forward of £3,650 from 2010/11 would be applied to the consultancy and administrative support which was estimated to be £5,000 at the end of the consultation process.

The Senior Finance Officer confirmed that the budget was expected to be fully spent by the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED

that the School Forum position statement as at 31 August 2011 be noted.

CBSF/11/21 Correspondence to and from the Forum

The Chairman drew the Forum's attention to a letter received from Andrew Selous MP and the response received from Lord Hill the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools relating to the school funding in Central Bedfordshire. The Forum noted the contents and the fact that the MPs for Bedfordshire would continue to liaise with Education Ministers.

CBSF/11/22 Close

The future meeting dates are as follows:-

- Monday 28 November 5.30pm – Priory House, Shefford – sandwich buffet
- Monday 23 January 9.30am – Watling House, Dunstable – coffee/tea/biscuits
- Monday 5 March 5.30pm – Priory House, Shefford – sandwich buffet
- Monday 25 June 9.30am – Watling House, Dunstable – coffee/tea/biscuits

(Note: The meeting commenced at 6.00 p.m. and concluded at 8.10 p.m.)

Chairman

Dated

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Meeting: Schools Forum
Date: 28 November 2011
Subject: Use of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
Summary: This paper makes a request to Schools Forum for a £400k contribution from DSG for Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport in 2011/2012

Contact Officer: Helen Redding
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council
Reason for urgency (if appropriate) N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. To propose the use of £400k Headroom in 11/12 to contribute to the SEN Transport costs**

Background

1. The School Finance (England) Regulations 2011 came into force in March 2011. Schedule 2 of these regulations set out the classes or descriptions of planned expenditure prescribed for the purposes of the Schools budget of a Local Authority which may be deducted from it to determine the Individual School Budget (ISB).
2. Schedule 2 includes special education provision, and within the section on 'other expenditure', paragraph 37(e), includes expenditure on special educational needs transport costs. In some councils SEN transport is funded entirely by the DSG.
3. The SEN transport to schools costs include transport to special schools both in and outside of Central Bedfordshire, Transport to specialist provisions in Central Bedfordshire, and transport to the Pupil Referral Unit.
4. The Local Authority has been fully funding SEN Transport to date. The total spend on SEN Transport to schools in 10/11 was £3,383,000, with a further £329,000 spent on transport to post school provision in colleges. The requested £400k contribution represents less than 12% of the costs of SEN Transport to schools and the PRU.

5. The Home to School Transport Policy 2010/2011, and the Post 16 Transport Policy 2011/12 set out the eligibility for pupils with SEN, and this policy is in the process of being implemented.

Update

6. Each year of the current spending round the Council is making efficiency savings in order to meet government targets on public sector spending. While implementation of the council's pupil transport policies is a high priority for the council in achieving efficiency savings while still ensuring all pupils who are entitled to transport to school receive that transport, a number of factors are working against this. One is the fact that overall costs in transporting pupils are rising with fuel prices rising ahead of inflation. A second factor is the unpopularity of removal of school transport amongst parents. This has led the council to undertake the implementation of this policy with great care for example by giving increased attention to the involvement of stakeholders in the process of walking assessments. The implementation of the revised transport policy is therefore likely to take additional time to impact on costs.
7. As part of the implementation of these policies, work is also being undertaken to reduce the costs of SEN transport, while at the same time increasing the abilities of young people with SEN to travel independently where possible and where this is appropriate to their assessed needs.
6. The Local Authority is currently awaiting the outcome of the consultation of the changes to the Finance Regulations.

Next Steps

7. That a further paper is brought to Schools Forum following the publication of the revised Schools Finance Regulations to consider a contribution to the future funding of SEN Transport

Appendices:

Appendix A – Home to School Transport Policy

Appendix B – Post 16 Transport Policy

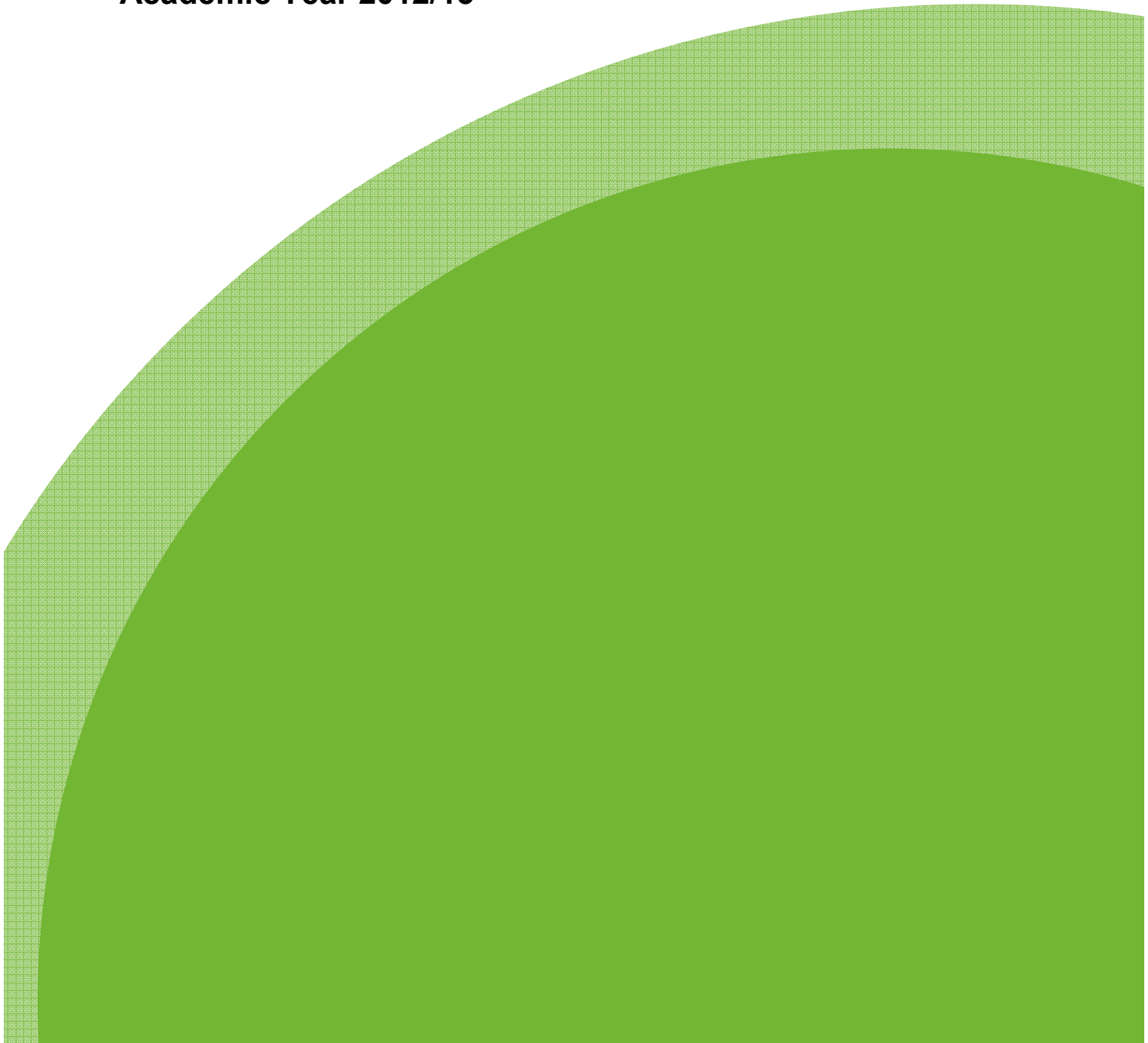
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**Central
Bedfordshire**

Children's Services

Post 16 Transport Policy

Academic Year 2012/13



Post 16 Transport Policy

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Introduction

1. The responsibility of a local authority to prepare and publish an annual Transport Policy Statement is included in the Education Act 1996.
2. The Policy must set out the arrangements for the provision of transport, or otherwise, that the authority considers necessary, to enable young people age 16 – 18 to attend education or training.
3. For the purpose of this Policy, 16-18 means young people aged 16-18 who are starting a programme at school, college or work based learning provider before their 19th birthday.
4. The overall intention of the 16 – 18 transport duty is to:
 - ensure that learners of aged 16 - 18 are able to access the education and training of their choice; and
 - ensure that, if support for access to education is required, this will be assessed and provided where necessary.

Principles

5. Central Bedfordshire Council aims to provide safe, efficient and cost effective transport for students entitled to transport, in accordance with its duties and powers as described in legislation.
6. In meeting its statutory responsibility Central Bedfordshire Council will provide transport in accordance with agreed eligibility criteria which it will review annually.
7. The Council is committed to equality of opportunity and access to services and facilities and as such has undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment of this Policy.
8. Information will be made available for parents, carers and students so that they are aware of the eligibility criteria and process for applying for transport.
9. Parents, carers and students are required to agree to a Code of Conduct when students are travelling on transport provided by the Council.
10. Eligibility for transport will be reviewed termly (before the start of each new term) to ensure that those students who are receiving transport remain eligible.
11. Take-up of transport will be monitored to ensure that access is fair and equitable and that hard to reach groups and those who are most vulnerable are aware of their entitlement.
12. Information relating to applications for transport will be held on a database for monitoring purposes and numerical information may be shared as requested with Central Government. Fair processing notices will be given to all applicants to ensure that they are aware of the purpose of the storage of their personal details.
13. Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to supporting sustainable modes of travel to school and college. Walking and cycling helps to reduce the congestion caused by the journey to school, together with the associated accidents and pollution and carbon emissions. If walking or cycling is not an option, school contract buses, public transport and car-sharing are more sustainable alternatives to individual car journeys.
14. The eligibility criteria set out in the Policy will be used for students starting a new course in the academic year 2012/13. Students entering the second or third year

of a course will be assessed using the same eligibility criteria against which their original application was assessed.

15. The timescale for arranging transport will be a maximum of 15 working days from receipt of the application.
16. This policy and the eligibility criteria will be kept under review and will be formally reviewed one year after implementation and thereafter every 3 years.

Legislation and Guidance

17. Through the Education Act 1996 and the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009) a local authority has a statutory responsibility to consider how it will assist learners to access the appropriate post 16 provision.
18. Through the Education and Skills Act 2008, from 2013 the age of participation will be raised so that young people will be required to stay in education or training until they are 17 and from 2015 until their 18th birthday.
19. A Post 16 Transport Policy Statement must be in place by 31st May each year. The Department for Education issues Post 16 Transport Guidance to support the preparation of a policy statement.
20. The policy links to the Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy and is similar in its principles to the Home to School Transport Policy.

Eligibility for Transport

21. This Policy sets out the eligibility criteria for transport for students aged 16 – 18 to ensure that those most in need of support receive it and those who are able to pay the cost of their transport do so.
22. The Executive of the Council sets its fees and charging policy rates annually and where students are eligible for subsidised transport, charges are made as set and published within the Fees and Charging Policy.

Eligibility Criteria

23. The eligibility criteria relate to specific areas of:
 - ◆ low income;
 - ◆ medical grounds;
 - ◆ children for whom Central Bedfordshire Council is a Corporate Parent;
 - ◆ special educational needs.

Subsidised transport for families with a low income

24. Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to working to assist low income families:
25. For a student to be eligible for free transport on low income grounds their family must be in receipt of benefits set out in Appendix A and will:

- attend the school where they have been enrolled for a minimum of two years and have been eligible for free home to school transport, or
- live more than 3 miles, but no more than 20 miles and attend the nearest establishment which offers a qualification at the same level and in the same subject area(s) as the course applied for and accepted on to.

Transport on grounds of medical needs

26. Where a student attends the nearest school or college offering the qualification and subject they are studying for, transport can be considered on medical grounds irrespective of distance between home and school. Each application is considered on an individual basis. An application for transport must be supported in writing by a GP or medical consultant.
27. Transport will be arranged in the most cost effective way and be provided for a maximum of one term at a time.
28. A subsidised charge based on a termly rate as set out in the Council's Fees and Charges Policy, will be made for the transport provided. The charge will be determined at a pro rata rate for the number of weeks for which transport is agreed.

Transport for children for whom Central Bedfordshire Council is a Corporate Parent

29. Whilst representing only a very small number of the total 16 – 18 age population, Looked After Children (including Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) can be some of the most vulnerable students in need of support. The most suitable establishment to meet these particular students' needs will not always be the nearest school or college to their home address.
30. As Corporate Parents to these children, Central Bedfordshire Council will ensure that free transport will be provided for students to attend the most suitable establishment to meet their individual needs, irrespective of distance.

Transport for students with Special Educational Needs

31. Transport needs for students with special educational needs will be assessed as part of the statutory assessment process, either the Statement of Special Educational Needs or the Learning for Living and Work Assessment.
32. Where students have been assessed as requiring transport and are eligible, a subsidised rate will be charged, as set out in the Fees and Charges Policy of the Council and reviewed annually.
33. A small numbers of students, typically with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties , who remain in continuing special school provision do not reach a point of transition at 16 and will therefore continue to be receive their existing transport arrangements for as long as they remain in that provision.
34. Subsidised transport will be provided for a student to the establishment identified through the assessment, where the distance between home and the establishment is more than 3 miles.

35. Where the distance is less than 3 miles the assessment will include consideration of whether a student could reasonably be expected to walk or cycle to school or college. Where this is not possible subsidised transport will be provided.
36. The most appropriate mode of travel will be agreed as part of the assessment process.
37. The assessment will consider transport to the nearest suitable school or college. If by parental or student preference a more distant establishment is named, transport will be the responsibility of the parent.
38. A travel training programme to support those students who are physically able to walk, to travel more independently and to support transition to adult life will be introduced.
39. Where a student with Special Education Needs remains in further education, transport could be provided up to the age of 25, if specifically required through the Learning for Living and Work Assessment.
40. On all routes the responsibility for the introduction of escorts on a temporary or permanent basis is delegated to officers.

Additional considerations

41. Students who live in a joint home arrangement, who fulfil the other criteria for free or subsidised transport, will be provided with transport from the primary home address registered with the school or college.
42. Students may be required to walk up to one mile from home to the pickup point and where allocated a place on a public service route, they may be required to walk up to one mile from the setting-down point to the school.
43. In determining entitlement to free or subsidised transport, the route used in assessing the distance will be the shortest available walking route up to 3 miles and the shortest motorised route up to 20 miles. Measurement will commence at the gate of the student's home to the nearest gate on the school or college site.
44. Where students receive free or subsidised transport as a result of errors in measurement, the transport will be withdrawn at the end of the term during which the error is discovered. The student and their family will be notified of any changes as soon as possible after the error has been identified.
45. Smoking is prohibited on all Council owned vehicles when used for the transportation of students and is a condition of hire of contractors' vehicles, including Taxis.

Concessionary Places on School Contract Vehicles

46. Where students are not entitled to free or subsidised transport, it may be possible to purchase a concessionary pass for routes operating on a school contract vehicle. There is where the Council has a direct contract with a bus operator and where there are spare seats once all entitled students have been allocated a seat.
47. Concessionary Passes can be bought for one term at a time and are allocated on a first come, first served basis.

48. Concessionary passes are not available on routes that are public registered services, where it is possible to pay a bus operator direct. Information on public transport routes is available through www.traveline.info

Rail/Bus passes and mileage reimbursements

49. Passes for public service routes are issued to students, based on the most cost effective provision of transport.
50. Where there is no public transport or where it is not practical to re-route an existing contracted vehicle, parents/carers or students may be able to claim mileage allowances for transport to and from school or college. However, this is at the Council's discretion and is based upon the most cost effective provision of transport. The subsidised rate is payable by students to whom mileage expenses are paid.

Replacement Bus Passes

51. Students are required to carry a bus pass on all occasions that they travel. Where a bus pass is lost a replacement must be obtained.
52. A handling charge will be made for a new pass to be issued as set out in the Council's Fees and Charges Policy. In addition the cost of a new pass provided by a bus company will be passed on to a student. Information on the cost of replacement bus passes will be provided when the original pass is issued.

Appeals

53. Where a parent, carer or student wishes to appeal a decision not to provide subsidised transport based on the appropriateness of course content, the 14 – 19 Strategy Group, a statutory group set up under Education and Skills Act 2008 section 85, will provide an independent view regarding the reasonableness of the choice made by the young person.
54. Appeals for any other reason will be managed through the Council complaints process.

Implementation and Monitoring of the policy

55. The Director of Children's Services will be responsible for the implementation of this policy through the development of internal processes that will ensure the ability to monitor take up of service and regular reviews for those in receipt of the service.

Appendix A: Free transport for families with a low income

1. Children from low income groups are defined in the Education and Inspections Act (2006) as those whose families are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC) or who are entitled to free school meals
2. Once a student has been assessed as being eligible for transport it will be provided free if the following criteria are met:

Maximum Working Tax Credit (WTC)

3. When a customer is first awarded tax credits, or following a change in their household circumstances, HM Revenue and Customs issue a “tax credits award notice” detailing the breakdown and amount of the award. Part two of the award notice gives details of “How we work out your tax credits” including details of the full WTC elements. This is the maximum amount a customer can receive in WTC in any year. It then lists “any reduction due to your income” and shows the net amount payable. It is therefore readily apparent from the award notice whether a person is receiving maximum WTC or a reduced sum due to income.

1

Benefit	Documentation required
Income Support (IS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter confirming receipt of benefit • Current GIRO payment which states ‘Inc. Supp.’ or similar abbreviation
Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter confirming receipt of benefit • Current GIRO payment which states ‘Inc. Supp.’ or similar abbreviation
Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (from the National Asylum Support	Letter of confirmation from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS)

¹ It is the Government’s intention to create a ‘universal benefit’ and remove all other benefits. At the point of implementation of any such legislation, this appendix and the associated criteria will be revised.

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by telephone: 0300 300 8000

by email: customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

on the web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Write to Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

Service)	
Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit	Pension Credit M1000 Award Notice
Child Tax Credit, provided a parent /carer is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and has an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) that does not exceed £16,190	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TC602 Tax Award Credit Notice – issued by HM Revenue and Customs • Letter from the local Revenues and Customs Office confirming tax credit details

Appendix B: Additional guidance on Subsidised Transport for Students with Special Educational Needs

Parental responsibilities

In all cases where free or subsidised transport is provided, parents/carers must make their own arrangements for the student to arrive at and be collected from the vehicle.

Parents/carers will be asked to allow the Council to use any specialist seating which the student requires. If this is not possible the Council will arrange for suitable seating to be provided.

If parents/carers choose to transport the student themselves when a place is available on existing transport arranged by the Council, then no mileage reimbursement will be payable by the Council.

Provision of transport for students with Special Educational Needs

The Council will endeavour to transport students in the shortest possible time and will investigate all possible alternatives if the travel time, one way, exceeds one hour and fifteen minutes. Where possible, adjustments will be made to transport arrangements to reduce travel time to less than one hour and fifteen minutes provided this can be achieved efficiently.

The timescale for arranging transport will be a maximum of 15 working days from receipt of the application. Where a change in transport arrangements is requested at least one week's notice must be given.

Residential placements

Contact us...

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by telephone: 0300 300 8000

by email: customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

on the web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Write to Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

Where a student attends a residential school or college, free or subsidised transport will be provided in accordance with the accommodation arrangements:

- a) Termly boarding
 - b) 12 day boarding
 - c) Weekly boarding
 - d) 52 week placement
- **termly boarding** – free or subsidised transport will be provided at the beginning and end of each term and at the beginning and end of the mid term holiday.
 - **12 day boarding** – free or subsidised transport will be provided on alternate weekends and at the beginning and end of each term.
 - **weekly boarding** – free or subsidised transport will be provided on Monday and Friday each week.
 - **52 week placement** – free or subsidised transport will be provided for three return journeys per year.
 - Any additional journeys will be the responsibility of the parent/carer.
 - In the interests of the efficient use of resources the council will, in all cases, encourage parents/carers to transport students for which mileage reimbursement will be made.
 - The cost of parent/carers attending one review per year at a school or college outside of the Central Bedfordshire area will be met by mileage reimbursement or by the provision of a travel warrant. No other additional costs (e.g. other members of the family, friends etc.) will be met by the Council.
 - One parent/carer may be transported with the student to act as an escort to out-county school or college where it results in the efficient use of the Council's resources.
 - Any additional transport requirements to those set out above will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer.

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Children Families and Learning

Home to School Transport Policy

Author(s):	Carol Wooding, Sue Reed
Date agreed:	Agreed by Executive on 9 March 2010
Agreed by (e.g. council):	
Date to be reviewed:	

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Introduction

1. Parents have a legal duty and a responsibility to ensure that their statutory aged children attend school regularly and to make any necessary arrangements to ensure that they attend.
2. In certain circumstances a Local Authority has a duty to provide transport. This document sets out Central Bedfordshire Council's Home to School Transport Policy and describes how the Council fulfils its duties and exercises its discretionary powers as required under the Education Act 1996 and subsequent amendments of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Principles

3. Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to providing free home to school transport to meet its statutory obligations.
4. The Council aims to provide equitable, safe, efficient and cost effective transport for pupils entitled to transport in accordance with its duties and powers as provided for in legislation.
5. Central Bedfordshire Council recognises that there are some children who do not meet the criteria for free home to school transport but who, nonetheless, would benefit from free home to school transport to enable them to access education and to achieve their potential.
6. Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to supporting sustainable modes of travel to school. As well as helping to boost children's fitness and concentration, walking and cycling helps to reduce the congestion caused by the journey to school, together with the associated accidents and pollution and carbon emissions.
7. Walking buses and bike trains help children walk or cycle to school safely with adult supervision. They are a sustainable alternative to transport by car, bus or train, and help keep children healthy.
8. If walking or cycling is not an option, school buses, public transport and car-sharing are more sustainable alternatives to taking the car.
9. The Council is committed to equality of opportunity and access to services and facilities and has undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment of this policy.
10. Parents remain responsible for ensuring their children are aware of what is acceptable behaviour from them before they board the vehicle in the morning, when they are travelling, and when they leave the school bus at the end of the school day. Parents are expected to make arrangements for their children to be accompanied by an appropriate person while walking to and from the vehicle pick up/drop off point, where they consider it necessary. Parents are expected to instruct their children to wear their seatbelts whenever these are provided.
11. Eligibility for transport will be reviewed regularly to ensure that those who are receiving transport are still eligible.
12. Information will be made accessible for parents and carers so that they are aware of their entitlement.
13. Take-up of the service will be monitored to ensure that access is fair and equitable and that hard to reach groups and those who are most vulnerable are aware of their entitlement.

Legislation and Guidance

14. Statutory guidance produced by the DFES in 2007 on Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance, derived from the Education Act 1996 as subsequently amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006, is used throughout this policy.
15. The policy links to the Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy.

Eligibility for Transport

16. Free transport is provided for all statutory age children who live in Central Bedfordshire and who attend their catchment area or nearest school, where the distance from home to school is over the statutory walking distance:
 - More than 2 miles from home for children aged under 8
 - More than 3 miles from home for children aged 8 and over.
17. The measurement of the "statutory walking distance" is not necessarily the shortest distance by road. It is measured by the shortest route along which a child, **accompanied as necessary**¹, may walk with reasonable safety. As such, the route measured may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads.
18. In addition, where children are in a family with a low income where there is additional entitlement:
 - Children aged 8 but under 11 must have travel arrangements made where they live more than 2 miles from their nearest qualifying² school by the shortest available walking route.
 - For children aged 11 and over free transport is provided in one of two ways:
 - to a choice of one of the three nearest qualifying schools, provided it is more than 2 miles by the shortest available walking route, but not more than 6 miles by motorised route from the child's home.
 - and also to the nearest suitable school preferred by reason of a parent's, or those with legal responsibilities, religion or belief, provided it is more than 2 miles by the shortest available walking route and not more than 15 miles by motorised route from home.
19. Families with a low income are defined as those children entitled to free school meals or whose family is in receipt of maximum working tax credit. There is currently additional Government funding to meet the cost of transport for these children.
20. Parental working commitment is not a criterion that will be considered in providing transport.

¹ Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance, DCSF, 2007 - para 47

² A qualifying school is defined as a community, foundation or voluntary school; community or foundation special school, non-maintained special school; pupil referral unit or maintained nursery school, with places available that provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special educational needs that the child may have

Suitability of arrangements

21. A local authority must ensure that travel arrangements are “suitable”. The suitability of arrangements will depend on a number of factors. Best practice guidance is set out in the Department for Education and Skills “Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance”, 2007. This includes enabling children to reach school without stress, strain, or difficulty and in reasonable safety and comfort. The criteria identified in the best practice guidance will be applied to ensure provision is suitable.

Transport on grounds of road safety considerations

22. Where children live within the statutory walking distance of their catchment or nearest school, the local authority has to ensure that it is possible for them to walk to school, accompanied by a responsible adult if necessary. Where this is not possible, because the route to school is not safe, the local authority has to make arrangements for free transport.
23. In assessing the comparative safety of a route, the Council will conduct an assessment of the risks a child might encounter along the prescribed route using the national guidelines: “Identification of Hazards and the Assessment of Risk of Walked Routes to School”. The national guidelines will be used for all new assessments from 1st April 2010.
24. Existing routes, previously assessed using the outdated criteria, will be reassessed using the above national guidelines and may result in changes to current entitlement to free home to school transport on road safety grounds.
25. Assessments will feed into the Council’s duty relating to sustainable school travel, and may inform the Council’s plans for upgrading the highway infrastructure, supporting sustainable school travel.

Transport to a faith school on grounds of the parent’s religion

26. In considering entitlement to free transport a council has to take in to account any wish of a parent for their child to be provided with education or training at a particular school or institution on grounds of the parents’ religion or belief. There is no statutory entitlement to such transport, as attendance at a denominational school is through parental choice. Parents sending their children to a school on the grounds of their religion will not be given free transport as an entitlement. However, in line with legislation, children over the age of 11 who attend a denominational school on the grounds of the parents’ religion or belief who also meet the low income criteria, will be entitled to free transport where the closest school is between 2 and 15 miles.

Children who are currently attending faith schools through parental choice and who are receiving free transport from home to school through the former Bedfordshire County Council policy will no longer receive free transport from September 2010.

Transport for permanently excluded pupils

27. Where a pupil has been permanently excluded from school the pupil is first allocated a place in the Pupil Referral Unit and is then allocated a new school place through a process called the In Year Fair Access Protocol. Where a new school is allocated in this way a child will be entitled to transport to the new school as long as the 2 or 3 mile distance criteria or road safety criteria are met. All requests for transport inside the statutory distance will be referred to the Director of Children’s Services or nominee for consideration against criteria which will be agreed with the Schools Forum on an annual basis.

Transport on grounds of medical needs

28. Where a child attends their catchment area or nearest school, transport is currently considered on medical grounds irrespective of distance between home and school. The medical condition can be temporary or long term and each application is considered on an individual basis. An application for transport has to be supported by a GP or consultant. Cases agreed will be subject to regular rigorous review.

Transport for pupils moving schools in years 10 and 11

29. Sometimes families and children, through no choice of their own, experience serious disruption in their home circumstances. This can cause particular difficulty for a child in their GCSE examination years if they have to move address and are not able to remain at their previous school where they have started a course of study. This does not apply to planned moves, where parents are making a choice to move to a new area.
30. In order to help children achieve their full potential and to succeed in their GCSE examinations, where a child who is attending school in Central Bedfordshire in years 10 and 11 has to move in exceptional circumstances to a new address in Central Bedfordshire they will be provided with transport from their new address to their previous school, as long as they have completed at least one term in year 10 at their previous school. Exceptional circumstances will be defined ; for example death of a parent, move from family home because of family issues such as repossession, family violence .

Transport for Looked After Children, Refugees and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

31. Whilst representing only a very small number of the total school population, Looked After Children, Refugees and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children can be some of the most vulnerable children in need of support. School places are identified that can best meet a child's individual needs. The school will not always be the nearest school to their home address.
32. Looked After Children, Refugees and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children will be supported with transport, if required, to attend schools that best meet their needs. This may mean that transport will be provided to schools where the 2 or 3 mile distance criteria or road safety criteria are not met.

Transport for children with Special Educational Needs

33. Children with Special Educational Needs are entitled to assistance with transport where the normal distance criteria apply. Transport is not automatically provided because a child has a statement of special educational needs.
34. The Council recognises that some children with special educational needs may not be able to walk even relatively short distances to school. However others may, with appropriate support, be able to walk or use alternative ways of getting to school.
35. Transport needs for a child with special educational needs will be assessed as part of the Statutory Assessment Process. The most appropriate mode of travel will be agreed as part of the Statutory Assessment.

36. For those children who live more than the statutory distance between home and the nearest school that can meet their needs, transport will be provided free of charge.
37. For those children who live within the statutory distance the Assessment will include consideration of whether, accompanied as necessary, a child could reasonably be expected to walk to school. Where this is not possible, the need for transport will be included in a child's Statement of Special Educational Need and transport will be provided free of charge.
38. Entitlement to transport agreed in this way will be subject to rigorous annual review and at transition.
39. From April 2010 a travel training programme to support those children who are physically able to walk, to travel to school more independently and to support transition to adult life will be introduced.
40. The Council will make suitable travel arrangements for children with SEN, a disability, or mobility problem if their SEN, disability, or mobility problem means that they could not reasonably be expected to walk to the school.
41. It should be noted that the Council will consider transport to the nearest suitable school. If by parental preference a more distant school is named in the child's statement but in the Authority's view the child's needs could be suitably met at a nearer school, transport will be the responsibility of the parent.
42. Transport to schools for children with moderate learning difficulties will usually be arranged on a localised pick-up point basis if this is assessed as appropriate and this is clearly identified in Part 6 of the child's Statement of Special Educational Need. For all other children the pick-up and drop-off point will be as close as possible to the address at which they usually live.
43. Pupils who attend special schools often take part in integration programmes with mainstream schools. Pupils are expected to attend their local catchment area or nearest school to enable the parent/carer to make their own arrangements to take or collect the child.
44. If parents move home within Central Bedfordshire during the Academic Year, transport will continue to be available to the current school until the end of the Academic Year. The child should be transferred to the nearest appropriate school to the new address from no later than the beginning of the next Academic Year. However, if parents wish their child to attend the original school, transport becomes their responsibility.

Concessionary Places on School Contract Vehicles

45. The Council is committed to supporting children to access school. Where children are not entitled to free transport, parents can buy a pass for any spare seats on a school contract vehicle once those entitled have been allocated a place. Passes can be bought for one term at a time and are allocated on a first come first served basis. This does not apply to routes that are public registered services where children pay the bus company direct.
46. Where pupils live within the statutory walking distance or do not otherwise qualify for free transport, a charge may be made for "spare seats" in the school bus provided the route is operated on a contract basis. Charges for concessionary spaces are:
 - a) charged on a termly basis.

- b) free for children entitled to free school meals, or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit
 - c) revised annually by the Council for the new financial year, with new charges to come into effect for the Summer Term each year.
 - d) issued on a first come first served basis where demand for places exceeds availability.
 - e) fixed at the termly rate. No pro-rata reductions are available for part week travel or single daily journeys or where for operational reasons, delays may occur in the issue of passes.
47. Concessionary passes are not available on routes registered as public service routes.
48. The provision of a free concessionary pass will be based on the same benefit criteria as for families entitled to free transport on low income grounds. This will mean that certain families in receipt of working tax credit, but not at the maximum rate, who have previously received such passes free of charges, will in future, be required to pay.

Additional considerations

49. Pupils who live in a joint home arrangement, who fulfil the other criteria for free transport, will be provided with transport from the primary home address registered with their school.
50. Pupils may be required to walk up to one mile from home to the pickup point and, where pupils use public service routes, they may be required to walk up to one mile from the setting-down point to the school.
51. Pupils aged eight years of age who are entitled to receive free transport under the distance criteria will continue to receive free transport until the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of eight.
52. In determining entitlement to free transport, the route used in assessing the distance is the shortest available walking route. Measurement will commence at the gate of the pupil's home to the nearest pedestrian gate on the school site.
53. Where pupils receive free home-to-school transport as a result of errors in measurement, the transport will be withdrawn at the end of the academic year during which the error is discovered.
54. Smoking is prohibited on all Council owned vehicles when used for the transportation of school children and is a condition of hire of contractors' vehicles.
55. All vehicles with up to 16 passenger seats supplied by contractors are required to have a forward facing seat and must be fitted with a three point seatbelt for each child.

Parents/Carers with disability

56. The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people and to eliminate discrimination.
57. Where walking children to school relies on disabled parents accompanying their children along a walking route for it to be considered safe, and where the parents' disability prevents them from doing so, in such circumstances, the Council will make reasonable adjustments. A reasonable adjustment may be to provide free home to

school transport. Medical evidence will need to be provided from their consultant or GP. Cases agreed will be subject to regular rigorous review.

58. This scheme only applies to primary school children as secondary aged pupils are expected to travel to school without being accompanied by an adult.

Rail/Bus passes and mileage reimbursements

59. Rail passes and season tickets for public service routes can be issued to pupils, based on the most cost effective provision of transport.
60. Where there is no public transport or where it is not practical to re-route an existing contracted vehicle, parents may be able to claim mileage allowances for transport to and from school. However, this is at the Council's discretion and is based upon the most cost effective provision of transport.

Single sex schools

61. Transport to single sex schools will not be supported unless the school concerned is the catchment area or nearest school, where the usual transport criteria will apply.
62. Similarly, if the catchment area or closest school is a **single** sex establishment, transport will not be provided to enable the child to attend a mixed school.

Escorts

63. Escorts will usually only be provided on vehicles with more than 16 seats which transport only lower school pupils.
64. On all other routes the responsibility for the introduction of escorts on a temporary or permanent basis, is delegated to officers.

Individual Requests for Discretionary Transport

65. Applications for assistance from parents of children receiving nursery education in line with the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 may be made to the Director of Children's Services.
66. Where parents/carers are dissatisfied with the way their application for transport has been processed they will be asked to follow the Central Bedfordshire Council complaints procedure.

Implementation and Monitoring of the policy

67. The Children Families and Learning Commissioning Team will be responsible for the implementation of this policy through the development of their internal processes that will ensure the ability to monitor take up of service and regular reviews for those in receipt of the service. Data produced by the team will be regularly reviewed and monitored within the Children, Families and Learning Directorate's senior management team.

Appendix A - Low Income Groups

Children entitled to free school meals, or whose parents are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit – primary and secondary age groups

Children from low income groups are defined in the Act as those who are entitled to free school meals, or those whose families are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC).

Determining whether parents are receiving maximum Working Tax Credit (WTC)

When a customer is first awarded tax credits, or following a change in their household circumstances, HM Revenue and Customs issue a “tax credits award notice” detailing the breakdown and amount of the award. Part two of the award notice gives details of “How we work out your tax credits” including details of the full WTC elements. This is the maximum amount a customer can receive in WTC in any year. It then lists “any reduction due to your income” and shows the net amount payable. It is therefore readily apparent from the award notice whether a person is receiving maximum WTC or a reduced sum due to income.

Primary age

Regardless of the level of family income, children of compulsory school age, but under the age of eight are entitled to free travel arrangements to their nearest qualifying school more than two miles from their home. In addition, children aged eight, but under age 11 from low income families must have travel arrangements made where they live more than two miles from their nearest qualifying school.

This two mile limit should be measured in the same way as the “statutory walking distance”.

Children of compulsory school age who are 11 or over

One of the aims of the new school travel legislation is to secure fair access to schools, especially for children from low income groups, where lack of affordable transport can act as a barrier to choice. The Act extends rights to free transport for all children from low income groups of compulsory school age who are 11 or over in two ways: to a choice of schools within six miles of the child’s home, and to the nearest school preferred by reason of a parent’s religion or belief up to a maximum of 15 miles from the child’s home.

Children of compulsory school age who are 11 or over from low income families must have travel arrangements made to one of their three nearest qualifying schools (or places other than a school at which they might receive education under section 19(1) of the Act), where they live more than two miles, but not more than six miles from that school.

Appendix B

Additional guidance on Transport for Children with Special Educational Needs

Parental responsibilities

68. In all cases where transport is provided, parents/carers must make their own arrangements to take the child from their home to the vehicle and collecting the child from the vehicle.
69. Parents will be asked to allow the Council to use any specialist seating which their child requires. If this is not possible the Council will arrange for suitable seating to be provided.
70. If parents choose to send their child to a school other than the nearest appropriate school, transport will become their own responsibility. If space is available on an existing route, the child can be offered a place on a concessionary basis. Such transport can only be offered if space is available. This will be reviewed termly and may be withdrawn if additional entitled children require transport on the route.
71. If parents/carers choose to transport their child themselves when a place is available on existing transport arranged by the Council, then no mileage reimbursement will be payable by the Council.

Provision of transport for children with Special Educational Needs

72. The Council will endeavour to transport children in the shortest possible time and will investigate all possible alternatives if the travel time, one way, exceeds one hour and fifteen minutes. Where possible, adjustments will be made to transport arrangements to reduce travel time to less than one hour and fifteen minutes provided this can be achieved without a significant increase in transport costs.
73. The timescale for arranging transport will be a maximum of 15 working days from receipt of the application.

Escorts for children with Special Educational Needs

74. An escort will be provided on all coach and mini bus routes where children are being transported to a Special School. Consideration will be given to providing additional escorts, when requested by the school/unit or contractors, on the grounds of driver safety, medical, physical or behavioural needs.
75. The Council will endeavour to transport children in the shortest possible time and will investigate all possible alternatives if the travel time, one way, exceeds one hour and fifteen minutes. Where possible, adjustments will be made to transport arrangements to reduce travel time to less than one hour and fifteen minutes provided this can be achieved without a significant increase in transport costs.
76. The timescale for arranging transport will be a maximum of 15 working days from receipt of the application.

Residential placements

77. Where a child is placed in a residential school following a judicial review or SEN Tribunal, free transport will be provided in accordance with those specific arrangements.
78. Boarding arrangements for residential schools can be one of the following:-
 - a) Termly boarding
 - b) 12 day boarding

- c) Weekly boarding
- d) 52 week placement

79. With regard to termly boarding, school transport will only be provided at the beginning and end of each term and at the beginning and end of the mid term holiday.
80. With regard to 12 day boarding, transport will be provided on alternate weekends and at the beginning and end of each term.
81. With regard to weekly boarding, transport will be provided to school on Monday and from school on Friday each week.
82. For those few students who require 52 week placement, the Council will provide transport up to a maximum of three journeys per year.
83. For all boarding arrangements, any additional journey to those laid out above will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer.
84. In the interests of the efficient use of resources the council will, in all cases, encourage parents to transport their own child for which appropriate reimbursement will be made.
85. The cost of parents attending one statement review per year at out-county schools will be met by the Council by reimbursement, at the appropriate rate of car mileage or by the provision of a travel warrant. No other additional costs (e.g. other members of the family, friends etc.) will be met by the Council.
86. One parent/carer may be transported with the child to act as an escort to out-county schools where it results in the efficient use of the council's resources.
87. Any additional transport requirements to those mentioned above will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer.

Meeting: Schools Forum

Date: 28 November 2011

Subject: 14–19 Practical Learning

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children’s Services

Summary: To ask the Forum to note the contents of this update and the proposal to continue with the present 14–19 funding arrangements for 2012/13 due to the potential risks to provision arising from changes to funding.

Contact Officer: David Bray, Learning Services
Watling House, Dunstable

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

Reason for urgency
(if appropriate)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That the current arrangement is maintained for 2012/13 acknowledging the amount of top slice will be reduced in line with the number of maintained schools.**

Background

1. The 14 – 19 practical learning funding has been used by the 14 – 19 partnership to support around 750 learners who are taking practical courses that meet their needs and interests and which cannot be delivered easily by schools. These courses include practical and vocational options delivered by FE Colleges and other providers and many require specialist facilities, staffing or other provision.

The School’s Forum in June 2009 resolved that the 14 - 19 Strategic Partnership should hold the relevant 'top slice' of DSG (£555,818 11/12) and Diploma Funding Grant (£160,335 11/12) which was to mitigate against the risk that students might not be able to carry on with courses already started or have the option to take new courses.

Update

2. The relevant funding for Academies comes directly from Central Government and falls outside this arrangement. Academies are responsible for funding all provision that they access from their own budget (received directly from the YPLA).

3. The practical learning courses provided are determined by schools. LA schools receive a proportion of the practical learning funding whilst they are LA maintained. The proportion is based on a formula which takes into account the number of students in Key Stage 4. Once the funding is allocated to schools the provider is responsible for all costs associated with course delivery, including transport costs.
4. Funding is passported to school budgets every month. This is a change from the previous policy which sought to shape the co-ordination of planning and delivery and to bring economies of scale to bear (in line with government policy at the time). This change reflects the change in policy of the coalition government which wishes to see an open and competitive market for course provision, rather than central planning. For this reason funding is now allocated directly to schools for allocation as decided by each provider. There is therefore no mechanism that would enable a report back to the School's Forum on the impact of this funding.
5. The process of overall strategic direction for 14–19 provision, including the requirement to raise the participation age (RPA) is managed through the 14–19 Strategy Group. This is chaired by a provider on a rotating basis and is currently chaired by the Chief Executive of Central Bedfordshire College. An operational group supporting delivery is chaired by a provider (currently Redborne Upper School).
4. The benefits of the practical learning provision are:
 - Increased attendance and enjoyment for up to 750 young people
 - Higher attainment and enjoyment through access to courses that meet their needs
 - Local employers are likely to receive young people who they can employ
 - Young people will be better ready for work and less likely to become NEET (not in education training or employment – particularly important within a challenging economic climate)

Appendices:

None

Meeting: Schools Forum
Date: 28 November 2011
Subject: Schools Specific Contingency Budget
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
Summary: To provide an update on the Schools Specific Contingency Budget for 2011/12 and to propose a further distribution of unspent funds.

Contact Officer: Dawn Hill, Technology House, Bedford

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

Reason for urgency
(if appropriate)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. To note the School Specific Contingency position statement as at 31 October 2011.**
- 2. To propose an additional £20 per statutory pupil registered on the January 2011 census be transferred to Schools.**

Background

1. The Schools Specific Contingency Budget falls under Schedule 2 of The School Finance Regulations 2008. 'Classes or descriptions of planned expenditure prescribed for the purposes of the Schools budget of a Local Authority which may be deducted from it to determine the Individual Schools Budget' (top slice Direct Schools Grant – DSG).
2. At the Central Bedfordshire School Forum on 7th March 2011, the following budgets were agreed:
 - £500,000 General Contingency plus a further £1,000,000 in anticipation of the cost of redundancies in schools during 2011/12.
 - £275,670 SEN Contingency.

Total Budget agreed for 2011/12 is £1,775,670.

3. The School Contingency carry forward from 2010/11, as at 31st March 2011 was £1,061,547 which is split into General (£845,708) and SEN Contingency (£215,839).

4. The General Contingency budget can be utilised to fund the following:
- Rent and Joint Use equalisation charges;
 - Rates adjustments that have arisen from re-valuations or an adjustment to original formula;
 - Lease/planning permission associated with curriculum classes;
 - Adjustment to Formula i.e. floor area, teacher threshold, NQT, additional pupil numbers;
 - DSG shortfall;
 - Closing Schools;
 - Redundancy costs where applicable
 - Funding of exceptional circumstances, the Director of Children's Services can authorise sums up to £10,000 in respect of any one school in a financial year.

General Contingency Expenditure to Date

5. It was resolved at the School Forum meeting of the 19th September 2011 that:-
- DSG received from Bedford Borough for sole registered PRU pupils would be transferred to the Central PRU Budget
 - An additional £25 per statutory pupil be transferred to Schools
6. The following table sets out the expenditure to date against the General contingency.

	BUDGET £	SPEND £	BALANCE £
Carry Forward from 2010/11	845,708		
Budget Allocation 2011/12	1,500,000		
Floor Area Adjustments		(10,092)	
Rent Adjustments		(2,309)	
Rates Adjustments		(13,976)	
Lump Sum		(7,915)	
ISB Adjustments		(642,946)	
EYSFF		(161,609)	
Admissions		(665)	
Early Years Extended Offer		373,607	
Redundancy		(336,639)	
Misc		43,355	
Total General Contingency	2,345,708	(759,189)	1,586,519

6. The detail on the spend is as follows -
- Floor Area adjustments to the initial allocation of SBS.
 - Equalisation of Rental costs
 - Rates adjustments that have arisen from revaluations/ rates relief.
 - Lump sum adjustment as agreed by School Forum for St Vincent School
 - Individual School Budget Adjustments
 - Adjustment to allocation of Early Years Funding based on May headcount
 - Admissions responsibilities
 - Funding of the Early Years extended offer for 3 and 4 year olds funded by Standards Funds

- Redundancy payments
 - Miscellaneous credits bank interest, accruals, closed cost centres
7. Expected commitments to end of financial year; redundancies approx £520K, EYSFF (Schools and PVI) £150K, Adjustments to AWPU October census £165K, Rent and Rates equalisation at year end.

SEN Contingency Expenditure to Date

8. The SEN Contingency has been agreed to fund :
- A growth in Behavioural Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) provision
 - Revised formula for Special Schools
 - Additional and alternative models of specialist provision within mainstream schools
 - Additional support to mainstream schools:-
 - i. Specialist support services and BESD services
 - ii. Special Schools Outreach
 - iii. Commissioned support
9. It was resolved at the School Forum meeting of the 19th September 2011 that the balance of SEN Contingency would be set aside to contribute to the cost of Central Bedfordshire children attending other Local Authority schools for 2011/12.
10. The following table sets out the expenditure to date against the SEN contingency.

	BUDGET £	SPEND £	BALANCE £
Carry Forward from 2010/11	215,839		
Budget Allocation 2011/12	275,670		
Out of County Placements		(200,000)	
Outreach		(74,676)	
Total SEN Contingency	491,509	(274,676)	216,833

11. Expected commitments to the end of financial year include Outreach schools £128K, Language Provision £20K, Down's Syndrome £7K.
12. The budget will be fully spent by the end of the financial year.

Recommendations

1. To propose an additional £20 per statutory pupil registered on the January 2011 census in Maintained Schools as at 1 December (26,436) be transferred to Schools (£529K) as a one off adjustment for 2011/12.

Appendices:

None

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Meeting: Schools Forum
Date: 28 November 2011
Subject: Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children Services
Summary: To provide an update on the new SFVS, the replacement to the Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS).

Contact Officer: Dawn Hill, Technology House, Bedford

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

Reason for urgency
(if appropriate)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. To note the update on the Schools Financial Value Standard.**

Background

1. The Financial Management Standard in Schools was introduced by the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in the early 2000s. This was followed in 2007 by a directed revision to Local Authorities Scheme for Financing Schools requiring all schools to meet the Standard by March 2010.
2. The objective of the Standard was to help schools evaluate the quality of their financial management and to train staff to become good financial managers. Achievement of the standard demonstrated that the school was financially well managed. All maintained schools had to comply with FMSiS in line with a timetable determined by the Local Authority and published in the Scheme for Financing Schools.
3. Compliance would be demonstrated by the submission of a portfolio of evidence every three years, which would be externally assessed. The Local Authority commissioned their Internal Audit Department to carry out these assessments, supported by the Schools' Bursary Service.
4. Schools, particularly primary schools, found the system too burdensome and felt that this did not add value to the school.

5. In 2009 the Audit Commission carried out a review and found that the FMSiS focused on processes rather than achievement of economy and efficiency, and that schools have not drawn an explicit link between its introduction and value for money. Therefore the Government worked with interested parties, including local authorities and schools, to develop a new, simpler way of doing this.
6. With effect from 15th November 2010, FMSiS was withdrawn by the Secretary of State and Schemes were subsequently amended removing the requirement on schools to meet the standard. It was also announced that it would be replaced by a new simpler standard during 2011.

Update

7. The Department for Education on the 14th September 2011 made available to schools the new Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS).
8. Maintained schools are required to complete the SFVS once a year by way of a self assessment, a series of 23 questions which governing bodies should formally discuss annually with the Headteacher and Senior Staff.
9. Those Schools that have not attained the FMSiS by March 2010 must complete and submit the SFVS to the local authority by 31st March 2012. Central Bedfordshire has twenty schools that meet this criteria and the schools have been advised of this requirement.
10. For all other maintained schools, the self assessment is required by 31st March 2013 with an annual review thereafter.
11. The DfE intends to make the SFVS mandatory following the passing of the Education Bill which contains a clause restoring the Secretary of State's power to make directed revisions to LA's Scheme for Financing Schools. The DfE are expecting to consult as soon as is practical on a directed revision which will add SFVS as a requirement to the Scheme.
12. The Chief Finance Officer must sign a statement annually confirming the actual deployment of the Dedicated Schools Grant in support of the Schools Budget. With the introduction of the SFVS this statement is now amended to include the confirmation that a system is in place which gives adequate assurance over schools standards of financial management and the regularity and propriety of their spending. The number of signed SFVS from Chairs of governors is required to be inserted.

Appendices:

Appendix A – SFVS Summary of Questions

School name:

LA and school DfE numbers:

LIST OF QUESTIONS	ANSWER (Yes/In Part/No)	COMMENTS, EVIDENCE AND PROPOSED ACTIONS
A: The Governing Body and School Staff		
1. In the view of the governing body itself and of senior staff, does the governing body have adequate financial skills among its members to fulfil its role of challenge and support in the field of budget management and value for money?		
2. Does the governing body have a finance committee (or equivalent) with clear terms of reference and a knowledgeable and experienced chair		
3. Is there a clear definition of the relative responsibilities of the governing body and the school staff in the financial field?		
4. Does the governing body receive clear and concise monitoring reports of the school's budget position at least three times a year?		
5. Are business interests of governing body members and staff properly registered and taken into account so as to avoid conflicts of interest?		
6. Does the school have access to an adequate level of financial expertise, including when specialist finance staff are absent, eg on sick leave?		
7. Does the school review its staffing structure regularly?		
B: Setting the Budget		
8. Is there a clear and demonstrable link between the school's budgeting and its plan for raising standards and attainment?		
9. Does the school make a forward projection of budget, including both revenue and capital funds, for at least three years, using the best available information?		

10. Does the school set a well-informed and balanced budget each year (with an agreed and timed plan for eliminating any deficit)?		
11. Is end year outturn in line with budget projections, or if not, is the governing body alerted to significant variations in a timely manner, and do they result from explicitly planned changes or from genuinely unforeseeable circumstances?		
C: Value for Money		
12. Does the school benchmark its income and expenditure annually against that of similar schools and investigate further where any category appears to be out of line?		
13. Does the school have procedures for purchasing goods and services that both meet legal requirements and secure value for money?		
14. Are balances at a reasonable level and does the school have a clear plan for using the money it plans to hold in balances at the end of each year?		
15. Does the school maintain its premises and other assets to an adequate standard to avoid future urgent need for replacement?		
16. Does the school consider collaboration with others, eg on sharing staff or joint purchasing, where that would improve value for money?		
17. Can the school give examples of where it has improved the use of resources during the past year?		
D: Protecting Public Money		
18. Is the governing body sure that there are no outstanding matters from audit reports or from previous consideration of weaknesses by the governing body?		
19. Are there adequate arrangements in place to guard against fraud and theft by staff, contractors and suppliers (please note any instance of fraud or theft detected in the last 12 months)?		
20. Are all staff aware of the school’s whistleblowing policy and to whom they should report concerns?		
21. Does the school have an accounting system that is adequate and properly run and delivers accurate reports, including the annual Consistent Financial Reporting return?		
22. Does the school have adequate arrangements for audit of voluntary funds?		
23. Does the school have an appropriate business continuity or disaster recovery plan, including an up-to-date asset register and adequate insurance?		

Meeting: Schools Forum
Date: 28 November 2011
Subject: Update on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and School Funding Reform
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
Summary: To note the update on the DSG and School Funding Reform

Contact Officer: Dawn Hill, Technology House

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

Reason for urgency
(if appropriate)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. To note the update on the DSG and School Funding Reform.**

Background

1. Since the beginning of the financial year 2006/07 local authorities have received allocations of DSG to finance the Schools Budget in each authority. The full DSG received must be applied to the Schools Budget in each authority, although authorities may provide additional resources in support of the Schools Budget should they decide to do so.
2. The Schools Budgets, as set out in the Statutory Section 251 budget, comprises the following:
 - a) Individual Schools Budgets (ISB), delegated to individual schools, by phase (also known as School Budget Shares). These allocations are delegated via the local Fair Funding Formula, which the Local Authority (LA) sets, in conjunction with its Schools' Forum.
 - b) Central Expenditure. This is the amount held back centrally for expenditure on pupils and includes:
 - Expenditure to fund Nursery Education in non-maintained settings (Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector)
 - School Specific Contingency
 - Special Education Needs - provision for statemented pupils, pupil referral units, behaviour support units
 - Termination of Employment costs

3. Central expenditure must not increase as a proportion of the overall Schools Budget. This mechanism is known as the Central Expenditure Limit (CEL) and can only be breached in exceptional circumstances and with the specific approval of the Schools' Forum. In the case of Schools' Forum refusal the LA can ask the Secretary for State to approve the breach. The final Schools' Budget depends on the January PLASC count and is determined by the units of funding (no of pupils - FTE) multiplied by the Guaranteed Unit of Funding (GUF).
4. The Chief Finance Officer (CFO), must sign two statements annually: the Actual deployment (out-turn) and Budgeted Allocation of the DSG, confirming that it has been fully deployed in support of the School's Budget in accordance with the condition of the grant and the School Finance Regulations.

Deployment of DSG 2011/12

5. The budget allocation of the DSG for 2011/12 is the full time equivalent (FTE) number of pupils as at Jan 11 of 37,044 multiplied by the GUF £4,658 to give £172.555M. This amount is adjusted for Academies which open in 2008 to 2012 as at September 2011, revising the allocation to £147,541M. The allocation is continually revised as Schools convert to academy status during the financial year. The table below represents the distribution of the final DSG based on current number of academies as at end of October 2011.

DSG	Academies 2008/12	Revised DSG	Academies Oct	Individual Schools Budgets	Central Spend	Headroom
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	ISB					
172,555	25,014	147,541	168	135,129	11,515	729

6. Academies receive a Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG) deducted from the DSG for those services that are the responsibility of the Academy but are retained centrally e.g. behaviour support, practical learning etc. it was agreed by School Forum meeting of the 7th March 2011 that the cost of LACSEG up to a £1M would be funded by Headroom for 2011/12. Any amount over this cumulative sum would be brought back to the Forum.
7. The LACSEG deductions attributable to 15 converted schools as at October 2011 is £440K. It is anticipated that a further 21 schools will convert by the end of this financial year, requiring a further £183K from Headroom leaving an estimated balance of £546K.

Consultation on School Funding Reform

8. On 19th July 2011 the Department for Education (DfE) launched a Consultation on school funding arrangements. The consultation considered revising the current methodology for allocating some £35bn of annual school revenue funding across 151 Local Authorities through the Dedicated Schools Grant. The consultation closed on the 11th October 2011. Although the consultation proposed no changes to the 2012/2013 methodology for funding Local Authorities it did give a clear steer as to the direction of travel. Pupil Premium will continue, and is outside the DSG arrangements.
9. Two sessions were organised and both School Forum members and Officers were invited to attend. Each of the 47 questions asked in the Consultation were debated before formulating a response. Both the LA and Schools Forum responded to the consultation.
10. The consultation did strongly suggest that the formula used to allocate funding to both the LA and Schools must be more simplistic and easy to calculate. The School Finance Regulations prescribes the factors that are currently allowed to be used for allocating funding to schools, however, Local authorities in consultation with School Forums have flexibility in deciding how and which of these are used. The DfE believes that there is scope to reduce this list of factors to provide greater consistency in funding across the country and to limit the degree to which local authorities can diverge from the national formula. The proposed list of factors only include the five elements below :
 - Basic entitlement per pupil (currently Age-Weighted Pupil Units)
 - Funding for additional educational needs (e.g. deprivation, SEN, EAL)
 - Rates
 - Exceptional site factors (e.g. split site, PFI and rent)
 - Lump sums for schools
11. School Forum members were in agreement with the proposed reduction to formula factors. It was acknowledged that this would simplify the local formula and enable schools to calculate with some accuracy their own allocation of funding. It was agreed that this should be done in phases as it was accepted that there would be 'winners' and 'losers' as the DSG is a finite source of funding. Officers were requested to model the reduction of formula factors and this was presented to members at the second session on the 30th September. **Appendix A.**
12. Members at the session proposed Model 2a to be implemented for Lower Schools and Model 2 for Uppers. Officers were requested to model a lump sum for Middle Schools as although the consultation proposed a lump sum to only schools with no higher than a year group 6, it did not take account of those LA's that still have a three tier system. Middle Schools were not represented at this meeting and it was agreed following the further modelling, officers would seek the views of Middle School representatives.
13. Proposals for the 12/13 distribution will be brought back to the next meeting in January 2012.

Pupil Premium

14. On 12 October 2011 the Department for Education announced that this year's Pupil Premium for disadvantaged pupils has been increased from £430 to £488; an additional £58 per pupil. The money has been released because fewer children than expected have registered for Free School Meals and fulfils the Government's commitment to allocate £625m to the pupil premium this year. Children who have been looked after by local authorities for more than six months will also qualify for the Pupil Premium at the higher rate. The funding premium for children of service families will remain at £200 per pupil for 2011/12.

Consultation on School Finance (England) Regulations 2012

15. On 11 October 2011 the DfE launched a consultation on the new School Finance (England) Regulations 2012, which included the Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) disapplications, Pupil Premium for excluded pupils and Remissions of boarding fees. The consultation ended on Friday, 11th November 2011.
16. Individual school's budgets are subject to a Minimum Funding Guarantee. It is based on the current year's budget as allocated at the start of the year with a fixed percentage uplift, adjusted for changes in pupil numbers and a limited number of exempt items. Formula factors exempt from MFG calculation are:
 - YPLA funding
 - Rates
 - Individual named pupils allocation
 - Infant class size allocation
 - Newly qualified Teachers (NQT)
 - Other: Insurance Pupil Led and Lump sum, Hearing Impaired unit,
17. The MFG protection for the period 2008/09 – 2010/11 was set at 2.1%. However for 2011/12 the protection was set at a **negative 1.5%** for all schools with exception of Nursery and Special Schools. For Nursery and Special Schools the LA in consultation with Schools Forum agreed 1% for Nurseries and negative 1.5% for Special Schools. For maintained primary and secondary schools the LA uses the MFG calculator published by the DfE.
18. MFG disapplication - In 2011/12 LAs could apply to the Secretary of State for further exclusions than those items listed in paragraph 15. Central Bedfordshire did not request any such disapplication. Where a factor is disappplied the school is not protected against any changes in the amount allocated through that factor. Although the MFG level for 2012/13 has not yet been announced, the DfE intend that disapplication could be agreed locally, subject to schools forum approval where the Secretary of State had agreed these unconditionally in 2011/12 and relate to factors were disapplications were consistently approved in 2011/12.
19. The consultation seeks views on the proposed MFG disapplications, Pupil Premium for excluded pupils following the pupil and the Remission of Boarding Fees being an allowable category of central expenditure within the central schools budget.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Modelling of Formula Factors

Assumptions:

The pupil numbers in all Options are based on the January 2011 PLASC data. Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) is calculated using the same calculator and assumptions used in calculating the 11/12 actual MFG. This may be subject to change in 2012/13.

The “pot” for all phases is kept the same for each option.

Caddington Village School and Fairfield Park are excluded from the direct comparison as individual factors applied in 2011/12.

For Upper Schools the Young People’s Learning Agency (YPLA) funding is assumed at the same level as 2011/12 actual.

Early Years Single Funding Formula and Special Schools funding will not change.

All funds reallocated to AWPU or lump sum for Lower and Middle.

There are three Models, each one increasing the number of factors removed until only five factors remain in line with the DfE proposals in the Consultation paper.

There are variations in Model 2 for Lower and Middles to take account of a *Lump Sum* factor.

Model 1.

Factors removed and added to the AWPU:

- Mainstreamed Grants
- Teachers Threshold
- Newly Qualified teachers (NQT)

	Lowers	Middles	Uppers
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Highest increase	44	95	28
Highest decrease	30	53	60
MFG increase	739	164	50

Model 2.

Factors removed and added to the AWPU:

- Mainstreamed Grants
- Teachers Threshold
- Newly Qualified teachers (NQT)
- Formula Funding Lump Sum
- Insurance Lump Sum
- Schools Meals Lump Sum

For Lower Schools Model 2 assumes no lump sum and Model 2a a lump sum factor of £95k.

For Middle Schools Model 2 assumes no lump sum, Model 2a a lump sum of £47,500 and Model 2b a lump sum of £40,000. The lump sum for middle schools is included to take account of year groups 5 and 6.

	Lowers		Middles			Uppers
		a		a	b	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Highest increase	66	21	74	52	54	63
Highest decrease	59	31	84	59	61	63
MFG increase	1,911	14	169	133	136	114

Model 3

Factors removed and added to the AWPU:

- Mainstreamed Grants
- Teachers Threshold
- Newly Qualified teachers (NQT)
- Formula Funding Lump Sum
- Insurance Lump Sum
- Schools Meals Lump Sum
- Addition Summer Intake Funding (Lowers only)
- Admissions
- Free School Meals
- Infant Class Size (Lowers only)
- Personalisation
- School Meals
- Small School protection (Lowers & Middles)

For Lower Schools Model 3 assumes no lump sum and Model 2a a lump sum factor of £95k.

For Middle Schools Model 3 assumes no lump sum, Model 3a a lump sum of £47,500 and Model 3b a lump sum of £40,000. The lump sum for middle schools is included to take account of year groups 5 and 6.

	Lowers		Middles			Uppers
		a		a	b	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Highest increase	101	62	124	92	97	148
Highest decrease	93	73	118	104	106	106
MFG increase	3,847	865	427	353	365	240

The table below shows the AWPU rates derived from each model and the actual AWPU rates for 2011/12.

Lowers	Year Group	Actual 2011-12	Model 1	Model 2	Model 2a	Model 3	Model 3a
		£	£	£	£	£	£
	Stat	2,244	2,743	2,954	2,456	3,291	2,870
1	2,231	2,727	2,937	2,442	3,271	2,853	
2	2,308	2,821	3,038	2,526	3,384	2,951	
3	2,144	2,620	2,822	2,347	3,144	2,742	
4	2,148	2,625	2,827	2,351	3,150	2,747	

Middles	Year Group	Actual 2011-12	Model 1	Model 2	Model 2a	Model 2b	Model 3	Model 3a	Model 3b
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
	5	2,365	2,917	3,101	3,006	3,022	3,384	3,292	3,306
6	2,370	2,923	3,108	3,013	3,028	3,391	3,299	3,313	
7	2,622	3,213	3,417	3,312	3,329	3,725	3,623	3,639	
8	2,628	3,220	3,425	3,320	3,337	3,733	3,632	3,648	

Uppers	Year Group	Actual 2011-12	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
		£	£	£	£
	9	2,908	3,559	3,679	3,956
10	3,405	4,168	4,308	4,632	
11	3,659	4,479	4,630	4,977	
12	3,770	4,615	4,770	5,128	

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Meeting: Schools Forum
Date: 28 November 2011
Subject: School Forum Budget
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services
Summary: To provide an update on the School Forum Budget for 2011/12

Contact Officer: Dawn Hill, Technology House, Bedford
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council
Reason for urgency
(if appropriate)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. To note the School Forum position statement as at 31st October 2011.**

Background

1. The School Forum Budget falls under Section 2 of The School Finance Regulations 2008. 'Classes or descriptions of planned expenditure prescribed for the purposes of the Schools budget of a Local Education Authority which may be deducted from it to determine the Individual Schools Budget' (top slice Direct Schools Grant – DSG) – 'establishment and maintenance of, and consultation with, schools forums'.
2. It was agreed at the School Forum meeting of the 7th March 2011 that a budget of £3,000 will be available for costs associated with the operation of the Forum e.g. venue hire, expenses and clerking costs, of which £2,000 be set aside and delegated to the Chairman of the Schools Forum to fund the commissioning of consultancy and administration support. The level of the budget will be reviewed annually.
3. The School Forum budget under spend from 2010/11, as at 31st March 2011 was £3,650, which was carried forward to 2011/12.

Expenditure to Date

4. It was resolved at the School Forum meeting of the 7th March 2011 that Central Bedfordshire would remain a member of the F40 Group, representing the lowest funded Local Authorities. It was further resolved at the June 2011 meeting that the School forum budget would also provide training and feedback to the National School Funding Consultation.
5. The following table sets out the expenditure to date against the School Forum Budget.

	BUDGET £	SPEND £	BALANCE £
Carry Forward from 2010/11	3,650		
Budget Allocation 2011/12	3,000		
F40 Subscription		(1,000)	
Room Hire/Hospitality		(439)	
Professional Consultancy/Training		(4,528)	
Total	6,650	(5,967)	683

6. It is anticipated that the budget will be fully spent by the end of the financial year.

Appendices:

None