

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN, FAMILIES & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held at Committee Room 1, The Council Offices, High Street North, Dunstable, Beds, LU6 1LF on Tuesday, 11 August 2009

### PRESENT

Cllr J Street (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs D B Gurney (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: P A Blaine  
D Bowater  
N B Costin  
I Dalgarno  
R Egan  
K Janes  
P Hollick  
A Shadbolt

Parental Co-optees: D Landman  
B Sear

Roman Catholic  
Co-optee: Ms F Image

Apologies for Absence: Ms H Chapman  
J Reynolds

Members in Attendance: Cllrs J G Jamieson  
Mrs A M Lewis  
S F Male  
Mrs C Turner

Officers in Attendance: Mr B Carter – Overview & Scrutiny Manager  
Mrs E Grant – Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of  
Children, Families and Learning  
Mrs S Hobbs – Democratic Services Officer  
Mr J Partridge – Overview & Scrutiny Officer  
Ms K Peddie – Head of Policy & Strategy -  
Children, Families & Learning  
Mr R Waterfield – Assistant Director Community &  
Cultural Learning

CFL/09/12 **Minutes**

Members noted that the minutes had been revised as Councillors Egan and Hollick and Katherine Peddie had not been included as present at the last meeting. Councillor Shadbolt advised that he should be recorded as being present at the last meeting. It was also noted that Patrick Shevlin's job title had been incorrectly recorded and should be amended to read Assistant Director Learning and School Support.

Doug Landman advised that he should be included on the list of names as having a personal interest as he was a school governor.

A query was raised regarding the former Bedfordshire County Council (BCC) reaching wave 2 in the bid for Building Schools for the Future (BSF). Members were advised that BCC had achieved wave 2. Bedford Borough Council had achieved wave 6.

***RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny held on 14 July 2009 as a correct record and to authorise the Chairman to sign them, subject to the above amendments.***

CFL/09/13 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

None.

(b) **Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-**

None.

(c) **Any Political Whip in relation to items on the agenda:-**

None.

CFL/09/14 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman had no announcements or communications to make.

CFL/09/15 **Petitions**

The Chairman announced that no petitions had been referred to this meeting.

CFL/09/16 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

There were no applications from members of the public to speak under the Public Participation Procedure allowed for under Part A4 of the Constitution.

CFL/09/17 **Call-In**

No matters were referred to the Committee for consideration at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

CFL/09/18 **Requested Items**

No items were referred to the Committee for consideration at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

CFL/09/19 **Priorities for the Children and Young People's Plan for Central Bedfordshire**

Members received a report that set out the work that had been done to develop a Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) for Central Bedfordshire and the priorities that had emerged following consultation with children, young people, families and the Council's partners. A supplementary report was circulated at the meeting which set out proposals on how the committee might wish to approach the scrutiny of the five key areas of the CYPP.

It was expected that local authorities put in place a Children's Trust by the end of 2008 which involved partners working together to develop a CYPP. The Plan would be in place for eighteen months so that the emerging guidance and legislation expected from Government in 2010 could inform the new Plan that had to be published in 2011. On 9 April the Central Bedfordshire Children and Young People's Trust Board held its first meeting and agreed working arrangements for the Children's Trust Board, a Commissioning Executive and five Every Child Matters Delivery Groups:

- Be Healthy
- Make a Positive Contribution
- Enjoy and Achieve
- Economic Wellbeing
- Stay Safe

The CYPP would set out the Government's aim that would make this the best place in the world to grow up and this would be the aim for the local authority as a corporate parent. By having the CYPP in place it would enable partners to be called to account for the benefit of children. The Every Child Matters Delivery Group leads held a series of workshops with partners and a list of 20 priorities emerged. Members were advised that stakeholders, children and young people were consulted on these priorities and had played a significant part in developing the Plan. Although some Members felt that the consultation process had not adequately involved children and young people in the poorest areas of Central Bedfordshire. Members were advised that all schools and youth centres had been approached to participate in the consultation.

The Committee noted that there was still work to be undertaken on the CYPP in relation to setting school improvement targets and identifying joint resources.

The Committee's response would be presented to the Children's Trust Board on 3 September 2009 and then the Plan would be submitted to the Executive on 15 September 2009 and approved by Council on 24 September 2009. Members would then have the opportunity to scrutinise the Plan over the following twelve months when the Plan was due to be refreshed. Members were disappointed that they had not had time to scrutinise the Plan in detail before it was adopted and there was also concern that there would not be adequate opportunities to amend priorities or targets throughout the year.

Members noted that many of these areas would be cross cutting, but they agreed that starting from January 2010 the Committee would scrutinise the following areas:

- 5 January 2010 – Enjoy and Achieve
- 2 February 2010 – Achieve Economic Wellbeing
- 30 March 2010 – Make a Positive Contribution
- 27 April 2010 – Stay Safe
- 25 May 2010 – Be Healthy

Members made the following comments:

- the foreword in the Plan did not emphasise that it was not a shared vision developed in partnership with the Children's Trust. The Plan needed more emphasis on it being a partnership approach and not solely the property of Central Bedfordshire Council. Members were advised that partners were going to be approached to include their logos on the Plan and it was being suggested that the foreword be signed by all the partners;
- the Plan contained too much jargon, which needed to be removed if it was to be used as a public document;
- the targets set out in the Plan did not appear to stretch the statutory partners to drive improvement in the areas defined as a priority. Members felt that statutory partners, such as the Police and the Primary Care Trust, needed to develop challenging measures of success that would encourage greater levels of improvement;
- that it was not clear how the strategic actions would be measured or what they would look like. The Plan should set out which lead partner would be responsible for achieving the individual targets so that they could be held to account. Members were advised that the five Every Child Matters Delivery Groups had action plans where the agencies had been named against the appropriate targets;

- statutory education indicators had been included in the body of the CYPP but were not evident within the Local Area Agreement indicators. Members agreed that it would be appropriate to recommend to the Local Strategic Partnership that the Local Area Agreement indicators should make reference to the statutory education indicators and the importance of a partnership approach towards their achievement;
- Members agreed that the provision of good housing was key as a means of achieving many of the targets set out in the plan as this would contribute to achieving the economic well-being targets;
- priority 4 in the CYPP needed to emphasise the importance of providing more opportunities for children and young people to keep fit;
- priority 5 in the CYPP needed to emphasise the importance of short-break services and provision made available by the Council in respect of respite and palliative care. There needed to be more targets contained within this priority detailing what success in transforming services for disabled children would look like. It was agreed that Councillor Gurney would feedback on the provision of palliative care as she was on the board for Keech Cottage hospice;
- Members also agreed that there should be early intervention where children were struggling to enable better outcomes for children and young people;
- Members were concerned that there was not enough facilities for children outside of school e.g. youth clubs. The CYPP should emphasise the importance of schools providing access to facilities out of hours for community use. Members were advised that Ofsted inspections from September would require schools to demonstrate how they were linked to the local community and this could be a means of enhancing community cohesion;
- providing such facilities as youth clubs would contribute to priority 12 as a means of reducing anti-social behaviour; and
- priority 14 in the CYPP referred to developing and promoting play, leisure, sport and cultural opportunities for children and young people age 8-13, but members felt that the age range should be widened.

Members were keen that during future discussion on the Plan that the Police Authority be involved with the possibility of inviting them along to Task Force meetings.

Members noted that the priorities contained in the report did not match those detailed in the CYPP and requested that Officers review the priorities in the plan to ensure that each of the priorities detailed in the report were included.

**RESOLVED**

- 1) that the Overview and Scrutiny Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, be delegated authority to provide a response to the Children's Trust and feedback to the Executive on the contents of the CYPP**
- 2) that the timetable for scrutinising the five delivery areas of the CYPP be agreed**
- 3) that the work programme of the Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee be amended to reflect the work to be undertaken by the Committee in respect of the CYPP.**

CFL/09/20

**Consultation on the Future of Special Schools in the East of Central Bedfordshire**

Members considered a report that outlined the options for the future of special schools in the east of Central Bedfordshire in the light of the recommendations of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Review, and the decision made by the Executive on 23 June 2009 to move forward to the first stage of consultation.

Members were advised that Hitchmead School, which provided for children with moderate learning difficulties aged 7 – 16 was likely to have around 41 pupils on roll for September 2009. Sunnyside School accommodated for children aged 3 – 19 with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties and currently had more children on roll than the building was able to accommodate, with requests for placements increasing.

Members were advised that there were five possible options, but the consultation would allow for any other option to be submitted for consideration by the Executive. The five options were:

- Option A: the merger of Hitchmead School and Sunnyside School to provide one Area Special School utilising both sites. If this was the preferred option then one school would effectively go through a process of closure and the new school would possibly have a new name;
- Option B: to close Hitchmead School and redistribute the children to other moderate learning difficulty (MLD) school (Weatherfield School) in Central Bedfordshire or an MLD school in their own Local Authority;
- Option C: to maintain the status quo;
- Option D: to close both schools and a re-provision of a new school which would become the subject of a competitive process for provision, unless there was a special dispensation from the Secretary of State; and
- Option E: any other proposal to come forward during the consultation process.

Members had received a copy of the draft consultation document that was due to be circulated to consultees. The consultation would be undertaken over a six week period, during which time public meetings would be held. Officers were in the process of booking the public meetings and the Committee requested that all Members be invited to attend. Meetings had been held with the Head Teachers and the Chairs of the School Governors to look at ways forward. Members noted that Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors of mainstream schools in the authority's area would be consulted and not just those in the locality. The conclusions of the consultation would be reported back to the Executive before Christmas.

Members commented that the list of consultees should include all relevant mainstream schools and appropriate Members of Parliament. The references to County Councillors should be removed in the list of consultees. Regarding the option A it was suggested that figures should be provided to outline the number of figures that stayed on at Sunnyside School post 16 years of age.

Members queried when the rationalisation of special schools would take place across the authority's area. Developing special needs provision, including proposals for special schools, could be brought forward as part of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. Co-location with mainstream schools and special schools would be looked at, as would the local provision of special needs. The needs of all groups of pupils must be met, especially vulnerable groups. The Committee recommended that the consultation document should outline that further reviews of SEN provision would be undertaken in the future.

Members were advised that the problems with Hitchmead and Sunnyside Schools had now become critical and that was why proposals for the future of these schools were being considered now. If after the consultation period it was agreed that Sunnyside School pupils move to Hitchmead then funding would need to be found to make adjustments to Hitchmead School to enable it to be accessible to wheelchairs.

Members were advised that the Head of SEN and Inclusion was arranging a visit for Members to an area special school in Cambridge during the autumn term.

Members requested that further reports on the future of Special Schools in the east of Central Bedfordshire be included in their work programme.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1) that all Members be invited to attend the public meetings on the future of Special Schools in the east of Central Bedfordshire**
- 2) that further reports on the future of Special Schools in the east of Central Bedfordshire be provided to the Committee as appropriate.**

CFL/09/21

## **Next Steps on Transforming Teaching and Learning in Central Bedfordshire**

Members received a report that built on the work of transforming teaching and learning in Central Bedfordshire that the Committee considered at its last meeting on 14 July 2009. Members' comments would form a view for a report to the Executive on 15 September by the Portfolio Holders for Children's Services and Culture and Skills.

Members received a presentation (attached at appendix A) on the following:

- the reaction to the work so far in the context of Central Bedfordshire's ambition to raise our performance to that of an excellent council
- the purpose of having a Learning Transformation Board
- feedback from the head teachers/governor meetings
- Building Schools for the Future (BSF) milestones
- how BSF works
- the integration with wider local services
- transformation
- integration with key education policy
- next steps in partnership with head teachers and governors
- preparing for readiness to deliver
- Central Bedfordshire's key stages

Five consultation meetings had taken place to gather views and information about areas for future development. Members raised concerns that the consultation process had not included front line workers. Members agreed that pupils needed to be involved and understand future development as this would have an impact on their lives.

Members thanked the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services for the letter she sent to Bedford Borough Council in response to their consultation. The Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children, Families and Learning had met with their equivalent counterparts at Bedford Borough Council. She was very optimistic that partnership working across the borders could be accommodated.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1) that the Committee be kept informed of progress and that their work programme be amended to include updates on transforming teaching and learning in Central Bedfordshire.**

CFL/09/22

## **Executive Forward Plan**

Members received the Executive Forward Plan for the period 1 August 2009 to 31 July 2010.

**NOTED** the Executive Forward Plan for the period 1 August 2009 to 31 July 2010.



CFL/09/23 **Draft Work Programme 2009-2010**

Members considered the draft work programme for the Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members discussed the need to set up Task Forces to discuss youth service provision, the Cultural Strategy and child poverty. Members agreed to establish two Task Forces, one investigating provisions for youth and the other scrutinising the Cultural Strategy. The Committee also agreed in principal to establish a Task Force looking into child poverty following the conclusion of either of the other two Task Forces.

Members agreed that an invite would be circulated to all non-executive members seeking volunteers to sit on the Task Forces. It would then be down to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to agree the number and appoint to the Task Forces. Councillors Mrs Gurney, Blaine, Bowater, Dalgarno and Dr Egan and Mr Landman indicated that they would be interested on being appointed to the Task Force looking at provisions for youth.

**RESOLVED**

- 1) ***to approve the draft work programme attached to the report, subject to the addition of the Children, Young People's Plan work (minute no. 19) and the updates on the future of Special Schools in the East of Central Bedfordshire (minute no. 20) and transforming teaching and learning in Central Bedfordshire (minute no. 21)***
- 2) ***to set up task forces to scrutinise the Cultural Strategy and provision of facilities for youth***
- 3) ***that the Overview and Scrutiny Officer submit proposals to a future meeting of the Committee detailing how a task force might be undertaken to review the provision of facilities for youth***
- 4) ***that the Overview and Scrutiny Officer submit proposals to a future meeting of the Committee detailing how a task force might be undertaken to review child poverty following the completion of either the task force to scrutinise the Cultural Strategy or the provision of facilities for youth***
- 5) ***that the Overview and Scrutiny Officer invite all non-executive members sit on the Task Forces and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to agree the number and appoint Members to them.***

CFL/09/24 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was 8 September 2009.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.56 p.m.)

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# **Transforming Teaching and Learning in Central Bedfordshire**

## **Next steps to stimulate comment**

# **Comments from the Scrutiny Committee to inform the report by the Lead Member – September 2009**

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**Central  
Bedfordshire**

The purpose of this short presentation is to stimulate discussion on:

- The reaction to the work so far in the context of Central Bedfordshire’s ambition to raise our performance to that of an excellent council
- The purpose of having a Learning Transformation Board
- Feedback from the Head Teacher / Governor meetings

# BSF milestones



## Project inception

- clarify the vision and engage the support of stakeholders to it
- mobilise governance & management arrangements
- mobilise full project resources, financial and personnel
- appoint advisers
- resources and skills external review
- integrate BSF with other strategies

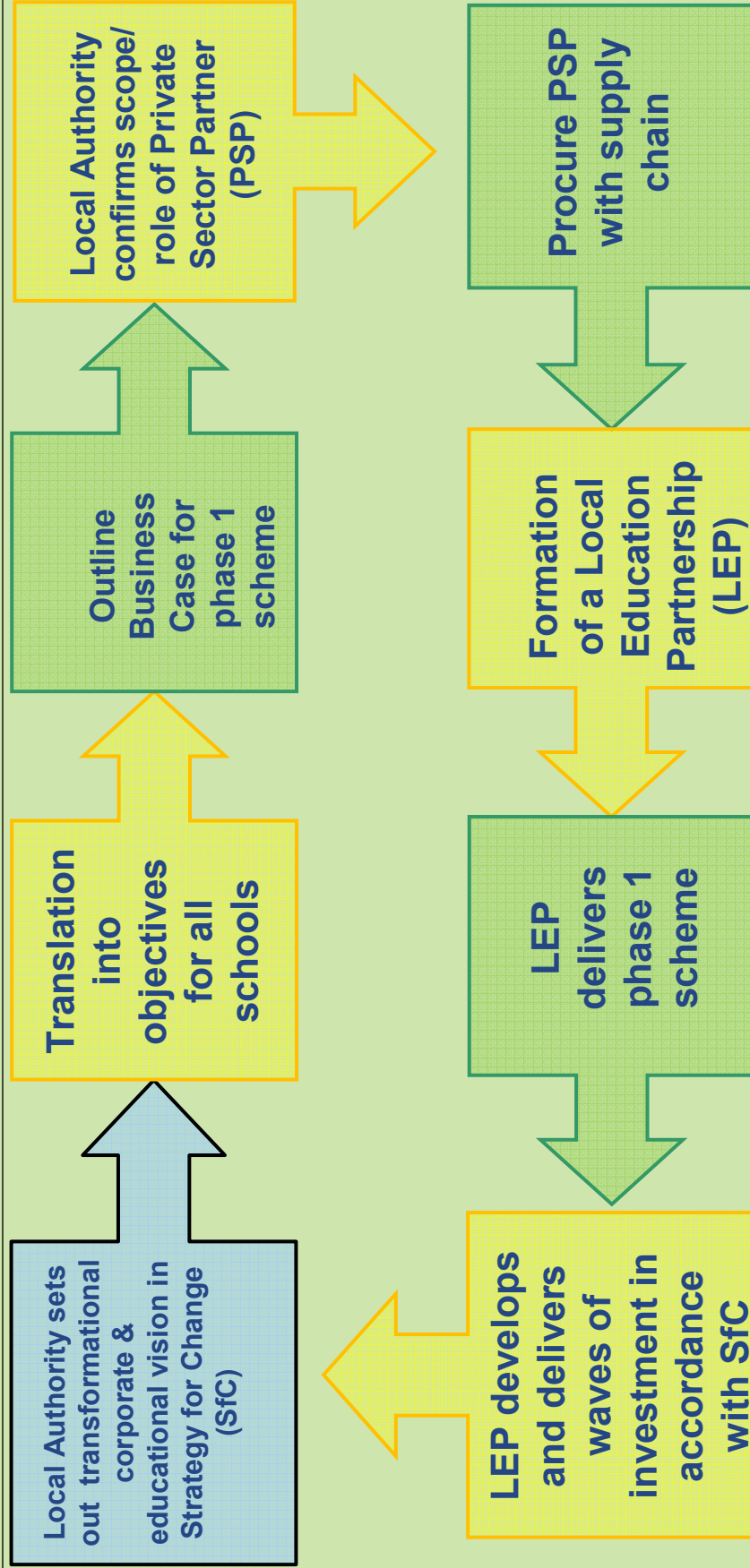
## Readiness to Deliver

- transformational overview
- deliverability
- affordability/value for money
- resources/capacity
- investment strategy

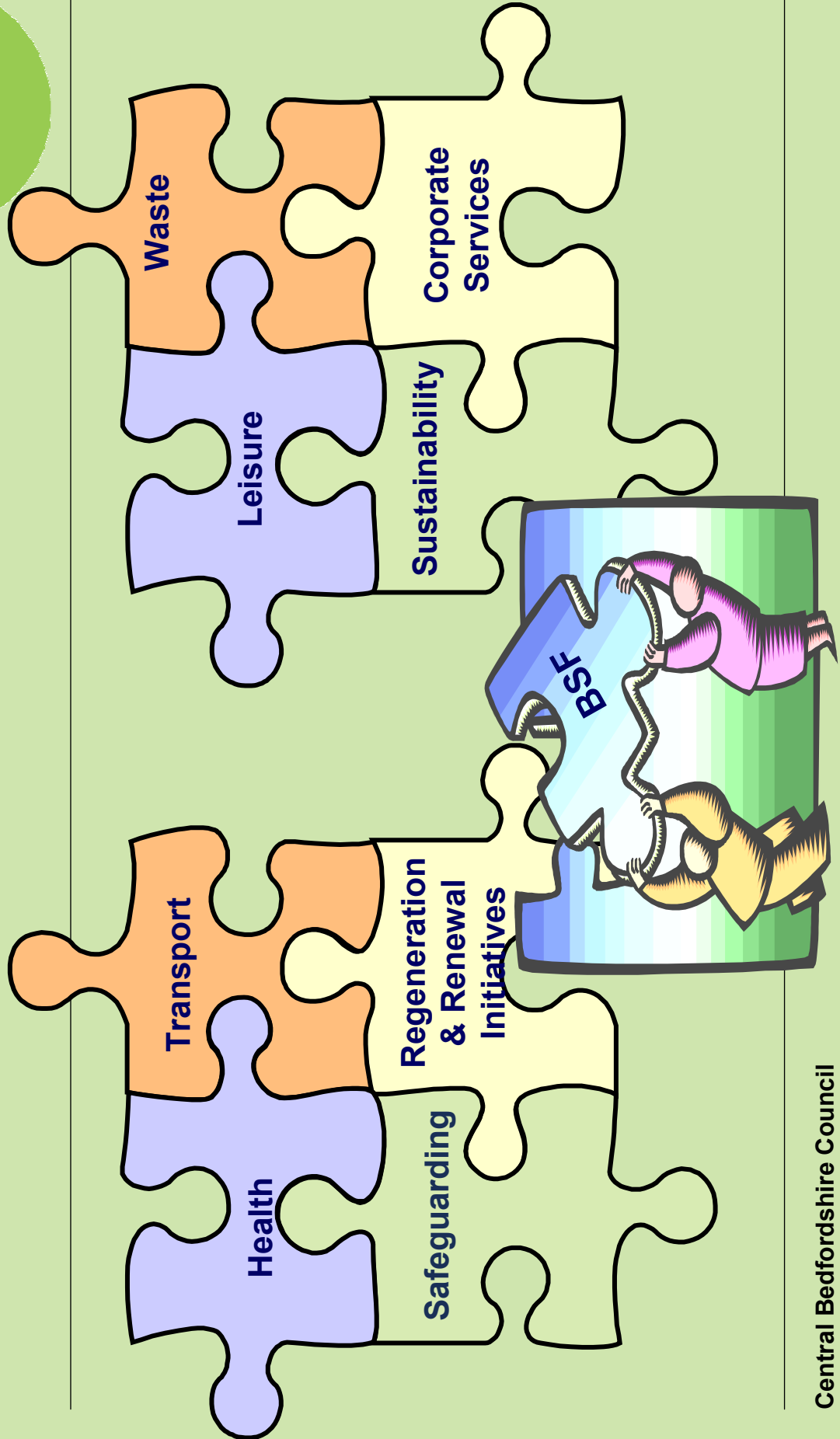
## Strategy for Change

- meet educational challenges and key objectives
- address key estate proposals
- maintain stakeholder engagement
- submit for approval to Overview & Scrutiny
- Strategy for Change formally approved by Executive

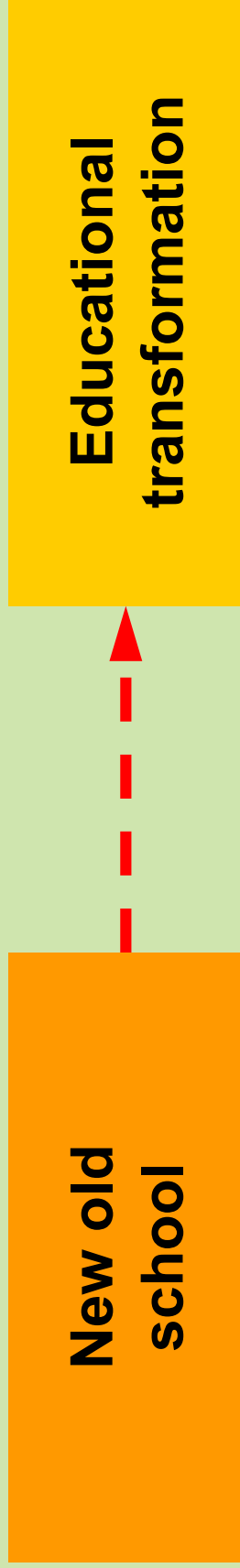
# How BSF works



# Integration with wider local services

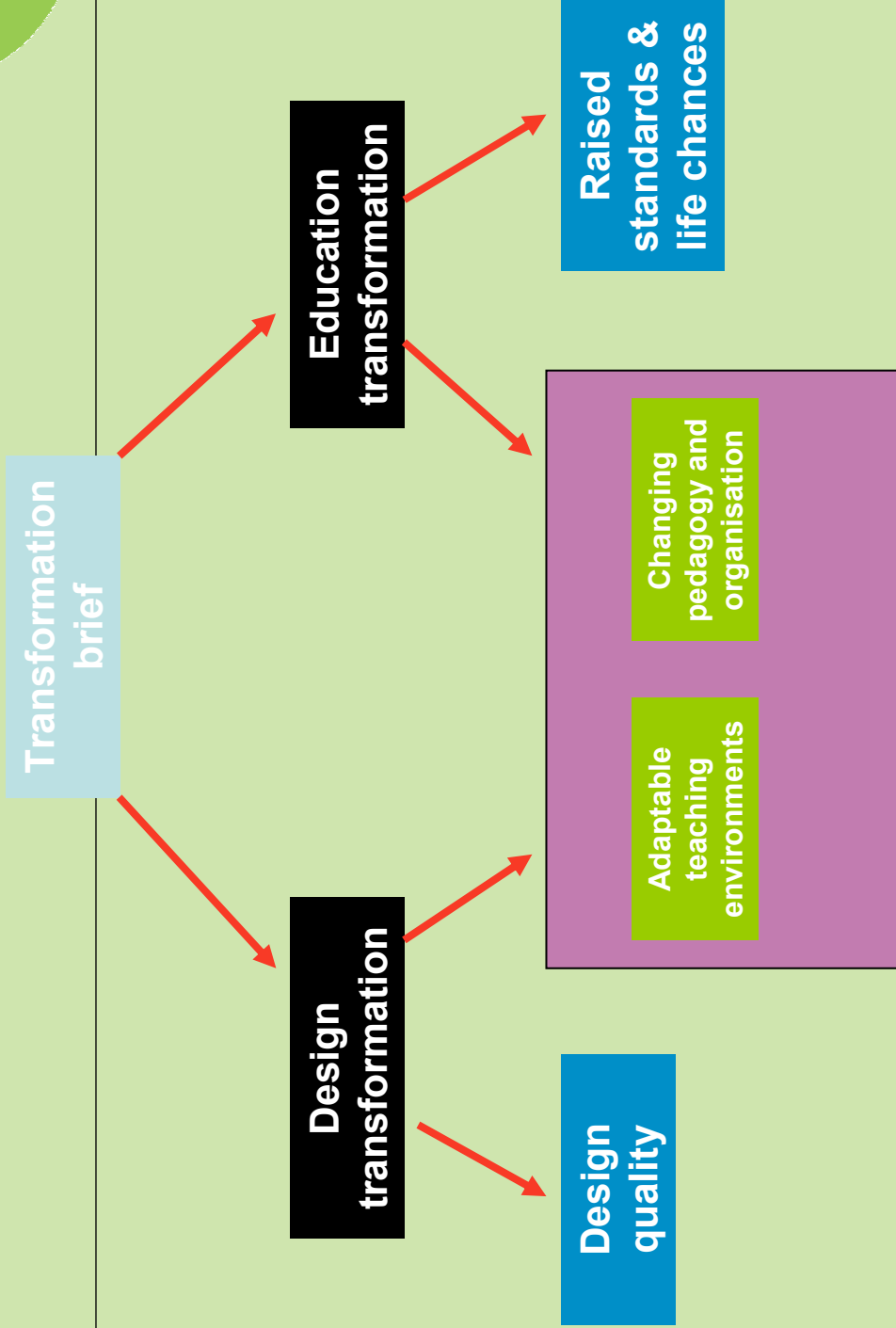


# Transformation – common misconception

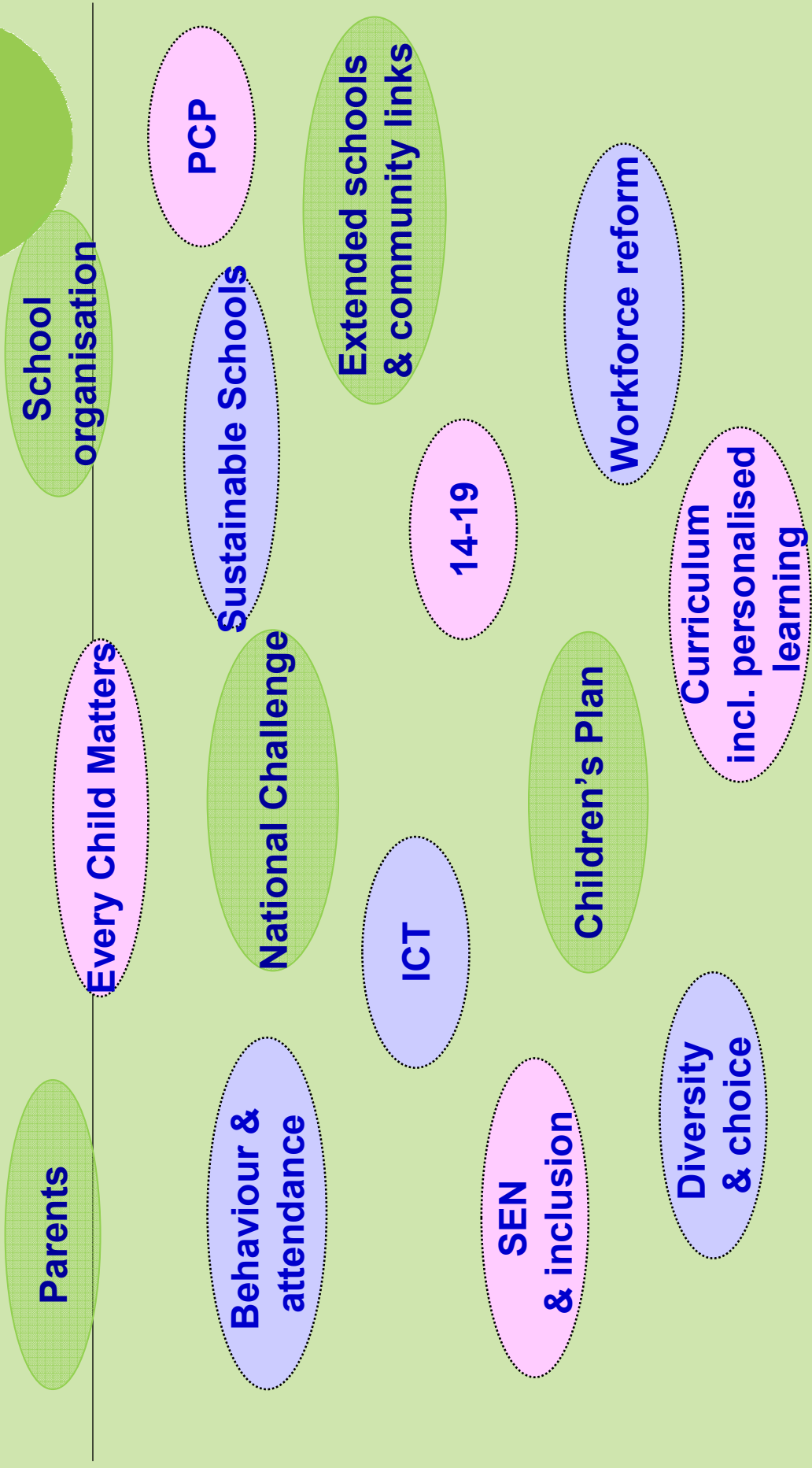




# But transformation is ...



# Integration with key education policy



## **Next Steps in Partnership with Head Teachers and Governors**



**The Lead Member has agreed to take account of Head Teachers and Governors views as to whether or not we go out to consultation on next steps. Your views are important. This will be a sensitive issue and may not be well understood**

# Summary of Head teacher and Governor workshops



## Principles

- Raising standards
- Continuity of provisions 3-19
- Child & family at the centre of any change
- Locality based services
- Reflective of curriculum reform
- Based around the community
- New models of leadership

# Summary of Head teacher and Governor workshops



## Criteria

- Outcomes at GCSE
- Accountability
- Parental satisfaction
- Data on exclusions, NEETs, surplus places, deprivation, housing growth
- Value for money
- Size of schools
- Ethos

# Preparing for Readiness to Deliver



Initial planning for 11-16, 16-19 and Special Educational Needs

Regular dialogue with Office for the School Commissioner

Incorporating any required statutory consultation into BSF plan

Utilising 4ps' Expert Client Programme eg Resource and Skills Review

## **Preparing for Readiness to Deliver**

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**Central Bedfordshire**

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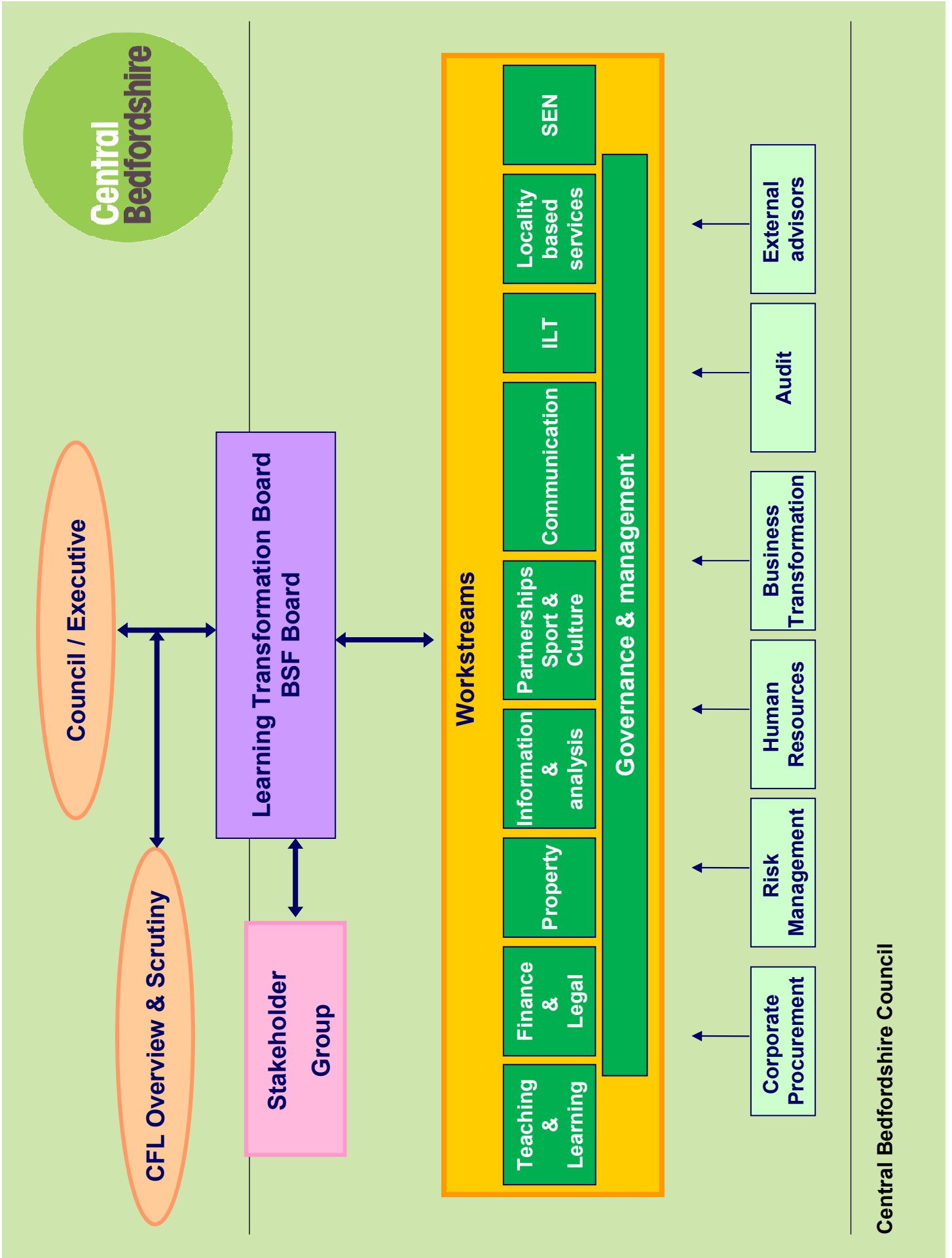
**Consultation with internal and external stakeholders**

**Robust pupil place planning**

**Identification of financial and people resources**

**Senior political and corporate support**

**Self assessment using Readiness to Deliver framework**





# Central Bedfordshire BSF – Key Stages



- Project Inception – Feb 2009
- Readiness to Deliver - now
- Strategy for change – Sept 2009
- Outline Business Case – Dec 2009
- Procurement – Feb 2010
- Preferred bidder / Financial close – June 2011

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