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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> March 2010  
**Subject:** Transforming Teaching and Learning: Central Bedfordshire's Education Vision  
**Report of:** Cllr Mrs Anita Lewis, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services  
**Summary:** The report sets out the education vision (Appendix A) for Central Bedfordshire and the direction for school organisation in the future.

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**Advising Officer:** Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children, Families and Learning  
**Contact Officer:** Patrick Shevlin, Assistant Director (Learning and School Support)  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key Decision** Yes  
**Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in (if appropriate)** Not applicable

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

Developing the right education vision is of key importance in Central Bedfordshire's Strategic Plan (2009-11), particularly in educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people.

### **Financial:**

This report and appendix sets out the education vision for Central Bedfordshire. The next stages of this work will be to develop a capital programme for schools alongside a plan for removing surplus places from the school system. There will need to be a review of school provision within each area and future development plans will need to be part of plans for community regeneration. The financial envelope for any development of school sites will be evaluated through the Capital Asset Management Group and costs will need to be contained within the financial resources available. Support for School Improvement will be financed from within the Children's Services revenue budget.

### **Legal:**

The Council has a duty under section 13A of the Education Act 1996 to promote high standards, ensure fair access to educational opportunity and promote the fulfilment by every child of his/her educational potential.

**Risk Management:**

Schools will need support to adapt to a new way of working where they both challenge and support each other. The Council role will be to co-ordinate the move to this way of working, commissioning for improvement in pupil outcomes and supporting schools via the Children's Trust. The most vulnerable schools will require targeted support in this transitional period and an ongoing review of schools will be needed to determine possible risks, particularly the risk of schools receiving inadequate judgements in Ofsted inspections and delivering poor outcomes for pupils.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

The Education vision has been sent to trade unions and professional associations for comments which have been incorporated into the document. The main focus of the concern is the protections of conditions of services and fair and equitable treatment for all.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

The Education vision includes a commentary on Inclusion and Special Educational Needs (section 11.5) and there will be a distinct programme of activity relating to pupils with special education needs within the overall programme to meet Equality Impact Assessment requirements.

Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote race, gender and disability equality. The analysis of results referred to in this report has therefore included consideration of the outcomes for vulnerable groups. This has identified particular issues related to performance for lower ability girls, boys, students with special educational needs (action and action plus), students receiving free school meals, looked after children and some groups such as Pupils who are Travellers of Irish Heritage and Gypsy/Roma, Pupils from Black Caribbean background and Pupils for whom English is an additional language. These issues have been identified as a priority in the Children and Young People's Plan 'Priority 10: Raise achievement for all learners particularly underachieving groups and children in vulnerable circumstances' and will need to be addressed as part of the raising achievement plan.

**Community Safety:**

N/A

**Sustainability:**

It should be noted that schools represent over 50% of the Council's carbon footprint and over 60% of the emissions that the Council has to pay for in the energy efficiency scheme (allowances come to the value of approximately: £207,672). Any future capital programme for schools will need to target a reduction in the carbon footprint and emissions. The number of school buildings maintained will influence this.

## Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments (Appendix B)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on July 14<sup>th</sup> 2009 on 'Building Schools for the Future (BSF) and Transforming Teaching and Learning in Central Bedfordshire'. The report set out the background to the BSF programme and outlined the early stages of the work of the Learning Transformation Board. It also outlined initial arrangements for gathering information and views from headteachers and chairs of governors about improving the way school places are organised; developing innovative curricula; managing transition points and ensuring that schools are at the centre of communities in Central Bedfordshire. The Children's Trust is the partnership that binds schools, the Council and other statutory agencies to delivering the outcomes that were set out in the Children and Young People's Plan approved by Council at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2009.

The Committee requested a further report on the vision ( see below )

At its meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> August, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were invited to comment on the next stage of this work.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> February the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report and a presentation from the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children, Families and Learning regarding the vision for transforming learning in Central Bedfordshire. It recommended to the Executive that the following comments on the principles of the education vision for Central Bedfordshire be taken into consideration:-

- Members raised concerns regarding the number of transition points in schools and the negative effect that this could have on levels of attainment. The number of transition points needed to be reduced where possible and this should be a key principle for the education vision;
- the education vision should focus on continuity of provision across the 0-19 age range to ensure that there was a 'one-phase' approach to learning; and
- there were opportunities for schools to work in partnership, which could provide collaborative benefits to schools, but views were presented that there needed to be a fuller debate around the development of trusts, federations and partnerships and their potential benefits.

### RECOMMENDATION(S):

**That the Executive agrees the Educational Vision to improve teaching and learning in Central Bedfordshire's schools and improve outcomes for all young people.**

*Reason for Recommendation(s): So that there is an agreed way forward in improving outcomes for young people particularly by developing partnership arrangements between schools so there is a seamless, 0 to 19 approach to teaching and learning.*

## **Executive Summary**

The Education Vision for Central Bedfordshire (Appendix A) has been developed following extensive consultations with headteachers, chairs of governors, elected members and others. It is underpinned by the principle of schools working together in strong governed partnerships to improve outcomes for all young people from 0-19 by developing the best approaches within their community and family of schools. The approach and subsequent work to be done is designed to put in place the conditions so that a good rate of educational progress will be maintained for young people, particularly at transition points between key stages and current phases of schooling.

## **Background**

1. The Executive received a report on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009 outlining the progress made with the development of an education vision for Central Bedfordshire. The report outlined the key principles which had been developed with headteachers and chairs of governors to inform the development of an education vision. These are:
  - The need to raise education standards and outcomes across all key stages and taking account of contextual added value, i.e. how much improvement a school can make for each pupil whilst they are at that school.
  - Continuity of education provision across the pupil age ranges of 0 – 19 Years.
  - That learning should take place in schools based around the community.
  - That what is best for children and families should be at the centre of any change.
  - That as far as possible services should be delivered locally.
  - That the strategy should take account of new models of leadership, e.g. Schools Trusts, executive headships, work across school boundaries.
  - That the strategy should reflect curriculum reform.
  
2. A further report received by the Executive in January 2010 outlined proposals to raise achievement as the first steps in the transforming learning strategy. The report made four recommendations:
  - for schools to develop strong, governed partnerships which have the core purpose of improving outcomes and raising achievement by providing a well planned, continuous curriculum and high quality learning experiences for young people from the age of 3 to 19;
  - to use all available resources to support the priorities set out in the Enjoy and Achieve section of the Children and Young People's Plan (endorsed by the Executive on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009);
  - to adopt a differentiated model for the support given to schools, through the School Improvement Strategy, in order to accelerate the improvement of satisfactory schools; and,

- to re-commission School Support and School Improvement Services so that increasingly support is commissioned from the strongest partnerships and schools or from other providers.

### **The Education Vision for Central Bedfordshire**

3. The attached vision (Appendix A) reflects the vision of the partners in the Children's Trust in setting out the following aspiration for all children and young people:
4. 'We want every child in Central Bedfordshire to enjoy their childhood and have the best possible start in life. We want every child to do well at school, make friends and build strong relationships with their family. By the age of 19 we want every young person to have the knowledge, skills and qualifications that will give them the best chance of success, so that they are prepared to take their full place in society as happy, healthy, contributing and confident citizens.'
5. The seven principles underpin the vision; particularly in developing school provision which is continuous and which meets the needs of children, families and communities. Improved continuity for learners must also be developed to address how transitions between key stages and phases of learning are planned for so that educational progress does not dip at these points.
6. The report to the Executive on 15 September 2009 outlined four possible configurations for schools in Central Bedfordshire.
  - Maintain the existing 3 tier system.
  - 3 to 2 tier reorganisation.
  - A mixed economy of local solutions for local areas.
  - Other suggestions from stakeholders.
7. The Education vision recommends the identification of local solutions driven by the principle of a one phase approach 0 to 19. These local solutions will be developed by schools working together in strong, governed partnerships to develop the best arrangements within their community and family of schools. Such partnerships should seek to remove barriers to progress and improvement, particularly at transition points between schools and key stages. If schools work in the spirit of partnership, some of the concerns about conditions of service and equity raised by the trade union should be alleviated.
9. Realising the vision will require significant collaboration between schools to establish effective, governed partnerships which are driven by the need to improve outcomes and raise achievement for all young people within the community. Many schools have already carried out initial work to evaluate how well they are doing across their community and to identify what needs to improve and how this can be achieved together. Schools and communities will wish to determine the best way forward for improving collaboration. They will require support in understanding the benefits of different ways of working in partnerships. They will also require a clear commission regarding the need to raise the achievement of pupils to be set out in the Children and Young People's Plan and for this to be reconfirmed via the Children's Trust.
10. On-going work will be to:
  - Improve outcomes for young people.

- Identify and tackle underperformance of schools and groups.
- Improve curriculum design and continuity.
- Provide integrated, locality support to children and their families.
- Improve inclusion and support for children with special educational needs.
- Develop new models of governance and leadership.
- Utilise information communication technology to provide flexible and stimulating learning.
- Develop sport and physical activity within communities.
- Ensure that Central Bedfordshire meets its commitment to sustainable schools.

### **Next steps**

11. Further work is now needed with parents and carers, young people, educational practitioners and key partners in developing local models to fulfil this vision.
12. Area reviews will now be prepared for the four geographical areas within Central Bedfordshire to determine how school organisation in each area can best meet the aspirations set out in the Vision. The aim is to follow the timescales as set out below:

Dunstable and Houghton Regis April 2010 to March 2011

Leighton and Linslade April 2011 to March 2012

Sandy and Biggleswade April 2012 to March 2013

Rural Central Bedfordshire April 2013 to March 2014

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – An Education Vision for Central Bedfordshire

Appendix B – Response of the Children, Families & Learning Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 2 February 2010

### **Background Papers**

Reports to Overview and Scrutiny can be accessed on the Council's website