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**Meeting:** Children, Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 30 March 2010  
**Subject:** Children and Young People's Plan – Achieve Economic Well Being  
**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services  
**Summary:** The report provides an overview of the progress made with the priorities within the Achieve Economic Well Being Plan.

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**Contact Officer:** Sylvia Gibson, Assistant Director Policy, Planning and Commissioning  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Council

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

The Achieve Economic Well Being Plan is one of the five outcome plans which support the Central Bedfordshire Strategic Plan (2009-11) particularly in managing growth effectively. It also relates to the second of the Council's key priorities:

- Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people.

### **Financial:**

Working with partners to deliver services together in a more integrated way, with a focus on prevention and early intervention, is a key driver of the Children and Young People's Plan and through pooling and aligning resources will deliver efficiencies.

### **Legal:**

The Children's Trust and the Children and Young People's Plan enables the Council and its partners to exercise the 'duty to co-operate' under section 10 of the Children's Act 2004.

**Risk Management:**

Key risks in failing to deliver the actions in the plan centre on young people not achieving as well as they could and ultimately not accessing employment, training or further education. Also there is a risk of reputational damage to the Council in being perceived as not providing good quality education to young people. Risk management is a key part of delivery planning for the Children and Young People's Plan and is managed and mitigated through this process.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

None

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

During the development of the plan equalities issues and impacts were considered and included in the priorities are a number of strategic actions which identify children and young people who are not Achieving Economic Well Being, who are excluded or who are in vulnerable circumstances.

**Community Safety:**

None

**Sustainability:**

The Achieve Economic Well Being Plan aims to coordinate the promotion of local job opportunities in the context of a local economic assessment. Making sure employees have the right skills to do the best job is fundamental to ensure a sustainable recovery within the economy. By training people to have the right skills the outcomes will be:

- Increased productivity and competitiveness.
- Increased customer satisfaction and skills.
- Increase employee satisfaction and retention.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the Committee comments on the progress made with the priorities in the Achieve Economic Well Being Plan.**

**The Achieve Economic Well Being Plan**

1. The Achieve Economic Well Being Plan is one of the five outcomes which make up the Children's and Young People's Plan for Central Bedfordshire.

2. The plan has been established by:
  - analysing evidence and consulting with children and young people;
  - holding workshops with key stakeholders to consider the evidence and identifying priorities for the plan;
  - consulting on the emerging priorities; and
  - finalising the draft plan at Delivery Group meetings and considering the analysis of feedback from the consultation, partner agencies and Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
3. The Achieve Economic Well Being Plan has three priorities in the Children and Young Peoples Plan
  - Priority: 16 – Develop a locality approach in reducing the number of young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), targeting those areas with the highest NEET levels.
  - Priority: 17 - Work with employers, colleges and schools to increase the range and quality of local training, volunteering and job opportunities.
  - Priority: 18 - Inspire our most vulnerable young people to raise their aspirations and provide integrated support, particularly to care leavers, young offenders, young carers, young people with physical and learning disabilities, gypsy and traveller children and teenage parents.
4. In addition there is one cross-cutting priority which is the responsibility of the Achieve Economic Well Being Group:
  - Reduce Child Poverty.
5. Children Families and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinised the draft Children and Young People's Plan at its meeting on 11 August 2009.
6. The Committee 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.
7. A range of strategic actions have been developed and there are specific indicators and targets for each priority in the Achieve Economic Well Being Plan to measure the impact of actions and to know what progress is being made. These are set out in Appendix A.

## **Child Poverty Strategy**

8. The Child Poverty Strategy is due to be presented to the Executive on 8 June 2010. It will be focused on four targets: relative low income; material deprivation; absolute poverty; and persistent poverty. The Strategy will also include a needs assessment to describe the characteristics of child and family poverty within Central Bedfordshire, and a joint child poverty strategy which will outline the steps and accountability for the Local Authority and its partners.

## **Progress with the Achieve Economic Well Being Plan**

9. The Achieve Economic Well Being Delivery Group is made up of key professionals from Integrated Youth Support Services, Learning and School Support, Adult Social Care, Adult Learning, Job Centre Plus, Specialist Services, Further Education Colleges, the Voluntary Sector, Economic Development, Organisational Development and schools. The group is charged with ensuring that services are delivered according to the agreed priorities.
10. The delivery group is now well established and the strategic plans for each priority and for the associated work plans are fully in place. The Information and Guidance Delivery Plan is also in place. Priorities 16 and 18 are amber, which means that progress is being made, and Priority 17 is green and on track to deliver.

### **Priority 16:**

11. At the end of quarter 3 there were 397 young people aged 16-18 classified as NEET. This figure stands at 6.4%, a decrease by 0.4% in comparison to quarter 2. NEET figures go up and down at different times during the year, peaking in September, reflecting new cohorts of school leavers and those who drop out of college after the first year. Nationally there has been a steady increase in the numbers of young people becoming NEET largely due to the economic downturn.

### **Priority 17:**

12. The Council's Economic Development Team has secured significant amounts of European Social Funding to support NEET young people, as well as young adults and graduates seeking work. A partnership is now in place and training for teachers to deliver Enterprise Training embedded into the Curriculum for Middle and Upper Schools.
13. Mentoring opportunities are being provided and work placements and jobs have been secured within the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sectors. A Jobs Fund application to Go East has been successful and this will help to create 90 jobs. 243 young people from Central Bedfordshire are being supported on the Young Innovators Programme.

14. Level 1 NVQ qualifications are being provided in Children's Care plus Level 2 NVQ in Team Leadership, Level 3, 4, and 5 in Management and Level 4 for Management for Care Services. Young people will be given support in CV writing, interview techniques and job search.
15. A specific programme is tailored to meet the need of adults with learning difficulties. Partnership Projects are in place with Central Bedfordshire College and Bedford College. Personalised programmes will be offered to young people in specific vocational disciplines. Support will also be given to graduates of the University of Bedfordshire.
16. The local economic assessment being carried out will provide information regarding the areas in which we will need to train our young people e.g. tourism, hospitality and environmental industries.

**Priority: 18:**

17. 100% of statemented students have high quality transition plans in place from Year 9 from 2009. The Council's SEN team has developed a Training Programme for students with learning difficulties. The number of young offenders categorised as NEET has decreased.
18. There is a strategic commitment to developing an apprenticeship scheme, and an application has been made to the Jobs Fund. Over 2000 young people are participating in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and Arts Award Scheme.

**Conclusion and Next Steps**

19. The Economic Wellbeing Group will need to make strategic links with the local economic development agenda and skills strategy to ensure that the right provision is in place for young people. Work is being done with Sustainable Communities to align the work of the Economic Wellbeing delivery group of the Children's Trust with the work to develop an Employment and Skills Group to develop an all age skills strategy. This is an important development area.
20. A cycle of meetings has been established with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to have reports from each outcome group which contributes to the Children and Young People's Plan.

**Appendix:**

Appendix A – Central Bedfordshire's Children and Young People's Plan – Achieve Economic Well Being – overall performance