
Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 1 March 2011
Subject: Outcomes of the Review of Transforming Teaching and Learning in Dunstable and Houghton Regis
Report of: Cllr Mrs Anita Lewis, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
Summary: The report provides an update on the progress and next steps of the review of school organisation in Dunstable and Houghton Regis, as set out in the Council's Education Vision. The Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services will give a presentation on the day of the meeting to provide the most up to date issues as they relate to the Education Bill.

Contact Officer: Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All in Dunstable and Houghton Regis
Function of: Executive

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Delivering the Council's 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:

Options arising from the review will be subject of a detailed options appraisal that alongside other criteria will consider capital and revenue modelling, including forecast impacts on Dedicated Schools Grant, requirements for capital expenditure and options for funding sources.

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. The Council also has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places within its area.

The Director will give a presentation on the day of the meeting covering the implications of the Education Bill for this review.

Risk Management:

The delivery of the programme to transform learning is subject to a risk management framework and options arising specifically from this review will also be subject of risk assessment as outlined within this report. The Policy context in which the review is currently being undertaken has changed significantly as a result of the recently published White Paper “The Importance of Teaching” and the Academies Act 2010. This will also impact on the Education Vision and refocuses Children’s Services significantly. The changing service context of the Council requires careful consideration of the corporate capacity to support and deliver any determined change. A detailed options appraisal that is to be undertaken of options will also include this assessment within the evaluation.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

Staffing and Trades Unions will be fully consulted on any options proposed as a result of this review and will also be involved in the detailed options appraisal process. The outcomes of these consultation exercises will be reported to Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to the Council’s Executive to inform decision making.

Equalities/Human Rights:

A full Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken on any proposals for change in the organisation of schools. This will be in addition to any changes arising from the decisions of the Council’s Executive on the proposals to establish an area special school and to discontinue the dyslexia provision at Priory Middle school, which will be subject of a separate impact assessment.

Community Safety:

Schools have an important role in working alongside a range of other agencies to ensure safety in their local communities. The review will include an evaluation of the extent to which specific options for change can bring about enhanced partnership activity at a local level.

Sustainability:

The findings within this report reflect the need to plan for significant growth in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis area, to reconfigure schools to reduce surplus places where they are unlikely to be affected by the planned growth, and to ensure that they are financially and educationally sustainable. The potential for the delivery of other corporate opportunities and synergies across the Council will also be assessed in the final recommendations to Executive. Service areas may include Leisure, PE and Sports, Libraries, Skills, employment and enterprise, Adult & Community Learning, Corporate Property, Town Centre master planning, Community Development – Priority Estates, Sustainable Modes of Travel, Central Bedfordshire’s Climate Change Strategy and Community Safety.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

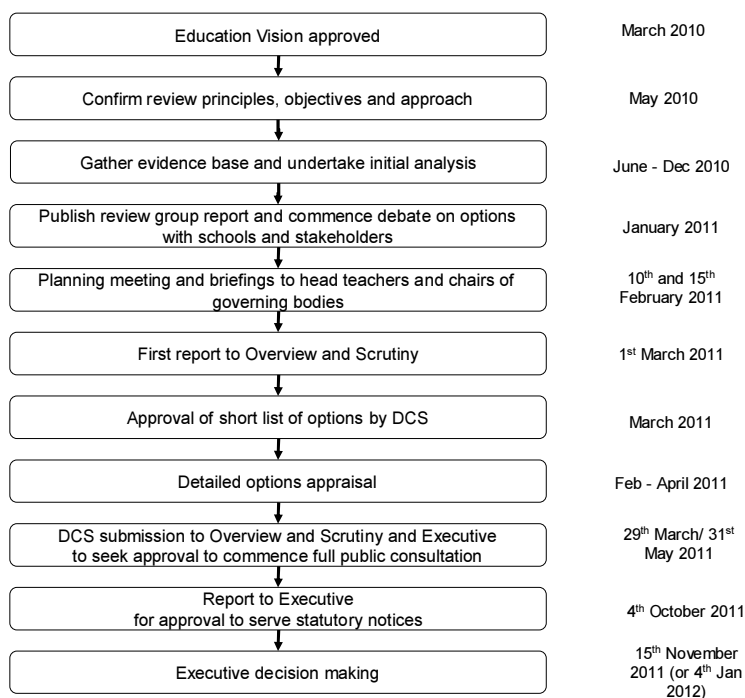
That the Committee considers and comments on the content of this report and on the progress of the Dunstable and Houghton Regis review. These will be taken account of in the further report to Overview and Scrutiny on 29 March 2011 and will inform the deliberations of the Council's Executive to the Council's Executive on the 5th April and 31 May 2011.

Background

1. The Council's draft Education Vision was presented to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2 February 2010 and was subsequently approved by Executive on 9 March 2010. The following comments recommended by Overview and Scrutiny to the Council's Executive were 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 educational 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.
2. As a result of the approval of the Education Vision, a review of schools in Dunstable and Houghton Regis, the first of four geographical areas outlined in the document, commenced in April 2010 to determine how school organisation could best meet the needs of the Vision. A map illustrating these four areas and the schools in each area is provided at Appendix A.
3. Headteachers and Chairs of Governing Bodies for schools in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis area were invited with a range of other local stakeholders, to attend a meeting in May 2010 to discuss the aims of the review, its timescale and the approach that the review would take. This detail was provided in a Protocol which schools were invited to comment upon and which was subsequently adopted.

However, more recent changes as a consequence of the Academies Act 2010 and the more recent White Paper "the Importance of Teaching" may impact upon the successes of any review and the ability to implement any proposed changes. Similarly, in light of these changes, there have been concerns raised as to whether the recently approved Education Vision may need to be refreshed to reflect national policy changes. The Education Bill will also be a consideration as it will become an Act during the time of the implementation of the review.

4. The timescale for the Dunstable and Houghton Regis review is illustrated in the following chart.



5. In June, schools were invited to comment on the key data sets that would inform the review. Schools were also asked to nominate representatives to a review group to undertake and oversee the early analysis necessary for the review. The group has met on eight occasions and its membership is provided at Appendix B. The data sets have been aggregated for each of the four geographical areas referred to at 2. above and will provide early comparative data for the proposed future reviews of the remaining three areas.
6. The analysis of data was grouped under six themes and this report follows that format. The themes are:

- Review area and catchment demographic
- Educational Standards
- Sustainability
- Early Years and Extended services
- Use of resources
- SEN and Inclusion

7. A workshop was undertaken in October with all headteachers and chairs of governing bodies invited and this meeting determined specific local objectives for each of the seven guiding principles of the Education Vision. These objectives provide the educational test against which any proposals for changes in school organisation will initially be evaluated. The results of the workshop can be seen at Appendix C.
8. A summary of the data and analysis reported to the Review Group has been published in January to head teachers and chairs of governing bodies of all schools in the review area to seek their views on the Review Group's work and on the relative value and challenges of a long list of examples of possible changes in school organisation identified by the review group and by Council officers. Stakeholders were also invited to submit any other options, not previously identified, for evaluation.
9. Head teachers, chairs of governing bodies and ward councillors have also attended a meeting in February to discuss the outcomes of the review group's work.
10. The outcome of that meeting will be circulated on the day of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting or before and will if this means that the options should be amended in any way, fresh copies will be available at the meeting.
11. A number of options have already been submitted by local schools for discussion and debate. These include:
 - A transfer to a traditional Primary/Secondary two tier model across the review area;
 - A continuation of the current 3 tier model but with schools formally engaged in hard federations and trusts across phases or as all through schools;
 - An alternative 3 tier model i.e. Primary/KS3/14 to 19;
 - A mixture of any of the above, each serving a local community with clearly defined catchments;
 - A phased implementation of any of the above, but with the initial introduction of partnership arrangements within formal governance structures.
12. Both of the Academies in the area have contributed to this process and Lark Rise Academy has indicated its desire to sponsor any lower, middle or upper schools under the Lark Rise Academy brand. This would mean actually taking over the strategic leadership and responsibility for the outcomes of the sponsored school.
13. The value of the development of specialist collaborations across schools has also been recognised with examples including the sharing of SENCOs, child protection, behavioural support, education psychologists and speech and language support with dedicated staff covering these functions across a small cluster of schools to help create best practice. Back office functions, i.e. finance and administration, could also serve a number of schools.

14. 19 of the 21 head teachers of lower schools in the review area support a traditional primary/secondary model as an option and further options have been suggested which detail a number of potential federations on the grounds of small school size, minimising transitions, maximising financial efficiencies and improved governance.

Review Findings

15. A summary of key findings that have helped to shape options for the area follow. These will be developed further to inform the next report to Overview and Scrutiny on the 29th March 2011.

Review Area & Catchment Demographic

16. Dunstable and Houghton Regis are located in the south west of Central Bedfordshire. This area is bordered by Buckinghamshire on the western side, Hertfordshire to the south and to the East by Luton, all of which operate different school systems to the current 3 tier – Lower (4-9)/Middle (9-13)/Upper (13-18) system operated across the area and the majority of Central Bedfordshire.
17. There are 37 schools represented by 2 Nursery schools, 21 Lower schools, 1 Primary school, 1 4-13 Middle deemed Primary school, 6 Middle deemed Secondary schools, 3 Upper schools and 3 Special schools.
18. In terms of diversity of provision at Lower School/Primary there are:
 - 4 Voluntary Aided schools (2 Roman Catholic and 2 Church of England)
 - 2 Voluntary Controlled schools (CE)
 - 15 Community schools (including Eaton Bray Lower School which is expected to convert to Academy status from 1 April 2011)
 - 1 Academy (converted under the new regulations)

At Middle School there are:

 - 1 VA school (CE)
 - 5 Community schools

At Upper School there are:

 - 1 VA school (CE)
 - 1 Foundation school
 - 1 Academy
19. As at Spring 2010, there were 3855 Lower School aged pupils, 2838 Middle School aged pupils and 2886 Upper school aged pupils.
20. The five wards with the highest rate of child poverty in Central Beds are all in the review area, namely Manshead, Northfields, Parkside, Tithe Farm and Houghton.

Educational Standards

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

21. In addition to the 21 lower schools, 1 Primary and 1 x 4-13 school, there are two maintained Nursery Schools – Willow and Westfield and one Special School with EYFS provision within the Dunstable Houghton Regis area. There are approximately 19 Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings in receipt of Nursery Education Funding (NEF) that feed into these schools.
22. The quality of EYFS provision in Lower and Primary schools (as measured by Ofsted) for the area is very similar to the quality of provision in Central Bedfordshire overall:

% EYFS Provision in schools judged by Ofsted to be:	Dun/HR	CBC
Outstanding	29	29
Good	62	63
Satisfactory	10	8
Inadequate	0	0

23. The quality of provision in Dunstable and Houghton Regis PVI settings as measured by the Council's own Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme (EYQISP) is far less favourable when compared with Central Bedfordshire overall. Four out of the five settings judged to be in need of intensive support (Red rating) are situated in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis area. Only five out of 19 settings in the area are judged to be in need of little support (Green rating):

% EYFS provision judged by LA EYQISP to be:	DHR	CBC
Green (Needing little support)	26	56
Amber (Needing targeted support)	53	38
Red (Needing intensive support)	21	5

24. The EYFS Profile sums up each child's learning and development achievements at the end of the EYFS. For most children this is at the end of the reception year (YR) in school.
25. The two key indicators of success in LAs are:
- The percentage of children achieving 78 points or more across the 13 assessment scales and at least a score of 6 in each of the Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL) scales – Threshold Indicator;
 - The percentage inequality gap in achievement between the median score for all children and the mean score for the bottom 20 percent – Narrowing the Gap Indicator.
26. The Threshold Indicator has improved slightly over the last three years in Dunstable and Houghton Regis from 47- 48% but remains consistently below the percentage achieved by Central Bedfordshire overall and when compared nationally:
-

Threshold Indicator %	2008	2009	2010
Dunstable/Houghton Regis	47	46	48
Central Bedfordshire	53	53	53
National	49	52	56

27. The Narrowing the Gap Indicator has improved broadly in line with national outcomes but remains below in comparison with the Central Bedfordshire overall:

Gap Indicator %	2008	2009	2010
Dunstable/Houghton Regis	36	35	33
Central Bedfordshire	31	31	30
National	36	34	33

NB Low is Good

28. Any approach to future organisation of EYFS provision in Dunstable and Houghton Regis should therefore consider the need to improve the quality of EYFS provision and outcomes as key drivers.

Key Stage 1

29. For writing, the results for Level 2+, and Level 3 over the last three years in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area are consistently above the national figure. However, although below the Central Bedfordshire average figure in 2008 and 2009, the results are now equal to it in 2010, showing an upward three year trend.
30. For reading the results for Level 2+, and Level 3 over the last three years in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area are consistently above the national figure but consistently below the figure for Central Bedfordshire.
31. For mathematics, the 2010 results show Level 2+ below the Central Bedfordshire figure, but level 3 above the Central Bedfordshire figure, with both results above the national. The average point score (APS) for reading writing and maths for Dunstable/Houghton Regis area is just below the Central Bedfordshire figure but above national.

Key Stage 2

32. There are 6 middle schools, one primary school, one 4 – 13 school and 2 special schools in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area that administer end of Key Stage 2 assessments.
33. In both English and Mathematics combined 2010 outcomes for the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area for Level 4 and above are 5 per cent below the figure for Central Bedfordshire and 6 per cent below the national figure.
34. In both English and Mathematics combined the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above at the end of Key Stage 2 shows an improving 3 year trend in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area.

35. 2010 outcomes for 2 levels of progress in English from KS1 to KS2 in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area are 5 per cent below those for Central Bedfordshire and 11 per cent below the national figure.
36. The 2010 outcomes for 2 levels of progress in Mathematics from KS1 to KS2, in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area are 3 per cent below those for Central Bedfordshire and 9 per cent below the national figure.
37. The 2010 APS for English and Mathematics for the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area are below Central Bedfordshire and national figure.

Key Stage 3

38. In the review area, all of the middle schools are delivering accelerated Key Stage 3 curriculum, in English, Maths and Science..
39. Up until 2009, there have been 'End of Key Stage 3' tests. However, National and LA Key Stage 3 results were not published in 2009. In 2010, Teacher Assessments at KS3 were reported, although not moderated.
40. The Council has three Upper schools that have published Key Stage 3 results in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis Area; these are Manshead CofE VA Upper School, Queensbury Upper School and Northfields Technical College (Up to 2009). Northfields Technical College became All Saints Academy in September 2009
41. The provisional 2010 KS3 results for the Council area are as follows:
42. English: 82% of pupils achieved a level 5 or above. This was above the national average (79%) for 2010. There was, however, a very significant difference between the performance of boys (76%) and girls (89%). The boys under-performed significantly at level 6 or above as well - (35%) compared to 51% for girls. Overall reported performance at level 6 was close to the national average.
43. Mathematics: 85% of pupils achieved a level 5 or more in mathematics, well above the national average of 79%. 64% of pupils achieved a level 6, well above the national average. There was no difference between the performance of boys and girls.
44. Science: 86% of students achieved a level 5 or more in science and 55% achieved a level 6 or more. Both of these figures were well above the national average (80% and 48%). There was no difference in the performance of boys and girls.

45. For the two Upper schools in Dunstable and Houghton Regis area within the Local Authority, both schools have a positive three year trend for Fischer Family Trust KS1 to KS3 CVA scores. Manshead CofE VA Upper school has moved from 92 percentile rank in 2008 to 51 in 2010, and Queensbury has moved from 85 percentile rank to 4 over the same period. Both schools also have a positive three year trend for their percentile rank for actual Key Stage 3 results, with Manshead CofE VA Upper School moving from 51 percentile rank in 2008 to 48 in 2010, and Queensbury Upper School moving from 59 percentile rank to 20 over the same period.

Key Stage 4

46. Currently progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 is below average across the three Upper Schools serving this area (based on a measure of comparing points score of students at Key Stage 2 compared to an estimate of the percentage of students that should achieve five or more grades A* - C including English and mathematics). This comparison results in a 'Fischer Family Trust' estimate for similar students (FFT B) and an estimate for how well similar students progress in the top 25% of schools across England (FFT D).

47.

	5 + A* - C incl. E&M					5+ A*-C					
	2009 actual	Target 5+A*-C EM	FFT B from KS2	FFT D from KS2	2010 actual	2009 actual	FFT B from KS2	FFT D from KS2	2010 actual	5 A-G	TPS
All Saints Academy	24%	30%	27%	32%	29%	36%	46%	52%	51%	86%	341
Manshead	37%	54%	53%	58%	46%	60%	73%	77%	64%	97%	436
Queensbury	49%	50%	49%	54%	42%	60%	70%	75%	70%	95%	393
C. Beds	50%	56%	58%	63%	54.2%	67%	76%	80%	71.5%	94.9%	438

48. Two of the Upper Schools were below the FFT B estimate in 2010 – meaning that progress from Key Stage 2 to 4 is below average. One was at the Fischer B estimate. All three schools are also well below the national average for this measure (this gives an indication of overall attainment compared to all schools nationally). There has therefore been a general picture over the last three years of attainment being well below the national average and progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 being below average.
49. Contextual value added data for each of the schools also shows a relative lack of progress even when contextual factors are accounted for. This measure allows statistical adjustments to be made according to the make-up of a particular cohort of students.
50. Support to raise achievement in Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 3 could also have a positive impact on achievement in Key Stage 4 in the future. Solutions could be found to offer improvement at Key Stage 3 which will in turn contribute to improvement in Key Stage 4. However improving Key Stage 4 performance needs to be seen as a shared responsibility between the schools in the review area, as agreed by the review group.

51. Any plans for re-shaping education provision will need to support improved outcomes at Key Stage 4. Some of the improvements for this group of students might be achieved by factors such as a more effective curriculum that meets students needs and allows them to achieve and progress, higher expectations and better transition (through more effective transition or fewer transition points), and more collaborative planning.

Post 16

52. Achievement in Post 16 school settings is difficult to compare as not all students go into sixth forms, which leads to different cohorts in each school. Central government uses performance tables that measure points score per student (total number of points achieved by a student averaged out for the school) and points score per entry (points score divided by the number of students on average for each school).

2009	Average points score per student	Average points score per entry
All Saints	No data (new school)	No data (new school)
Manshead	799	192
Queensbury	619	188
C.Beds College	579	198
England	721	208

Post 16 2010 results	No.of pupils	Points per student	Points per entry	KS4-5 Value Added	Lower C.I.	Upper C.I.
All Saints	20	645	206.4	999.7	971.2	1028.2
Manshead	101	816.7	189.4	987.2	971.8	1002.7
Queensbury	139	647.5	200.5	996.9	983.6	1010.3
CB College	196	654.8	217.1	100.9	989	1002
Central Beds		739.7	202.1			

53. The Council, in partnership with schools, has subscribed to the ALPs (A level Performance) methodology to evaluate progress between Key Stage 4 and post-16. This approach compares the points score achieved by students with the points achieved at A level. This information is then compared to the progress made by all students within the data-base. The process is based on the aspiration of reaching the 75th percentile (best performing schools/subject within the data base) and then each school/subject is ranked using a nine point scale (or thermometer for easy reference). This produces a challenging target for each school to aim towards. Using this approach a school that achieves 9, 8 or 7 is under-achieving. A school that achieves a 6 or upwards is performing well.

	2008	2009	2010
All Saints	n/a	7	8
Manshead	7	5	7
Queensbury	4	7	5

54. Manshead and Queensbury currently share significant amounts of post-16 provision. This gives a good economy of scale and allows a broader curriculum offer. There are some areas of improvement needed for all three schools. Using the ALPs methodology students in school sixth forms are generally falling further behind and make below average progress from Key Stage 4 (measured over a three year period). School sixth forms offer other courses as well, such as some level 2 courses and BTECs. For level 2 courses there is currently no recognised progress measure. The ALPs method includes BTECs where they are available but only if providers have given this information. A straight comparison between ALPs score, with no further evaluation, is therefore not possible.

14-19

55. In addition to the three Upper schools (13–19) in the area there is one FE College within the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area that also admits students aged 16 from a wider geographical area.
56. Central Bedfordshire College has submitted a proposal to form a University Technical College that would cover the local area including Dunstable/Houghton Regis. The UTC would be a 600 place 14–19 school that specialises in a technical/vocational curriculum. Students would register at this institution solely from the age of 14 onwards. This development, if successful, could have a significant impact on the shape of local provision and could admit students from September 2011.
57. All Saints Academy has been open since September 2009 as a replacement to Northfields Upper School which had been placed in Special Measures and was showing insufficient capacity to improve. Although it is improving the school is still at the stage of needed to consolidate some provision. This means that although the Academy is a willing partner in collaboration pre and post- 16 and has stated its interest in innovative local solutions it has not been able to engage extensively with collaboration to date.
58. The curriculum is likely to change, with the introduction of the English Baccalureate and any proposals made as a result of the Wolf review of vocational education.
59. The proportion of young people NEET (not in education, employment or training) in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area is relatively high. The following is a breakdown of young people in the NEET Group by Ward and total 16-19 cohort in November 2010.
-

60.	Dunstable/Houghton Regis	Total NEET	Cohort Total	% of NEET to Cohort Total
	Caddington Hyde & Slip End	4	198	2%
	Dunstable Central	19	188	10%
	Houghton Hall	17	325	5%
	Icknield	7	385	2%
	Kensworth & Totternhoe	0	131	0%
	Manshead	25	287	9%
	Northfields	22	353	6%
	Parkside	21	265	8%
	Tithe Farm	18	305	6%
	Watling	5	424	1%
	Total	138	2861	5%

61.	Area	Total NEET	Cohort Total	% of NEET to Cohort Total
	Dunstable & Houghton Regis	138	2861	5%
	Rural Central Beds	71	4671	1.5%
	Central Beds East	54	1955	3%
	Leighton Linlade	105	1872	6%
	Total	368	11359	3%

Ofsted

62. 87% of the Lower school provision in Dunstable and Houghton Regis is rated as good or outstanding in overall effectiveness with none in an Ofsted category. 67% of middle schools and all upper schools are rated as satisfactory but with one Middle school currently in an Ofsted category.
63. All lower schools rated as good or outstanding in overall effectiveness are also rated similarly in terms of capacity to improve. At middle school 67% have good or outstanding capacity to improve, the remaining two schools are rated as satisfactory. Two Upper schools are satisfactory and All Saints Academy has good capacity to improve.
64. A full list of Ofsted ratings for schools in the review area at the time of writing can be seen at Appendix F. (At the time of validation of the data for Appendix F, and circulating it, there was one school in an Ofsted category, this has now increased to two).

Sustainability

Surplus places

65. For the purpose of this section of the report the geographical area has been divided into 4 groupings: Rural, South Dunstable, North Dunstable, and Houghton Regis. See map provided as Appendix D. Each area has the following provision:

Rural: 5 Lower Schools, 1 middle deemed primary taking ages 4-13
 South: 6 Lower, 2 Middles and 2 Upper Schools
 North: 5 Lower, 3 Middle, 1 Upper
 HRegis: 5 Lower, 1 Primary, 1 Middle

66. Across the review area, as at January 2010 there were a total of 990 surplus places at Lower school, 674 surplus middle school places and 258 surplus upper school places. **NB: Surplus places are cost drivers as each surplus place represents a cost to the education of other pupils in the Council.**

67. As at January 2010 there were eight mainstream schools with 25% or more (and at least 30 places) surplus capacity in the area. These are:

School	Net capacity	Numbers on roll	% surplus
Ardley Hill Lower	300	200	33%
Beecroft Lower	300	222	26%
Caddington Village School (Year R)	300	215	28%
Downside Lower	150	108	28%
Thornhill Lower	200	147	27%
Tithe Farm Lower	300	152	49%
Totternhoe Lower	145	69	52%
Brewers Hill Middle	480	212	56%
In addition the following schools also have considerable surpluses			
Mill Vale Middle	560	434	23%
Streetfield Middle	520	397	24%

68. At upper school level Manshead and Queensbury are at capacity and all of the surplus places in the review area relate to All Saints Academy in its current buildings. Planned new buildings will provide a 740 place upper school with a design that provides for expansion to a secondary school in line with the original expression of interest submitted to the DCSF. The Academy has submitted a request to the YPLA for additional funding to enable the school to become an 11-18 Academy.

69. These surplus places are not evenly distributed across the sectors, or indeed geographically across the area. Action is required if surpluses are to be reduced to a more manageable level (10%) across the area as a whole but some flexibility is required within the system, particularly allowing for the forecast growth in numbers in the area and to enable parental preferences to be met. This could be achieved through a reduction in the published admission numbers at a number of schools, based on their recent intakes.

70. There are a total of 4845 places at lower school level which equates to an admission number of 969 at age 4+. At middle school level the capacity of 3512 equates to 878 admission places and at upper school this equates to 750 admission places.

71. In comparison, recent admissions at 4+ have been about 800, Middle School intakes have been about 735 and Upper School intakes about 700, hence overall there are sufficient places across the area although there is still be a mismatch between the supply and demand for places.
72. The demand requires provision in the area to cater for some 27 Forms of Entry (FE), which is approximately 810 places per year, of which 23 FE (690 places) is in the immediate Dunstable and Houghton Regis area and 4 FE (120 places) is in the rural area.
73. The retention of students between year R and Year 11 in the area is poor with a historical net loss of approximately 150 students moving out of provision within the area, with slight increases in the rate of loss at the end of year 4, but also through to year 8 suggesting parental choices to move children to provision outside of the area and possibly to other authorities with two tier provision. Some of this loss is known to be as a result of a lack of Roman Catholic provision at Middle and Upper school levels.
74. The main issues arising from this analysis are:
- Lack of RC provision at Middle/Upper School
 - Overall level of excessive surplus
 - Significant surplus at individual schools
 - Mismatch between provision and need across the area as a whole
 - Specific mismatch between provision across the phases within Houghton Regis
 - Predominance of Upper school provision in the south
 - Poor retention rate in the area - overall loss of pupils from cohorts year on year
 - Need to match current provision against future need

Future need

75. The draft Core strategy for Luton and Southern Bedfordshire identifies Dunstable and Houghton Regis as a growth area. In particular, to 2026 it identifies proposed allocations of:

North Houghton Regis extension – 5150 dwellings
 Dunstable North & South area – 1655 dwellings
 Houghton Regis urban area – 398 dwellings
 Other Rural areas – 638 dwellings

76. North Houghton Regis urban extension also proposes a further 1850 dwellings between 2026-2031.
77. The local impact of these developments will clearly be dependant upon the anticipated rates of specific developments and the actual location of some of the assumed sites. However, grouping these into the two main categories (major sites and “infill”) gives us:
- Major extension to the North of Dunstable and Houghton Regis – total 7,000 new dwellings (2011 – 2031) See map at Appendix E.

- Infill developments – total 2,691 dwellings (2011-2026)
78. Based on the “traditional” pupil place planning assumptions arising from new developments this will give rise to an additional 388 pupils/age group (12/13 Forms of Entry) of which 280 pupils/age group (9/10FE) will be generated from the allocations to the north of Houghton Regis.
79. Whilst some of this, particularly the infill/rural developments will be able to be catered for from within the existing infrastructure, thereby removing some of the current surplus, there will also be the need to consider the considerable impact the major allocations to the north of Houghton Regis/Dunstable will have in terms of existing/new provision and the known lack of school provision within this area, particularly at Middle and Upper School level.
80. Based on current intakes, the effect of this at reception age would be expected to be:
- Dunstable North & South area - Could be catered for in existing schools dependent upon location
 - Houghton Regis Urban area - Could be catered for in existing schools dependent upon location
 - North Houghton Regis Extension and Urban Extension - Additional 7.5 - 8.5FE required
 - Other rural areas - Would take up some surplus but may need extra dependent upon location
81. It is therefore expected that overall, the need will grow to an eventual total of approximately 1163 (38FE) pupils in the area at 4+ i.e. an increase of approx 45% on current numbers.
82. If these figures were translated into the Middle and Upper Schools, this would give rise to the need for a similar increase at Middle School level i.e. extra 285 pupils (9.5FE) per year group and an extra 413 pupils (13FE) per year group at Upper School level.
83. The main issues in terms of future need are:
- The need for new schools, new sites and increased provision across all sectors to meet the growth.
 - The ability of existing schools to match the demand – i.e. the location of developments vis-à-vis existing surplus capacity
 - The potential “shift” in infrastructure needs
 - The potential that some existing schools will be “in the wrong place” to meet future need.

Parental Preferences and Catchment Data

84. A key measure of the relative popularity of each of the schools in the area can be seen by analysing the extent to which applicants for a school record it as their first preference when submitting an admission application. This can be expressed as a percentage of the school’s published admission number. An analysis of this data over the past three years is provided at Appendix H.

85. This shows the popularity of the voluntary aided schools in the area with all four lower schools averaging over 80% first preferences for the past three years. This is reflected at Middle and Upper school level with Ashton Middle and Manshead Upper attracting more than 100% on average over the past three years.
86. The analysis also illustrates the popularity of Lark Rise Academy and Eaton Bray Lower, due to convert to Academy status on the 1st April 2011, both exceeding 100% of first preferences over the past three years. St Christopher's Lower and Kings Houghton Middle have also averaged over 100% in the past three years. Caddington Village School's year 5 admission has also shown a similar figure although this is based on a very low additional intake at year 5.
87. Totternhoe, Beecroft, Tithe Farm and Downside Lower and Brewers Hill Middle have all averaged less than 50% first preferences over the past three years and are carrying considerable surplus places as outlined earlier in this report. In comparing parental preferences with Ofsted judgements and standards achieved by schools in the area there appears to be no direct correlation.
88. An analysis of catchment data indicates that many Dunstable and Houghton Regis schools are not retaining their local children and pupil choice patterns support this conclusion. Eight lower schools, for example, had more pupils in their reception classes in summer 2010 from outside of their traditional catchment area than from within the area. Similarly, four Lower schools had more catchment area pupils attending other schools within Central Bedfordshire (incl DHR) than attending the catchment area school. Whilst not as extreme, a similar picture emerges at Middle and Upper School level. This intake pattern makes it more difficult to define what is meant by each school's local community.

Recruitment and Retention

89. There are 4 schools with interim leadership or acting leadership receiving support from School Improvement in the Dunstable and H.Regis area. These are:
 - Ardley Hill Lower
 - Downside Lower
 - St Mary's Lower (Caddington)
 - Watling Lower
90. 19 of the 21 Lower school head teachers in the review area have indicated that in their local experience the current 3 tier system makes it difficult to recruit and retain good quality staff particularly at Key Stage 2 and in leadership positions due to the curtailing of the primary years education. Senior staff move to primary schools for the experience needed to enable career progression.

Early Years and Extended Services

Early Years Provision for 3 and 4 year olds in the Private Voluntary and Independent Settings (PVI's)

91. A number of early years provisions are based on school sites in dedicated use buildings, which have been funded through Sure Start Capital over the last 5-7 years. This provision is based at Thomas Whitehead Lower School, Downside Lower School, Eaton Bray Lower School, Kensworth Lower School, St.Christopher's Lower School, Studham Lower School , Totternhoe Lower School and Watling Lower School. Provision on Tithe Farm Lower and Queensbury Upper was funded from an earlier stream of New Opportunit'es Fund Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative Funding.
92. At present there are sufficient places to fulfil the needs amongst the three and four year olds, and the few places for two year olds which are available in Central Bedfordshire. However recent Government announcements suggest that there will be an increase in both the number of places, and the hours available for two year olds which will begin to put pressure on the existing settings, combined with potential housing growth – especially in-fill building.
93. Opportunities and challenges include:
 - Provision based on a school site supports closer liaison and increasing levels of quality within the early years sector
 - There is an opportunity for improved transition.
 - It ensures that the authority can deliver on its statutory duty to deliver places for 3 & 4 year olds offering a flexible, free extended entitlement (often not available in community buildings)
 - It clearly fulfils the Education vision, offering as it does places for children from the age of 3 or sometimes even 2 as part of the 0-19 education vision.
 - One of the biggest challenges with the PVI's can be the constant change in Management, and therefore it would be beneficial to ensure that in the long term, it is easier for a school to take over the running of an early years provision in case of problems with the management
 - Enhanced opportunities to improve outcomes at Foundation Stage Profile
 - Unlikely to be sufficient future capital to continue the move onto schools sites from community buildings but if capital were available continuing this programme would be beneficial
94. Desired/Improved outcomes include:
 - Improve the quality of the settings
 - Improved transitions
 - Improved outcomes for children at end of Foundation Stage
 - More opportunities for Early Intervention
 - Reduction in levels of child and family poverty

Nursery Schools

95. There are two nursery schools within the review area. Both are on sites adjacent to lower schools. Westfield Nursery School is on a shared site with Beecroft Lower School and Willow Nursery School on a shared site with Hadrian Lower School. They are both high quality settings achieving a good and outstanding Ofsted respectively.
96. Both nursery schools had been under-occupied for some years, based on the number of places available. A recent change in funding (ahead of the introduction of the Single Funding Formula) has meant that they have become funded by numbers of occupied places rather than numbers of available places.
97. Opportunities and challenges include:
 - From April 2011 onwards the two nursery schools are likely to be challenged by the introduction of the Single Funding Formula.
 - Possible future opportunities are to consider a realignment of the management of the schools, thereby reducing costs to ensure continuing provision and available places.

Childrens Centres

98. Several Childrens Centres are positioned on school sites across the area. There are bases on Downside Lower School, Beecroft Lower School, Hawthorn Park Lower School, Tithe Farm Lower School, Slip End Lower School and Eaton Bray Lower School. They are well positioned on school sites, to be at the centre of their communities, and easily accessible for new parents and for families with children attending the lower school provision. Some outreach services are being delivered at other Lower School sites across the area.
99. Families are using the Centres increasingly, and the range and numbers of services, working with partners, are being increased all the time, as is the outreach work with harder to reach families. As numbers of families in the area grow, increasing pressure will be put on the current physical resources, meaning that more services will have to be delivered in alternative venues across the area or expansion of bases will have to be funded.
100. Opportunities and challenges include:
 - The Childrens Centre management and development was in three clear phases, and once the third phase is complete it will be possible to reconfigure and consolidate aspects of management and delivery across the area
 - The challenges ahead will be to ensure that the centres are adequately funded
 - In this area with high levels of deprivation the Childrens Centres are an essential element of the Child Poverty and Early Intervention agenda.

- The buildings are clearly a significant asset to the community, and all opportunities should be taken to ensure as much community use as is practicable.

Out of School Including Extended School Services

101. Many Schools across the area offer Extended Provision, especially Childcare. Schools where there is current Out of School Provision include: Ardley Hill, Thomas Whitehead, Caddington Village, Dunstable Icknield, Downside, Eaton Bray, Hawthorn Park, Hillcrest, Lancot Lower, Kings Houghton Middle, Lark Rise, St.Christophers, St.Marys Caddington, Thornhill, Totternhoe and Watling,
102. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment is presently being undertaken and this will identify specific requirements across the area. The last assessment did not identify many gaps in after school provision, however some clubs have subsequently closed due to lack of numbers and unsustainability. As the economy improves and more parents are able to work, provision may need to be increased.

Whilst Out of School provision does enhance outcomes in schools the main driver is economic as they enable parents to work. Therefore they are essential as part of the Child Poverty Strategy to improve the financial circumstances of families.

103. Opportunities and challenges include:
- The opportunities to increase the range of provision in schools where a need is identified but no provision presently exists
 - Ensure in recessionary times that provision stays viable or can be sustained until it becomes viable.
 - The challenge going forward is to ensure that the accommodation is available for this provision

Use of resources

Revenue cost per pupil

104. Appendix G illustrates the staffing costs (consistent financial reporting outturns 2009/10) per pupil (January 2010) for each of the schools in the review area.
105. At Lower school level the authority average staffing cost is approximately £3,480.00 per pupil.
106. In the review area there are eight lower schools with higher than average staffing costs per pupil. These are small community and voluntary controlled schools below approximately 180 places.
107. At Middle school level the authority average staffing cost is approximately £3449.00 per pupil.
108. In the review area three of the middle schools have higher than average costs. Brewers Hill Middle with 212 pupils has the highest staffing cost per pupil of any Middle school in Central Bedfordshire at £4971.00 per pupil.

109. At Upper school level the Council's sample size does not allow robust comparison although all of those within the review area are either within 2% or below the Central Bedfordshire average staffing costs of £3939.00 per pupil.
110. In undertaking analysis across all phases of gross revenue and of property costs per pupil a similar trend appears showing the high costs per pupil of small schools.
111. Co-management of small schools and the removal of surpluses elsewhere could potentially make a significant impact towards the more effective use of revenue resources in the area.

Suitability of Buildings

112. Suitability is described as how well premises meet the needs of pupils, teachers and other users, and contribute towards raising standards of education. The assessments concentrate mainly on the numbers and characteristics of each type of space with a final score (per pupil) provided to enable a comparison of one school against another.
113. Analysis of the current suitability of schools as teaching and learning environments in the review area indicates that Watling Lower, Studham VC Lower and Dunstable Icknield Lower are the least suitable and potentially represent considerable investment demand as lower schools.
114. There are significant suitability issues across the review area which any programme of school reorganisation would need to consider carefully to ensure that the situation is not worsened with alternative use of buildings or when the removal of surpluses removes flexibility in the use of the current school buildings.

Condition of Buildings

115. Analysis of the 2009/10 condition data for the schools indicates that there is a considerable maintenance backlog across the schools with an assessed need for approx £13-14m across the estate to address condition related need. This equates to an average of £1690/pupil although there are some schools where the sum is considerably higher. Notably, there are 7 schools where the average is over £2,500/pupil (Kensworth, St.Mary's RC, Thornhill and Tithe Farm Lower schools, Ashton VA and Mill Vale Middle and Queensbury Upper schools). At Ashton this represents over £1.57m, at Mill Vale £1.34m and at Queensbury in excess of £4m.

Special Needs & Inclusion

116. Lancot Lower School hosts a 6 place Lower School Provision for children with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties whose needs cannot be met in their own local provision. Children attending this provision have a statement of Special Educational Needs, although on very rare occasions and on the basis of assessed need, a child may attend Lancot Lower School provision on an assessment placement during the period of statutory assessment.

117. Streetfield Middle School and Manshead Upper School host the resourced provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders in this area of Central Bedfordshire. Each school is funded as a 6 place provision but they can admit over numbers with agreement from the school.
118. Priory Middle School currently hosts the resourced school provision for Dyslexia. There are currently 3 pupils in the provision (1 in Year 7 and 2 in Year 8) which is funded for 7 pupils. Only one of these pupils has a statement of SEN. When the pupils leave, this arrangement completes guarantees given by the legacy Council that pupils could continue in this provision. A proposal has been made to discontinue this unit and to extend provision across all schools through training to both teachers and teaching assistants in the accredited Dyslexia training course available through University of Northampton and delivered locally.
119. Reports have been presented to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Council's Executive setting out possible options for consideration of the area special school model in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis area and for the delivery of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) in Central Bedfordshire, focused on the development of provision that can meet local needs in mainstream schools.
120. Expressions of interest have been received from schools in the review area as providers for the re-commissioned pupil referral unit, including those for years 9 and 10 at the Kingsland Campus in Houghton Regis. Statistically the highest need for years 7 to 11 in Central Bedfordshire is in the review area and local provision is therefore essential as an outcome of this review and of the commissioning process that will evaluate the expressions of interest.

Shortlisted Options and Next Steps

121. Members of the Committee are requested to comment on shortlisted options at this meeting without commenting on individual schools. Likewise, the Executive will consider the options paper and their preferred option on 5th April 2011. Subsequently, the report on 31st May 2011 will bring details on the effect on schools.
122. The process requires the detailed appraisal of each option in terms of the following themes and criteria:
 - Educational – the ability to deliver the aspirations of the Council's Education Vision, as defined in the guiding principles and local objectives.
 - Financial – Capital and revenue modelling, including forecast impacts on Dedicated Schools Grant, requirements for capital expenditure and options for funding sources.
 - Community - impact on social/community cohesion, regeneration, community use and rural locations, and potential environmental impact.
 - Property – Site values, construction costs, alternative uses of surplus property, potential to reduce the carbon emissions arising from schools

- Corporate capacity to deliver - Support required for the process of consultation, implementation and change management, including workforce, curriculum and ICT development.
- School and site specific - Impact on specific schools, on school staff affected by the proposals, any contractual commitments i.e. facilities management, third party users. Impact on travel times/distances to nearest schools.
- Equalities - Equalities Impact Assessment to determine the impact of the proposed change on compliance with equality legislation

123 The outcome will be reported to Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 29th March 2011 and to the Council's Executive on the 31st May 2011. There will then be full public consultation on any proposed changes.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Map -Transforming teaching and learning review areas

Appendix B – Membership of the Dunstable and Houghton Regis review group

Appendix C – Dunstable and Houghton Regis review criteria

Appendix D – Map - Dunstable and Houghton Regis review area

Appendix E - Map North Houghton Regis growth area

Appendix F - Ofsted ratings for schools in the review area

Appendix G – Staffing costs (consistent financial reporting outturns 2009/10) per pupil (January 2010) for each of the schools in the review area.

Appendix H – 2008 - 2010 first preference admissions as a percentage of schools published admission numbers

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

Transforming Teaching and Learning: Central Bedfordshire's Education Vision.
Executive 9th March 2010

DfE Schools White Paper "The Importance of Teaching"

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands