
Meeting: Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 17 January 2012
Subject: Alternative Future Provision of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)
Report of: Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services
Summary: Attached at Appendix A is a draft Executive Report (March 2012) which provides the decision making framework to secure the future provision of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). The Committee is asked to comment on the draft Executive report.

The implementation of the agreed options will take place between September 2012 and September 2013.

Advising Officer: Edwina Grant Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services
Contact Officer: Pete Dudley
Assistant Director Learning, Commissioning and Partnerships
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. The provision of effective and efficient local services for Special Education Needs forms a key element in delivering the Central Bedfordshire Children's Services Education Vision.

This report supports Priority 2 of Central Bedfordshire's Strategic Plan 2009-2011, Educating, Protecting and Providing Opportunities for Children and Young People. The information also supports the Children and Young People's Plan priorities, Priority 2 Protecting Children and keeping them safe and Priority 1, increased educational achievement.

Financial:

2. These proposals will not increase costs for the Council
3. The PRU is fully funded by Direct Schools Grant (DSG) and the transfer of the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) from schools if they exclude pupils.

4. The existing funding available for this provision will be utilised taking account of any new school funding regulations. Schools will be able to buy into additional support or programmes should they wish to.
5. Additionally, the current Pupil Referral Unit buildings will continue to be modernised using available capital monies. Should a partnership of schools be successful in a bid for an Alternative Provision Free School, this may bring additional refurbishment money that would not have been available directly to the Council.

Legal:

6. Legal advice will be sought in accordance with the current legislation at the time the provision is established.

Risk Management:

7. There will be no difference regarding risk to pupils as they will continue to receive appropriate provision. The risk of the Alternative Provision Free School bid not being successful is mitigated against by an alternative proposal to deliver a similar model via a commission. Any risks will be managed to ensure provision is not disrupted and statutory duties are met.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

8. Consultation with staff and unions will need to take place regarding any proposed changes to staffing structures required. TUPE regulations would apply to the transfer of existing staff. Staff will be kept up to date with developments and involved in informing any proposals.
9. Any commission from schools to provide the medical needs aspect of the service will be preceded by a consultation with all relevant staff and their Trade Unions through a TUPE consultation.

Equalities/Human Rights:

10. Public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to foster good relations in respect of the following protected characteristics; age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
11. This statutory duty includes requirements to:
 - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - Take steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
 - Encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.
12. The work being undertaken to make the Pupil Referral Unit provision ensures that pupils at risk of being out of school are able to access their entitlement to a full time appropriate education.

Community Safety:

13. Not applicable.

Sustainability:

14. The proposals outlined in the report will ensure that the Council fulfils its Statutory Duty to ensure education for pupils who are in alternative provision to schools

Procurement:

15. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:**The Committee is asked to:-**

1. Comment on the draft Executive report.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Draft Executive Report – 27 March 2012 – Alternative Future Provision of the Pupil Referral Unit