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**Meeting:** Schools Forum  
**Date:** 5 March 2012  
**Subject:** Central Bedfordshire Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)  
**Report of:** Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services  
**Summary:** The report outlines the arrangements for the use of Central Bedfordshire's Pupil Referral Unit in the Academic Year 2011/2012, and proposals for the future.

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**Advising Officer:** Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services  
**Contact Officer:** Helen Redding, Head of School Support  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Council

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

**To take note of the current position of the PRU and support proposals for the future (as is required for provision that is funded through DSG).**

**Background**

1. At its meeting on 15 February 2011, the Executive agreed that the Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services (now Executive Member Children's Services) takes forward detailed work on the future delivery of PRU provision in Central Bedfordshire from 2012 onwards to take account of the commissioning strategy, any new and relevant legislation and any changes to school funding arrangements.
2. On 31 March 2011, the Service Level Agreement with Bedford Borough Council regarding the operation of the Pupil Referral Unit as a shared service ended. On 1 April 2011 60% of the staff transferred to Central Bedfordshire. Transition arrangements were put in place for the Summer term and Central Bedfordshire PRU was formally registered with the DfE on 1 September 2011.
3. Provision for primary age pupils was successfully commissioned to a partnership of 3 Lower Schools in Dunstable and Houghton Regis from 1 September 2011. The secondary age aspect was retained by Central Bedfordshire while detailed work was carried out to plan future delivery of the provision.

## **National changes since February 2011**

4. The regulatory landscape has changed since February 2011.
5. A PRU was initially required to have a delegated budget in 2012/13, but this has now been deferred until 2013/14, pending the outcome of the consultation on School Funding Reform which was completed in October 2011. The outcome of this national consultation is not yet known.
6. Section 3 of the Children, Schools and Families Act 2010 extended the duty in the Education Act 1996 to provide a full time education for all children who, for reasons related to illness, exclusion or otherwise, would not receive suitable education unless arrangements were made for them. At the time of the 2010 Schools White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' the provisions in section 3 had not been commenced. The Department for Education (DfE) made a Commencement Order which brought this duty into force from 1 September 2011.
7. Emergent guidance from the DfE suggests that increasingly, schools should be collectively responsible for providing for the needs of excluded pupils and the future financial framework is expected to support this aim.

## **Summary of work carried out to date, and use of the Dedicated Schools Grant**

8. The budget for the PRU in 2011/12 was £1,757,334 to reflect the cost of the service in its disaggregated form, and in 2012/13 is £1,335,552
9. A consultation on a new staffing structure to meet Central Bedfordshire's needs was initiated and concluded in the Summer Term, and was fully implemented on 1 January 2012. Some staff opted to take early redundancy.
10. The cost of the disaggregated staff in April 2011 was £1,678,252 per annum.
11. The cost of the current staffing structure is £1,021,242 per annum. It consists of:
  - (a) Medical Needs Team: 1 Coordinator Medical Needs Provision, 6 teaching staff (one covering the Primary age range), and 1 administrator. Supply teachers are utilised when numbers of pupils requiring teaching are higher.
  - (b) Excluded Pupils: 1 Teacher in Charge, 1 Deputy Teacher in Charge, 1 Coordinator Behaviour, Attendance and Reintegration, 6 teachers (including Maths English and Science), 6 Specialist TAs and 1 administrator. 1 teacher and 1 IT Technician left at Christmas and are being replaced with 2 additional TAs.
12. Some alternative curriculum provision, the Exams Officer function and IT support are bought in from the colleges and other providers.
13. A Management Committee has been set up and operates according to national regulations and is meeting regularly to oversee the governance of the PRU. It has representatives from all phases of schools.

14. Staff have been provided with high quality training on managing behaviour, and pupils are now set clear expectations regarding their behaviour.
15. The learning environment has been improved, and there is a detailed plan of further improvements.
16. As of February 2012, there are 40 excluded pupils on roll, 28 of whom have been excluded since September. 31 pupils are in Key Stage 4, and 9 in Key Stage 3 (6 of whom are Year 9). 11 pupils have a second permanent exclusion.
17. Since September 4 pupils have been reintegrated into schools, and 5 more are in the process of being reintegrated.
18. As of February 2012 the Medical needs team are teaching 45 pupils.

### **Future Plans**

19. The Upper Schools, working as a Consortium, came forward in June 2011 expressing a desire to take responsibility for provision for pupils through a bid for a Free School Alternative Provision. They have also shared their vision and proposals with middle school colleagues to gain their view and input, and there is now a Middle School Representative on the Steering Group. Since then representative headteachers, alongside the headteacher of Oak Bank special school, the Teacher in Charge of the PRU and a Children's Services representative have been exploring national examples of good practice in order to inform future proposals. The bid is due to be submitted by 24 February 2012.
20. An alternative model of delivery through a commission is being developed alongside the schools bid as an alternative model, should this bid not be successful.