
Meeting: Schools Forum
Date: 4 March 2013
Subject: Central Bedfordshire Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Children's Services

Summary: The report sets out the improvements of the PRU buildings to date, and recommends that the underspend in 2012/13 be used to offset some of the capital costs to date.

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

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Schools Forum is asked to:

- 1. Take note of the current position of the PRU budget and approve use of the forecast underspend of £50,000 to offset costs of improving the PRU buildings on the Kingsland Site in 2012/13.**
- 2. Approve any additional balance in the PRU budget at the end of the Financial Year be transferred for the same purpose**

Background and recommendation

1. The School Forum Regulations accompanying table regarding powers and responsibilities states that 'Central spend oncapital expenditure funded from revenue' is proposed by the LA and decided by School Forum.
2. When Central Bedfordshire took over responsibility for the PRU in April 2011, the buildings were in a significant state of disrepair. The staff underwent a restructure consultation and the costs of the running of the PRU were reduced by £400k.
3. Works were initiated to ensure that both pupils and staff had a significantly better learning environment that demonstrated that they were valued, and that they would value and respect.

4. The works to date have included replacing the door system, replacing the windows and remodelling the old Design and Technology area to make a new staff and pupil entrance, meeting area, office area and new classroom. The previous entrance was at the back of the building, was difficult for visitors to find, and was part shared with the new UTC. In order to utilise all of the resources available to improve the PRU building and add to the capital coming from the EFA to refurbish the buildings further for the Alternative Provision Free School, it is proposed that the forecast underspend at the PRU be used to offset some of these costs. The underspend has been achieved due to lower staffing costs than anticipated (on disaggregation most staff were at the top of their scale but when replaced, have been replaced with lower cost staff). Also when teaching staff have left or reduced their hours, they have been replaced with an increased number of support staff at a lower cost. The costs of the works to date will be provided at the meeting as they are being checked by Property and Assets.
5. The PRU now has access to much improved learning resources and a much improved learning environment, which benefits the current pupils and staff, and will support the Alternative Provision Free School on its opening in September 2013.
6. Schools Forum is asked to approve the transfer of the forecast underspend of £50k, plus agree to any balance at the end of the financial year to be transferred to offset the cost of improving this provision to date.