

Appendix **B**

# **Consultation on the proposed closure of Streetfield Middle School, Dunstable Road, Caddington.**

**Monday 24 February 2014 -  
Monday 7 April 2014**

## 1. Introduction

Councils have a duty to ensure there are enough suitable school places for children aged 5-16 (as per Section 14 of the Education Act 1996). The Council's role is to promote parental choice, diversity, high standards and fair access to education (Education and Inspections Act 2006).

To help meet these duties a Council has the power to close schools where no other viable options are available.

Possible reasons for closing a school include where:

- it is surplus to requirements (e.g. as a result of an area-wide reorganisation and/or there are sufficient places in neighbouring schools to accommodate displaced pupils)
- it is to be amalgamated/ merged with another school
- it is failing and there is no viable sponsored academy solution
- it is to acquire, lose or change religious character or
- it is being replaced by a new school.

Central Bedfordshire Council is proposing to close Streetfield Middle School because the current and projected pupil numbers make the school unviable.

This document explains the reasons for proposing to close the school and how you can have your say.

The Council is also currently consulting on proposals to close two other middle schools in the Dunstable area for the same reasons. You can also have your say, by responding to the separate consultations, on the proposals to close:

- Brewers Hill Middle School (Aldbanks, Dunstable) and
- Ashton CofE VA Middle School (High Street North, Dunstable).

Consultation documents and responses forms are available from the schools concerned and from the Councils website at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations) . You can also request copies by email from [admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) and by calling the School Admissions helpline on T.0300 300 8037.

## 2. Background

There have been lots of changes taking place in Dunstable and Houghton Regis schools over the last few years; many have taken advantage of greater powers given to them by Government to change their school, in response to parental demand. The governing bodies of maintained schools in the area, which have approached the Council for permission to consult on a change of age range, were able to provide proof of parental support at that early stage in response to their initial surveys. This support was further demonstrated during the consultation process for each proposal and was one of the factors that were considered by the Council when approving a requested change of age range.

Likewise, for academies that were required to ask the Secretary of State for Education for permission to change their age range, the level of parental support was again one of the factors that were considered when approving the proposal.

In both Dunstable and Houghton Regis there has been a shift from the three tier system of lower, middle and upper schools towards a two tier primary and secondary school model as a result of these changes.

This shift has led to many of the previous feeder schools converting to primary schools. This has led to fewer pupils applying to middle schools for the intake at Year 5. Also the four former upper schools have extended their age ranges, meaning that some pupils are leaving middle schools to start secondary school in year 7. The combination of these factors means that pupil numbers at Streetfield Middle School have fallen significantly as a result of these changes. We have now reached a point where falling pupil numbers means the Council needs to consider the future viability of the school.

The funding that schools receive comes to the Council from Central Government and is passed directly to the Council's maintained schools in accordance with our local funding formula (academies receive their funding direct from Central Government). A maintained school's funding allocation is predominantly based upon the total number of pupils they have on roll and the total number of pupils that are due to move in and out of the school during that academic year. Because of falling pupil numbers, the budget for Streetfield Middle School is due to fall by 24.3% for 2014/15 alone, and this decrease, and projected decreases going forward, places the school in a financially unviable position. With such a significantly reduced budget, the school will find it difficult to employ sufficient teachers to enable the delivery of a full curriculum.

The table below sets out the current pupil numbers at Streetfield Middle School, the projected numbers in September 2014 based on actual applications, and projected numbers for September 2015 based on assumptions regarding applications. Streetfield Middle School has a Published Admission Number of 130 which is the total number of children that the school is able to admit for each year group.

### Current and Projected Pupil Numbers at Streetfield Middle School

Year Group	Current number of pupils – as at 15 January 2014	Projected number of pupils for September 2014	Projected number of pupils for September 2015
5	78	22	0
6	86	78	22
7	85	29	26
8	114	85	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>77</b>
Total number of places available at the school	520	520	520
Percentage of school places filled	The school is 69.8% full	The school would be 41.2% full	The school would be 14.8% full

The projected figures are based upon applicants' 'first preferences'. There are sufficient places within Streetfield Middle School to admit all of the children who have applied for a place, in year 5, at the school as a 'first preference'. Due to the places that are currently available within other Dunstable middle schools, children who have applied for a place within an alternative Dunstable middle school as their 'first preference' and have named Streetfield Middle School as their 'second preference' will be allocated a place within their

'first preference' school. Second and third preferences for Streetfield Middle School will not therefore need to be considered.

As described above, low pupil numbers make the school no longer educationally or financially viable and keeping this school open would not be in the best educational interests of their pupils.

### 3. Our proposal

The Council is proposing to close Streetfield Middle School. The Council has considered other options (see question the Frequently Asked Questions on page seven) but the fall in pupil numbers, both current and projected, means that the school is not able to deliver the full curriculum and the school is unviable.

Should the proposal go forward and the closure of the school be approved, the timeframe and process would be as follows. **Please note that this timescale would need to be reviewed nearer the time depending on actual numbers at the school.**

September 2014	
Year 5	Children for the new Year 5 group are admitted.
Year 6	Parents of Year 6 children are invited to apply for transfer to a secondary school in Year 7 (to transfer in September 2015).
Year 7	Year 7 operates, but on a reduced size of year group.
Year 8	Parents of Year 8 children are invited to apply for transfer to a secondary school in Year 9 (to transfer in September 2015). This will be the last Upper transfer in Dunstable.

April 2015	
Year 7	Parents of Year 7 children are invited to consider making an application to transfer to a secondary school in Year 8 (to transfer in September 2015).  This is known as an in-year application as it happens outside of the normal transfer point.

September 2015	
Year 5	No new pupils are admitted.
Year 6	Parents of Year 6 children are invited to apply for transfer to a secondary school in Year 7 (to transfer in September 2016).
Year 7	Year 7 operates, but on a reduced size of year group.
Year 8	Year 8 operates, but on a reduced size of year group.

April 2016	
Year 6	<p>Any Year 6 children whose parents haven't made an application to transfer to a secondary school will be sent an application to state a preference for a school.</p> <p>If no application is received by the end of May a place at the nearest Secondary school with places will be allocated.</p>
Year 7	<p>Parents of Year 7 children are invited to consider making an application to transfer to a secondary school in Year 8 (to transfer in September 2015).</p> <p>This is known as an in-year application as it happens outside of the normal transfer point. If no application is received by the end of May a place at the nearest Secondary school with places in Year 8 for September will be allocated.</p>
Year 8	<p>Parents of any Year 8 children remaining in the school are invited to apply for a place in Year 9 at a secondary school (to transfer in September 2016).</p> <p>If no application is received by the end of May a place at the nearest Secondary school with places in Year 9 for September will be allocated.</p>

We recognise that this proposal to close the school may be unsettling for pupils, staff, parents and carers and we are keen to hear from all those people who want to have their say on the proposals during the consultation. You will find a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) starting on page seven of this document which may help to address some immediate concerns that you have. You are also welcome to raise queries via the School Admissions helpline on T. 0300 300 8037 or at the public meeting that is being held at the school on Wednesday 5 March (see page six for details).

#### **4. The consultation process**

The Council is required to consult with a range of people and organisations including:

- Parents and carers of the children in the school
- The school's governing body
- The school's teachers and other staff
- The governing bodies, teachers and staff of other schools that may be affected
- Parents and carers of children at other schools that may be affected e.g. at feeder schools
- The local diocese and other faith groups
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Members of Parliament

**You can have your say online at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations)** or you can complete pages 12 and 13 of this document and return them to the FREEPOST address provided at the end of the form. As well as providing feedback on the Council's

proposed closure of Streetfield Middle School, you can also submit an alternative proposal for the school. All responses should be returned by **5.00pm Monday 7 April 2014**.

We will also hold a public meeting at Streetfield Middle School on **Wednesday 5 March 2014** at 7.00 pm which is open to all interested parties. We are also meeting with the staff, union representatives and governors of Streetfield Middle School.

The timetable for the consultation and decision making process is set out below. At the end of this consultation, if the Council decides to pursue closure of the school, it would then have to go through another stage of consultation (a Statutory Notice period) before any final decision could be made in August.

### Consultation Timetable

Action	Timescale/Deadline
Six week consultation period begins	Monday 24 February 2014.
Staff, Governors and trade union meeting	Wednesday 26 February at 4.00pm at Streetfield Middle School.
Public meeting	Wednesday 5 March 2014 at 7.00pm at Streetfield Middle School.
End of six week consultation period	Monday 7 April 2014.
Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee meet to consider the responses received to the consultation  This meeting is open to the public **	Wednesday 7 May 2014 at 7.00pm at the Grove Theatre, Dunstable.
Council's Executive meet to consider responses to consultation and decide next course of action  This meeting is open to the public **	Tuesday 27 May 2014 at 9.30am at Priory House, Chicksands.
If decision is made to proceed with the closure, Statutory Notices will be published and a four week period for comments and/or objections will begin	Monday 9 June 2014.
End of Statutory Notice period	Monday 7 July 2014.
Final decision regarding the proposal to be made by the Council's Executive Committee  This meeting is open to the public **	Tuesday 19 August 2014 at 9.30am at Priory House, Chicksands.

\*\* for information regarding these meetings, please see page 11.

For more information about this proposal please -

- visit the School Admissions webpage at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions)
- email [admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) or
- call the School Admissions helpline on T.0300 300 8037.

## 5. Frequently asked questions (FAQ's)

**Q – Does this consultation mean that the Council has already decided that Streetfield Middle School will close?**

**A –** No. The Council's Executive committee has approved the start of a consultation on the proposal to close the school, based upon the school's financial and educational viability. The final decision will not be made until 19 August 2014.

**Q – Has the Council considered any alternative solutions other than the proposed closure of Streetfield Middle School?**

**A –** Yes. We have considered converting the school to either a primary or a secondary school but we do not need any additional primary or secondary places.

**Q – To give parents a real choice, could the Council keep just one of the 3 middle schools open?**

**A –** Unfortunately, due to the total number of pupils currently in Streetfield, Ashton CofE VA and Brewers Hill Middle Schools, and the number of projected pupils moving forward, this is not a viable option.

**Q – Is the Council proposing to close Streetfield Middle School because it 'requires improvement' as per the last Ofsted report (dated December 2013)?**

**A –**No. The closure is proposed because the current and projected pupil numbers make the school unviable. The school is currently being supported through the Council's School Intervention Strategy due to its performance.

**Q – What is the Council's response to the accusation that by proposing to close 3 middle schools in Dunstable you are reducing parental choice?**

**A –** Parental choice and support was demonstrated to us within the proposals that were brought forward to the Council by the schools that wished to expand their age range. This has been further demonstrated by the number of parents who have not applied for a middle school place for September 2014 but are choosing to keep their child within a primary school. There are still middle school options available in the area:

- Barnfield Vale has expanded and is a Primary and Middle school for children aged 4-13 years and admits children in both Year R and Year 5 as these are their normal points of entry.
- Caddington Village School is for children aged 4-13 years and admits children in both Year R and Year 5 as these are their normal points of entry.
- Priory Academy is expanding from 9-13 years to 9-16 years from September 2014 and admits children in the Middle transfer round to Year 5 as their normal point of entry.

**Q – How can the Council be sure that the projected figures are correct?**

**A –** The projected number of pupils for September 2014 for Streetfield Middle School is based upon the total number of applications received by the School Admissions Team, by the national closing date of 15 January 2014, that requested a year 5 place in the school.

**Q- Would there be sufficient places in Dunstable upper/secondary schools to take any potential displaced children?**

**A –** Yes. The Council is legally obliged to provide sufficient places for all children aged 5-16 years.

**Q – Following the conversion of many Dunstable lower schools to primary status, is there now a surplus of primary school places within the town?**

**A –** Yes. There is currently a 17% surplus of places in year R (reception) to year 5 and a surplus of between 63% and 65% surplus of places in years 5 to 8 within the local area.

**Q – Historically, some Dunstable parents have chosen to send their children to schools outside of the local area. Is this still the case?**

**A –** The admissions process allows for parental preference and parents can select any school they wish their child to attend whether that is their local school or one some distance away. In previous years some parents in the Dunstable and Houghton Regis area have opted for middle and upper schools in the Leighton Buzzard or Harlington areas or have chosen to send their children to schools in Luton.

**Q – Are the school staff also being consulted as part of the consultation process?**

**A –** School staff and trade union representatives are being consulted throughout this consultation process. Should a decision be made to issue statutory notices to close the school, staff and trade unions would be further consulted. The Council and the school's Human Resources provider will work with the governing body, the staff group and trade unions to ensure all staff have access to appropriate advice and support and will ensure that the relevant policies and procedures of the Council are followed.

**Q - Should a decision to close the school be made, how would the Council retain the staff that would be needed until the school closed completely?**

**A -** Should a decision be made to close the school, the governing body of the school would consider a staffing structure that would reflect the pupil numbers and the educational and pastoral needs of pupils at the school until it's closure. The Council would work with the governing body and their Human Resources provider when considering the staffing structure.

**Q- Is the Council able to place staff from the schools under consultation in other local schools that may have vacancies?**

**A –** In accordance with education legislation, each school's governing body is responsible for appointing its own staff therefore vacant posts in other schools are unable to be ring fenced to staff in those schools under consultation. The Council has a redeployment procedure for school based staff and would support the redeployment of suitably qualified and experienced staff where possible.

**Q- Why did the Council not forewarn parents of this proposal?**

**A –** Because it is only a proposal at this stage. A decision has not been made yet. The data upon which this proposal is based was not available until after 15 January 2014, when the closing date for middle school applications had passed.

**Q – My child is due to transfer into Streetfield Middle School this September from their lower / primary school – if the proposal is approved, what would this mean for my child?**

**A –** If the proposal to close the school is approved, all children who are due to start Streetfield Middle School in September 2014 would still be able to take up their place. By 31 October 2015 you would need to make an application for your child for a year 7 place at a Secondary school in September 2016. Streetfield Middle School would be closed by the end of the academic year in the summer of 2016.



**Q – My child is currently attending Streetfield Middle School – if the proposal is approved, what would this mean for him/her?**

**A –** If the decision is taken to close the school then the following would apply:

Child is currently in Year 5	Could continue at the school and make an application in September 2014, when in Year 6, to transfer to year 7 in secondary school in September 2015.  Or alternatively child could continue into Year 7 in September 2015 but would need to make an ‘in-year’ application in the summer of 2016 to transfer into Year 8 at an alternative school i.e. Secondary school or Priory Academy or Barnfield Vale.
Child is currently in Year 6	You would need to make either a late application for a Secondary school to start Year 7 in September 2014.  Or apply ‘in-year’ for a place in Year 8 in the summer of 2015 to start in September 2015.
Child is currently in Year 7	Could continue at the school and make application in September 2014, when in Year 8, to transfer to Upper school as normal for September 2015.  Or make an ‘in-year’ application for a place in a secondary school either to start in the academic year of 2014/15 as a Year 7 pupil, or at the end of Year 7 to start in Year 8 at a secondary school.
Child is currently in Year 8	Would transfer to Upper or secondary school in September 2014 as per usual process.

**Q – What happens at the end of this consultation period?**

**A -** This consultation period will end on Monday 7 April. The responses to the consultation, plus any other alternative proposals that are submitted as part of the consultation process, will be considered at a meeting of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 7 May. This meeting will be held at the Grove Theatre in Dunstable at 7.00 pm. As with all Council meetings, the public are welcome to attend and to speak at this meeting. For advice on how to apply to speak at a council meeting, please see the guidance on page 11.

The Council’s Executive Committee will then consider the results of the consultation plus any other viable options that have been submitted, along with the recommendations from the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at their meeting on Tuesday 27 May. This meeting will be held at the Council’s offices, Priory House, Chicksands at 9.30 am. The public are welcome to attend and to speak at this meeting. For advice on how to apply to speak at a council meeting, please see the guidance on page 11.

If a decision is made by the Executive to proceed with the proposal to close Streetfield Middle School, the Council would move to the next stage of the process, which is the publication of a statutory proposal and this would be published on Monday 9 June.

**Q – If the Executive decide that an alternative viable option has been submitted for the future of Streetfield Middle School, what would happen then?**

A - The Council would be required to carry out a consultation process for the alternative proposal, following the same procedure as this consultation.

**Q – What is a statutory proposal and what would happen if it is published?**

A – A statutory proposal is the second part of the process that the Council is obliged to carry out for proposed prescribed alterations to its maintained schools. A full representation (description) of the proposal would be published on Monday 9 June along with a summary of the proposal, which is referred to as a statutory notice.

Once published, all interested parties would have an opportunity to respond and make their views known to the Council regarding whether or not they support the proposal to close the school. Any comments or concerns they may have can be submitted during this period. This part of the process would last for 4 weeks and would end on Monday 7 July.

**Q – When would the decision be taken to either keep the school open or close it?**

A –The Council's Executive would consider all of the responses received during the statutory notice period, and would determine whether or not to close the school at their meeting on 19 August 2014. This meeting, which the public are welcome to attend, will be held at the Council's offices, Priory House, Chicksands at 9.30 am. For advice on how to apply to speak at this council meeting, please see the guidance on page 11.

**Q – Could the Governing Body of Streetfield Middle School or anybody else appeal against the Executive's decision?**

A -. Within four weeks of the decision being made by the Council, the following can apply to the Schools Adjudicator against the decision

- The local Church of England Diocese
- The local Roman Catholic Diocese
- The governing body of the school that is subject to the proposal
- The Trustees of a foundation, foundation special or voluntary school that is subject to the proposal

On receipt of an appeal, the Schools Adjudicator would request the Council to submit, within one week, the proposal, the responses received and the reason for the decision made. There is no right of appeal on any determination made by the Schools Adjudicator.

**Q – What would happen to the building and land if the school was to close?**

A – No decision has been made regarding this. The land and buildings would remain as Council assets. If the Council decided to submit the buildings and land for disposal, the Secretary of State could insist that they are used for educational purposes.

**Q – Why has the Council allowed this situation to happen within Dunstable?**

A – Following Central Government's decision to allow academies (which are outside of the Council's control) to change their age ranges, in order to give maintained schools (schools which are within the Council's control) the same flexibility, Central Bedfordshire Council has allowed schools, with evidence of parental support, to bring forward their proposals to improve their schools and, through this, the outcomes for their pupils.

The changes that have subsequently occurred in schools and academies throughout Dunstable and Houghton Regis have led to the situation that we now have.

New Government regulations, which came into effect at the end of January 2014, have given more freedoms to maintained schools; they are now able to change their age range by up to two years without following a statutory process and without the Council's consent.

**Q – How does the consultation that Streetfield Middle School is currently undertaking, regarding a change of age range, affect the Council’s consultation?**

**A** –The consultation process that the Governing Body of Streetfield Middle school is currently undertaking is to enable the school to feedback into the Council’s consultation with, what the governing body believe, will be an alternative viable proposal to the school’s proposed closure.

**Information regarding Streetfield Middle School’s Governing Body’s proposal can be found on the schools website - <http://www.streetfield.beds.sch.uk/>**

If you have any questions that have not been addressed above you are welcome to -

- raise these at the meeting to be held in school on Wednesday 5 March
- visit the School Admissions webpage at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions)
- email [admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) or
- call the School Admissions helpline on T. 0300 300 8037.

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**Attending and speaking at Council meetings**

The public are welcome to attend the Council meetings at which decisions regarding the proposed closure will be discussed.

The Council’s Constitution allows anyone to register to speak about an item, prior to the meeting, once the agenda has been published. Those who register to speak are allowed a maximum of three minutes to speak (unless the Chairman agrees to allow more time).

Normally no more than three people can speak on any one item, but again the Chairman can extend this number if they feel it necessary and if there is significant public interest.

We encourage groups of residents or community groups to nominate a speaker to speak on their behalf and represent the views of others so as to encourage as many different views to be represented as possible.

Speakers are normally invited to speak at the start of the meeting or, at the discretion of the Chairman, during the debate.

Agendas for meetings are published eight working days ahead of the date of meeting. You can find the agendas on the Council’s website here [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/committees](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/committees)

You are encouraged to submit a request to the Clerk to the Committee to speak at a meeting as soon as possible after the agenda has been published, although the Clerk can accept such requests up to 15 minutes before the meeting starts.

The clerk to the Children’s Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee is Jonathon Partridge: you can contact Jonathon via email [Jonathon.partridge@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathon.partridge@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) or T. 0300 300 4634.

The clerk to the Executive is Sandra Hobbs: You can contact Sandra via email [Sandra.hobbs@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Sandra.hobbs@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) or T. 0300 300 5257.

**Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children’s Services  
Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford  
SG17 5TQ**



# Streetfield Middle School Proposed Closure Consultation



Central Bedfordshire Council is consulting on the potential closure of Streetfield Middle School as current and projected pupil numbers makes the school unviable. We want to hear your views.

Feedback must be received by **5pm on 7th April 2014**. You can also see the full details of the proposed closure and complete this online at: [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations)

**1. Are you a:** (Please tick one)

- Parent of a child/children at Streetfield Middle School
- Parent of a child/children at another school in the area
- School employee of Streetfield Middle School
- School employee of another school in the area
- School Governor of Streetfield Middle School
- School Governor of another school in the area
- Local resident
- Other

Please specify:

**2. If you are the parent of a child/children currently at another school, or the employee or governor of another school, please tell us which school.** (Please write name of school)

**3. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close Streetfield Middle School** (Please tick one option)

- Agree                       Neither agree nor disagree                       Disagree

**4. Please give your reasons why you agree or disagree with the proposal to close Streetfield Middle School. Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary**

5. Please use the space below to suggest any alternatives to closing the school or make any other comments you would like to make about this proposal.

## About you

The following information will help us when considering your opinions and to make sure that we're getting the views of all members of the community. The answers will not be used to identify any individual. Our data protection statement is provided at the end of this form.

6. Are you (Please tick one)

Male

Female

7. What is your age? (Please tick one)

Under 16 years

20-29 years

45-59 years

65-74 years

16-19 years

30-44 years

60-64 years

75 years +

8. Do you consider yourself to be disabled? (Please tick one)

Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Yes

No

9. To which of these groups do you consider you belong? (Please tick one)

Asian or Asian British

Chinese

White British

Black or Black British

Mixed

Other Ethnic group

If other, please specify:

10. What is your postcode?

Thank you for your views.

Please return your completed form by 5pm on Monday 7 April 2014 to:

**FREEPOST RSJS GBBZ SRZT (you do not need to use a stamp)**

**School closure proposal for Streetfield Middle School**

**Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ**

### Data Protection Act 1998

Please note that your personal details supplied on this form will be held and/or computerised by Central Bedfordshire Council for the purpose analysing feedback to the consultation on the proposed closure of Streetfield Middle School, Dunstable. The information collected may be disclosed to officers and members of the Council and its' partners involved in this consultation. Summarised information from the forms may be published, but no individual details will be disclosed under these circumstances. Your personal details will be safeguarded and will not be divulged to any other individuals or organisations for any other purposes.

Information classification: Protected when complete

## Notes from staff briefing held at Streetfield Middle school on Wednesday 26 February 2014

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Notes from staff briefing held at Streetfield Middle School	
<b>Date/Time:</b>	26 February 2014 at 4.00 pm	
<b>Attendees:</b>	<u>Central Bedfordshire Council</u> – Helen Redding, Assistant Director School Improvement Rob Parsons, Head of School Organisation, Admissions & Capital Planning David Waller, Senior Human Resource Manager Lydia Braisher, Admissions Manager Sue Barrow, Information Manager  <u>HR Provider (Bedford Borough Council) -</u> Tina Wallace	<u>Union Representatives –</u> Stuart Barnard – NASUWT Ken Richards – Unison Mark Foster – GMB John Laidlaw - ATL
<b>Venue:</b>	Streetfield Middle School, Dunstable Road, Caddington	

A presentation was given by the officers of Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the proposal to close Streetfield Middle School and the consultation process that is being undertaken.

The officers advised that the proposed closure of the school was based upon the

- Changing pattern of provision
- Year 5 retained in Primaries, Year 7 transfers to Secondaries
- Reducing pupil numbers in the Middle Schools
- School funding follows the child so resulting significant financial impact
- Forecast further reduction in pupil numbers will increase the financial impact

Questions were then invited.

Below is a summary of the questions and issues that were raised by the staff.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
What would happen if the schools that are extending their age ranges are not able to provide the places that they have committed to provide?	The Council would hold the Governing Body to account to provide the places.

<p>Historically, the Council has a poor record of forecasting pupil numbers. How accurate is the current forecast?</p>	<p>The forecast for pupil numbers is key to the Council's proposal. The forecast numbers for year 5 from September 2014 are based upon the number of applications we have received for transfer. Based upon these numbers, forecasts have been made for subsequent years. It is these low numbers that have impacted upon the schools budget from September 2014.</p>
<p>Why are Councillor Versallion and the Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Children's Services Edwina Grant not at this meeting?</p>	<p>Officers have been charged by the Council's Executive to carry out this consultation. Councillor Versallion is a member of the Council's Executive and will therefore be involved in the decision making process.</p> <p><i>The Head teacher apologised for advising staff that these two people would be at the meeting.</i></p>
<p>We are concerned that parents were not provided with an informed choice and that the lower schools did not advise their year 4 parents of the choices available to them, despite Streetfield sending information to the lower schools for distribution. Not all parents understand the system (e.g. in-year transfers) and not all parents have access to a computer.</p>	<p>The Council does not target children who are not required to transfer e.g. we do not target year 4 children at St Vincents Catholic Primary (whose age range is 4-11) or upper school children who could move to the UTC at age 14. We only send out information at specific transfer points.</p> <p>Information regarding parental choice is available on the School Admissions website and via our telephone helpline.</p>
<p>The letters that have been sent out by the Council to parents of current year 6 students regarding admissions have been misleading. If the letter had been properly written we would not be losing so many pupils.</p>	<p>The School Admissions service has a duty to advise parents of a change to a transfer point. We therefore needed to advise parents that there will be no coordinated year 9 transfer into Manshead or Queensbury from September 2016.</p> <p>The letters invited parents to contact the Admissions helpline. Many did contact us and we were able to assist them.</p>
<p>Have all of the schools in Dunstable been subjected to the same level of financial scrutiny?</p>	<p>The Council reviews the finances of all maintained schools on an annual basis. Schools budgets for 2014/15 have recently been set and sent out to the schools. The funding follows the child therefore those schools that are affected by the loss of year 5 pupils are seeing a decrease in their budget.</p>
<p>Are academies allowed to do what they like? Academies appear unaccountable and Council maintained schools are therefore at a disadvantage</p>	<p>Academies are accountable to the Secretary of State who will intervene in any that are underperforming or are significantly undersubscribed and therefore unviable.</p>

Will a decision be made on the proposal to close all 3 Dunstable Middle Schools at the same time?	A separate consultation is being carried out for each of the 3 Dunstable Middle Schools. A separate decision will be made for each proposal.
What would happen to the SEN provision within the school if the school were to close?	The Council would ensure that this is provided elsewhere. Staff would be transferred to the new provision.
Can the school come forward with an alternative proposal?	The Council will consider an alternative proposal however it will need to be viable and be able to demonstrate demand from potential future parents.
Did the Council require other schools, which were proposing a change of age range, to provide the same level of support?	All schools were required to show a level of parental support.
Could the final decision regarding the proposed closure be delayed until September?	The national offer day for middle school places in 16 April. Children will start year 5 on 3 September. There is no ideal time to carry out this process and we cannot delay the decision beyond August.
What would happen to the redundant school site? Would it be used for housing?	No discussion has been had regarding the future use of the site. The Council would be required to get permission from the Secretary of State if it wished to dispose of the site. The site would also have to be offered as possible site for a 'free school'

At the close of the meeting, all were encouraged to respond to the consultation.



## Notes from public meeting held at Streetfield Middle School on Wednesday 5 March 2014

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Notes from public meeting held at Streetfield Middle School
<b>Date/Time:</b>	5 March 2014 at 7.00 pm
<b>Venue:</b>	Streetfield Middle School, Dunstable Road, Caddington

A presentation was given by officers of Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the proposal to close Streetfield Middle School and the consultation process that is being undertaken.

Helen Redding, Assistant Director School Improvement

Rob Parsons, Head of School Organisation, Admissions & Capital Planning

Lydia Braisher, Admissions Manager

The officers advised that the proposed closure of the school was based upon the

- Changing pattern of provision
- Year 5 retained in Primaries, Year 7 transfers to Secondaries
- Reducing pupil numbers in the Middle Schools
- School funding follows the child so resulting significant financial impact
- Forecast further reduction in pupil numbers will increase the financial impact

The officers encouraged everybody to respond to the consultation.

Questions and concerns were invited.

Below is a summary of the questions and concerns that were raised

<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
What would happen to the redundant school site? Would it be used for housing?	There have been no discussions regarding the future use of the site. The Council would be required to get permission from the Secretary of State if it wished to dispose of the site. The site would also have to be offered as possible site for a 'free school'
Have the 600 new houses on the housing development next door to the school been included in the forecast figures?	Yes. We update our School Organisation Plan annually and this takes into account all proposed new developments across Central Bedfordshire.
To close all of the 3 middle schools will take away parental choice. You are moving the schools in the area from 3 tier to 2	There is still a mix of 2 tier and 3 tier provision in the town. Prioxy Academy is a Middle combined Secondary school that has an intake at Year 5 and is working in partnership with Dunstable Icknield, Watling and Studham Lower

tier.	schools; there is also Barnfield Vale who currently has a Middle intake. If the decision is made to close the Middle schools, options are available to transfer to alternative schools as part of the annual admissions round or in-year.
There will be almost no opportunity to get into Priory Academy, it is always oversubscribed.	Admission numbers fluctuate across all schools.
This fall in numbers is due to the letter that was sent out by the Council. Some parents have chosen not to request a middle school place because of the uncertainty. It was scaremongering. Lower schools did not advise their year 4 parents of the choices available to them, despite Streetfield sending information to the lower schools for distribution.	<p>The role of the School Admissions Service is to advise parents when a transfer point is removed. The co-ordinated year 9 transfer point from middle to upper will not be available for current year 6 pupils after September 2015.</p> <p>The Council's letter to parents was clear and provided contact details for obtaining further advice.</p> <p>Information regarding parental choice is available on the School Admissions website and via our telephone helpline.</p>
What would happen to the SEN provision within the school if the school were to close?	The Council would ensure that this is provided elsewhere. The staff would be transferred with the provision and we would ensure that there were sufficient places available.
What would happen to the children who do not have SEN but who need support within the mainstream school and who get this support at Streetfield?	<p>All schools have a responsibility for meeting the needs of all of their pupils, including those pupils with SEN and Disability. Each school will provide information on how they support their pupils. The Children and Families Act will bring about many changes to the way in which children are supported and we are working with our Parent Forum SNAP (Special Needs Action Panel) to help shape future services. All schools will be required to update their arrangements in the light of these changes.</p> <p>The Council's Parent Partnership Team can also provide advice to parents who have concerns.</p>
Has the decision already been made to close the 3 middle schools? Is there a political agenda to rid the Council of their control of all schools?	<p>No decision has been made; this is the consultation stage for the proposal.</p> <p>There is no plan to rid the Council of its control. The Council has not been the decision maker for the changes that have happened in academies, but the Council decided to give our maintained schools the same freedoms that were available to academies.</p>
Are middle schools in other areas of Central Bedfordshire still viable?	The changes that have happened in Dunstable and Houghton Regis have not happened in other areas of Central Bedfordshire. For example, Robert Bloomfield

	Academy is a 840 place middle school in Shefford that is full and there are no concerns regarding its viability.
Can the lower schools, that have changed their age range, provide the same facilities as the middle schools e.g. science labs?	At the meetings held during the lower school consultations many parents asked whether the lower schools would be able to deliver the full primary curriculum. The schools were able to assure them that they would.
If all year 6 children were to stay at Streetfield, could Manshead then avoid having to provide a year 7?	Parents have the option to decline a place in year 7 but Manshead would have to provide a year 7.
Will the different stages of the consultation process be published? Which Councillors will consider the proposal and the views submitted during the consultation process?	The Council will publish the first report, which will be considered by the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on our website 8 working days ahead of the meeting date. This meeting will be held on 7 May at the Grove Theatre in Dunstable and is open to the public. Subsequent reports will also be published on the Council's website. The Members of the Committees are listed on the Council's website.
Will all of the views that are being put forward be considered by the Members?	The Council is capturing the views from both the staff and the public meetings and all of these, plus the responses to the consultations, will be considered by the Committee Members.
Who came up with the proposal to close the middle schools?	The Council monitors the viability of all maintained schools in Central Bedfordshire. Council officers put forward the option for consulting on closure to the Council's Executive.
Why have you given so much support to the new primaries?	<p>The Council gives support to all of its maintained schools. Academies are answerable to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>Academies and schools within Dunstable and Houghton Regis have brought forward their own proposals to change their age ranges. They were able to justify these proposals and show evidence of parental support to the Council who is the decision maker for Council maintained schools and to the Department for Education for academies.</p> <p>However, following recent changes to school regulations by the Department for Education, all maintained schools can now change their age range by up to 2 years without any recourse to the Council.</p> <p>The Council retains responsibility for ensuring the provision of school places.</p>
This is scaremongering and nobody has been asked to vote for either 2 tier or 3 tier across the town. Nobody has voted for this	This not a referendum, there is no voting process. This is a consultation and we encourage everybody to submit their responses.

closure. The council will not listen.	
You are using our children as guinea pigs, they will get lost in the system if the middle schools close.	If the middle schools close the Council will work with the schools to support them as they transfer.
You should not close the school until 2018, which would allow the children who come into the school at year 5 in September 2014 to complete their middle school education.	It will be up to Members to determine whether the school should close, and if so, the date of the closure.
If, after the closure of the 3 middle schools, there were not enough school places in Dunstable, would the Council provide transport to schools outside of the town?	There are sufficient places in all of the year groups.
Some primaries have very low numbers for year 5, despite the schools being confident that year 5 children would stay.	Some lower schools that have converted to primary are predicted to have lower numbers for year 5 in September 2014. This is a trend seen elsewhere in the first few years of a school's transition to a new age range but we expect numbers to rise in subsequent years as parents grow in confidence.
Have the children from the new development north of Houghton Regis been included in the projected numbers?	Places for these children will be provided either within or adjacent to that development, providing school places local to the new communities in north Houghton Regis, when they are required.
If the school might close, why is money being spent on the school roof?	Despite what may happen in the future, the school building still has to be maintained.

At the close of the meeting the Acting Head teacher of Streetfield Middle School gave his view of the current situation and how it has arisen.

He advised of the alternative proposal that the school is currently consulting on, in response to the Council's proposed closure; this is to change the range of the school from 9-13 years to 4-11 years, with the addition of Nursery provision for 6 months -4 years. He encouraged everyone to respond to both the Council's and to the school's consultations.