

## **EXECUTIVE – 7 JULY 2015**

### **Recommendation to Executive from the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 June 2015**

#### **CS/15/10. New middle school places in Leighton Linslade**

The Executive Member for Education and Skills introduced a report that sought the support of Members on the proposal for the provision of new Middle School places in Leighton Buzzard from September 2016. The Governing Body at Leighton Community Middle school would carry out a consultation if support for this proposal is agreed by Executive on 7 July, 2015. Members of the Committee were advised in detail on the process to expand school places. The Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning explained that a lengthy process had been undertaken and the 9 policy principles had been adhered to in the planning of the expansion. The policy principles had been provided to new members as part of their induction pack.

A Ward Member for Leighton Buzzard advised that a previous briefing provided to ward members by the school organisation team, had proved confusing splitting the Leighton Buzzard school place planning area into Leighton Buzzard north and south. Officers were asked again to look at the terminology used in such briefings.

In light of the report and clarification of the process the following concerns were raised:-

- Why the Committee had not been asked to scrutinise the consultation document or consider the business case. The Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning advised the consultation document was currently being drafted and would be issued by the Governing Body of Leighton Community Middle School and would follow the national standard for the purpose of expanding a school. Arrangements to notify Members of the Committee when the consultation was available would be made.
- Whether the redevelopment of the Riverside Centre situated next to the school had been considered for redevelopment for the school's use. The Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning advised the Centre had been considered in detail and deemed unsuitable because of the costs involved to refurbish the building.
- Whether future proofing of new school place projects had been achieved. The Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning advised the expansion of Leighton Middle would resolve the shortfall of places for 2016 with a further proposal to be brought forward for 2017, ahead of new school provision to be provided to the east of Leighton Buzzard, the design of which would be future proofed with potential further expansion in mind.

- Concern that a travel plan had been considered as part of the expansion. A Member of the Committee advised that the school development programme was accurate, planned meticulously and included travel plans in his experience. The Head of Service confirmed that site access issues, although often challenging, were considered in high level initial options appraisals and would be covered in detail in design and subsequent planning applications.

## **RECOMMENDED**

- 1. To amend the second paragraph in recommendation 1 by removing the words ‘ decision to approve’ and replacing them with ‘consideration of’.**
- 2. Members of the Committee be notified of the publication of the school consultation.**
- 3. That the Committee support the decision for Leighton Community Middle School to consult upon expansion.**