

## Central Bedfordshire Council

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 15 March 2016

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#### Partnership Vision for Education

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**This report relates to the key council objective to improve education and skills**

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#### Purpose of this report

1. This report provides an update to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the actions taken and being taken following the launch of the Partnership Vision For Education in September 2015.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. Comment on the progress made to date in delivering the Partnership Vision For Education
2. Recommend any additional actions for the Partnership Vision For Education Board to consider

#### Background

2. The Partnership Vision for Education was approved by the Council's Executive on 4 August 2014 following engagement with a range of key partners including the Children's Trust Board, The Headteachers and Partners' Reference Group, Head and Governor Forums in addition to individuals being offered the opportunity to comment. The list of engagement meetings that took place to inform the Partnership Vision was included with this report.

3. Letters were written to all headteachers, Chairs of Governors and partners early in September to start their engagement in the delivery of the Vision, and they were invited to a formal launch on 5 October 2015.
4. The Headteachers and Partners Reference Group Membership has been reviewed and extended, and has been re-designated as The Partnership Vision For Education Board. Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix A.

### **Progress to Date**

5. All partners were invited to demonstrate their commitment by signing up to a Pledge (Appendix B)
6. As at 26 February 2016, 66 organisations have signed the Pledge, and a further 10 people have responded as a separate representative of an organisation (i.e. Head and a Governor have responded individually). 76 signed pledges have therefore been received. This comprises of:
  - 1Nursery School;
  - 40/76 Lower Schools;
  - 3/21 Primary Schools;
  - 8/11 Middle Schools (3 others are closing this August and are working with us to improve outcomes this year. 1 of these has submitted a signed Pledge);
  - 2/6 Upper Schools;
  - 3/6 Secondary Schools;
  - 3/5 Special Schools (including ACB);
  - 6 key partners (including 1 Chair of a Trust of schools representing all 9 schools in the Trust group which have all also signed the Pledge separately).
7. Schools and their Governing Bodies and being continually encouraged to formally express their commitment by signing the Pledge. In order for schools to make a collective commitment, we have drafted a version of the Pledge that can be signed by partnerships of schools, trusts and locality groups.
8. Some schools are demonstrating their commitment to delivering the Vision even though they have not signed the Pledge as yet, for example by taking part in the actions identified in the plans. It is therefore important to recognise that not returning the Pledge does not signify a lack of engagement. Engagement also requires more than a signature. We are therefore monitoring engagement in key school improvement activity.
9. A Programme Plan has been developed which provides an overview of the Programme structure and the approach being taken to deliver actions in the priority areas and sets out key deliverables. This is attached at Appendix C.

10. Each work stream lead provides a highlight report for the Board meeting, updating on the status of actions over that period. New actions are added to the action plans as a consequence of the meetings.

**Work stream 1 and 2 progress – School leadership and achieving results in the top quartile in key stage tests, including GCSE and A levels.**

11. The key elements to this work stream are:
  - develop models of successful leadership, supporting the development of outstanding headteachers and school leaders
  - improve school governance;
  - recruit and retain the best teachers;
  - secure effective school to school support;
  - identify routes to improving results;
  - improve outcomes at all key stages;
  - narrow the gap between all pupils and vulnerable pupils;
  - improve the percentage of good and outstanding schools.
12. An analysis of the career progression of people undertaking the Leadership training through the Teaching Schools has been carried out. Of the 62 delegates who have taken part in this training since 2012/2013, to date 29 have progressed to a promoted post. We are continuing to track delegates and support opportunities for career progression. An example of this is that a successful Deputy from 1 school has been seconded part time to a school being supported through the School Intervention Strategy.
13. We are reviewing the materials for supporting governors with recruitment of headteachers. School are also encouraged to consider alternative models of leadership. The following documents are available:
  - CBC Recruitment Guidance with links to other helpful documents;
  - a quick guide – step-by-step overview;
  - a good practice guide – a more detailed guide of the process;
  - a shortlisted candidates form;
  - a flyer developed with the Teaching Schools to promote Central Bedfordshire as a Great Place to Live and Work.
14. Meetings have been set up by the Director of Children's Services with head teachers and Chairs of Governors and the Executive Member for Education and Skills. This aims to further strengthen the partnership between schools and the Council, and provide an opportunity to agree collective actions to improve outcomes., starting with secondary and upper schools. 10 meetings have been held (up to 1 March), initially with upper and secondary schools, and more are being planned.

15. Governor Dashboards have been developed, and additional training has been provided for Local Authority Governors.
16. We have reviewed Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) Report on governance in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools with a group of National Leaders Of Governance (NLGs), and are meeting with them again in March to develop a strategy.
17. We have met with 'The Key', an organisation that is highly regarded by schools using it that provides advice and guidance to school leaders and governors. We have asked them to look at a discounted price for our schools if we bulk buy and sell back to schools. This is currently being negotiated.
18. We have surveyed schools to establish their views on the Local Authority Arrangements for School Improvement, and to establish impact to date of the Partnerships Vision for Education and take suggestions for future actions. The analysis will be reviewed by the Board in March.
19. Recruitment of the teachers remains an issue which is affecting all schools, particularly in key subject areas. This is a national issue. To date the Teaching Schools have carried out the following actions
  - Prepared a flyer for schools to send to applicants.
  - Attempted to set up a Recruitment website on behalf of schools although there has been a lack of interest from schools due to the requirement to assist with funding.
  - Attended NQT Recruitment Fairs at local universities.
  - Attended Initial Teacher Education recruitment fairs to recruit trainee teachers.
  - Currently developing updated flyers for issue at the NQT and ITE recruitment fairs i.e. to target different audiences.
  - Promoted the School Direct route into teaching.
20. At the meeting of the Board on 18 January 2016, it was agreed that a different approach was needed. Suggestions included:
  - A co-ordinated marketing approach – with support in place to consider how to attract students to key courses, and retain staff (promoting future prospects).
  - Identifying officers that have worked or are working in a recruitment environment as it was felt that they would be better placed to consider marketing strategies and drive a campaign than those working in the education field.
  - Further promoting Central Bedfordshire as a place to work with different messages considered for each school phase. It was noted however that Central Beds schools are competing with others who can offer (for example) an outer London wage.

- Consideration should be given initially to expertise within the community – i.e. whether there were any suitable volunteers who could assist in the recruitment and retention process.
  - Consideration of schools buying into a central role.
  - There is a need to think broadly in terms of the work skills / economic agenda.
21. It was agreed that a Recruitment and Retention Group be formed with representatives of each school phase to develop a Recruitment Strategy which could be considered by the Board.
22. The data sharing agreement has been reviewed, and 4 Locality Data Reports have been produced following feedback from the Board on 18 January 2016. These will be circulated to schools by the end of February, and will enable schools to consider collectively the issues in their locality and identify actions to address these. These reports will be amended this September to take account of the new assessment arrangements.
23. A consultant was identified to provide an external challenge to 'Raising The Bar' at Key Stage 2 and 4. Following feedback from board members at the meeting in January 2016, it was agreed to focus his attention on meeting with heads in localities focussing on improving the progress between key stages 2 and 4. He is starting these meetings as a Pilot in February in Leighton Buzzard.
24. Following sharing best practice from 2 schools regarding improving outcomes in mathematics, we have investigated bulk buying the App they used to support achieving 100% of children achieving expected levels in maths at end of key stage 2. This will bring the cost down for schools. 21 schools have registered an interest: 6 lower schools; 9 primary schools; 4 middle schools, 1 middle/secondary school and 1 secondary school (to support intervention work at KS3). We are delighted with this response.
25. A Peer Review of the Local Authority Arrangements for School Improvement has been commissioned for the 7 and 8 March 2016. The key elements that the Review will consider are:
- How engaged are schools in the LA's 5 year vision and how well do they understand joint roles, responsibilities and accountabilities?
  - What are the LA mechanisms to monitor and evaluate school improvement and how effectively does this shape ongoing priorities and practice for schools and the LA?
  - How do schools feel that the Local Authority holds them to account?

26. The Peer Review team has also been asked to consider whether we are achieving Best Value through our commissioned school improvement services?

### **Work stream 3 – School Readiness**

27. The key outcomes for this work stream are:
- ensuring that children have the skills to be ready for school on admission;
  - taking actions to ensure that Central Bedfordshire is in the top quartile at end of Early years Foundation Stage (EYFS);
  - taking actions to narrow the gap at the end of the EYFS.
28. The School Readiness work stream has been focussing on 2 key elements, developing a detailed action plan with key partners, including schools, providers and Health Visitors, and establishing key messages on school readiness for parents and professionals.
29. 3 areas have been identified as important to improving outcomes, and these have been articulated in the 3 key deliverables identified below:
- Improve communications with parents and professionals
  - Improve assessment and observation
  - Develop clear pathways for children who are identified as needing support in order to be ready for school.
30. A draft Key Messages document has been developed based on the Public Health England Document 'Improving School Readiness, creating a better start for London'. This is attached at Appendix D.
31. This is being customised to reflect Central Bedfordshire needs and data and form a presentation, with video links, that can be used by all lead professionals at cluster/ specialist meetings.
32. The presentation will be formatted and available for lead professionals to easily cascade to their teams, and a schedule for initial delivery is being created and will commence mid March.
33. The agreed parent outcomes are being drafted into a 'reader-friendly' brochure that will be available to be distributed with the offer of school places in April. Brochures will also be distributed to child-centred organisations such as doctors' surgeries, child and baby clinics, children's centre, libraries etc.
34. The group are investigating approaches that ensure that parents maintain their child's development during the summer break using mediums that are easily accessed by all parents, including those that are harder to reach. It is probable that this will take the form of a phone APP.

#### **Work stream 4 – Improving health outcomes to support improving educational outcomes.**

35. The key outcomes for this work stream are:
  - We will be in the top quartile nationally at the end of each key stage
  - The free school meals gap will narrow
  - School attendance rates will improve
  - Childhood obesity will reduce
  - Children's health and wellbeing will improve, and health indicators will be in the top quartile nationally
36. All schools are members of the PSHE/SRE Partnership Network (Personal, Social and Health Education/Sex and Relationships Education) led by Public health. Feedback is very positive on this and on the Professional Study Group set up through the Teaching Schools.
37. A survey was developed to establish changes in school practices, and to identify best practice. Responses were low and so the survey was resent directly to PSHE Network members in January.
38. 2 workshops were delivered on improving emotional resilience in October and November 2015 for schools and early years settings. 60 delegates attended and feedback was positive, although it is recognised that there is more to do to support schools in this area.
39. 7 Central Bedfordshire Schools are part of a national Mental health Pilot Project aimed at improving joint working between schools and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHs)
40. There was a big push to encourage more schools to sign up to the 2016 Health Related Behaviour Perception Survey. In 2014 3099 pupils took part from 19 schools. By December 66 schools had registered and 13,259 pupils are taking part. This will provide us with much richer information on the issues for our children, and enable us to target services and support accordingly. We are delighted with this response.
41. A workshop is being held on 20 April 2016 for schools to consider the findings from their school and other schools, and identify next steps.

#### **Work stream 5 - Young people have the skills to be work ready**

42. The key outcomes for this work stream are:
  - Young people will value the information, advice and guidance (IAG) they receive
  - Young people will have the work skills to secure and maintain employment
  - There will be clear progression routes for all young people for the next level of training/learning and into work

- The percentage of young people achieving a level 3 qualification will improve.
43. A new All Age Skills Strategy is being developed across directorates to ensure that we are able to meet the needs of young people, schools, employers and the growing economy. The strategy will focus on 3 key priority areas:
    - Working together;
    - Raising individual aspirations and achievement;
    - Developing the workforce.
  44. The strategy will be consulted on with partners over the next few months and will be in place by July 2016.
  45. In addition to the All Age Skills Strategy, Children's Services and the Business and Regeneration Team are working together to ensure collaboration in order to help meet the needs of the local economy. This includes brokering support from the new Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) in order to secure maximum involvement in Central Bedfordshire schools.
  46. The CEC is a government funded company and will provide those participants a dedicated enterprise adviser that will act as a broker between local employers and schools. A key focus of this work will be to enable young people to have greater exposure into the 'world of work', including work experience.
  47. The council is working on developing a revised offer of work experience for young people, which is anticipated to be in place by September 2016.
  48. All upper schools and secondary schools are now signed up to the Careers Education and Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) minimum standards. Work is now focussing on middle schools that have recently converted to secondary schools.
  49. Additional actions have been identified, including working with young people (via the Youth Audit) to assess the quality of CEIAG and a review of the standards with schools to ensure that they continue to reflect national policy and local aspirations.

**Work stream 6 - Commission new school places from good or outstanding providers to serve growing communities.**

50. The Programme for commissioning of new school places is currently on track.
51. The current 9 key principles for commissioning new school places will be reviewed in line with the updated guidance from the DfE on school organisation, which are yet to be published.



52. A methodology agreed with the special schools is now in place for forecasting special school places for the next 5 years. The actual numbers against forecasts are reviewed termly, and forecasts amended accordingly. Other Local Authorities have approached us to share this methodology.
53. The SEND Vision is being developed with involvement from all key partners, including parents. The outcome of this work will report separately to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee later this year.
54. There have been initial meetings to consider the development of an options appraisal for 6<sup>th</sup> Form provision in Dunstable and Houghton Regis for the future. This will support the development of an efficient and effective model that will support improved outcomes for young people.

### **Council Priorities**

55. This report supports the Council Priority of 'Improving Education and Skills'

### **Corporate Implications**

56. All partners' support is required to deliver the Partnership Vision for Education, and in particular public health, housing, regeneration and business.

### **Legal Implications**

57. None

### **Financial and Risk Implications**

58. There is currently no additional budget identified to support delivery of the Vision and therefore we are looking at creative ways of using existing budgets and external funding.

### **Equalities Implications**

59. Public Authorities must ensure that decisions are made in a way which promotes equality of opportunity, minimises unfairness, and without a disproportionately negative effect on people in relation to 9 protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
60. It is important that Councillors are aware of this duty before they take a decision. The work streams identified in the Partnership Vision

relating to attainment, school readiness, health outcomes and skills for work, all have the potential to impact positively in terms of advancing equality of opportunity for vulnerable groups.

61. The schools' outcome data is analysed to ensure that children from vulnerable groups, including those with special educational needs and disability, (SEND), pupils who are disadvantaged and those entitled to free school meals, children who are looked after (LAC), and children from ethnic minority groups.
62. Professional development is commissioned via the 2 Teaching Schools where issues are identified for any of the groups identified above. Additionally the Service For Vulnerable pupils, which includes the Virtual School for Looked After Children ensures that schools are supported and challenged to ensure those children make at least expected progress, and if not additional interventions are identified and implemented to support their progress.

### **Implications for Work Programming**

63. It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny receive 6 monthly reports, and give a view on progress and additional actions for the Board to consider.

### **Conclusion and next Steps**

64. The Partnership Vision For Education Board will continue to agree actions to be added to action plans to ensure successful delivery of the Partnership Vision For Education.

### **Appendices**

**Appendix A: Terms of Reference for the Partnership Vision For Education Board.**

**Appendix B: The Pledge**

**Appendix C: Programme Plan**

**Appendix D: Key Messages for School Readiness.**