

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee** Cabinet  
**Date of Committee** 14 July 2011  
**Report Title** Meeting the Needs of Pupils Excluded or at Risk of Exclusion from School

**Summary** This paper proposes consultation on the closure of the Warwickshire Pupil Referral Unit as part of the wider strategy to reduce permanent exclusions and improve provision for those pupils who are permanently excluded. The strategy is based upon devolving funding to schools and making early intervention a less expensive alternative to permanent exclusion.

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**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?** [please identify relevant plan/budget provision]  
 No

**Background papers** Ofsted Inspection Report – June 2010  
 Ofsted Letter – May 2011

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:** Details to be specified

Other Committees  CYPF Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 24.11.10  
 Cabinet – 16.12.10  
 Cabinet – 17.02.11  
 CYPF Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 06.04.11

Local Member(s)  Cllr Frank Mccarney – Bedworth West  
 Cllr Claire Watson – Lawford & New Bilton  
 Cllr Sarah Boad – Leamington North  
 Cllr Eithne Goode – Leamington North  
 Cllr Mike Gittus - Alcester

- Other Elected Members  CYP&F O&S Chair & Vice Chair for information:  
Cllr June Tandy  
Cllr John Ross
- CYP&F O&S Spokespersons for information:  
Cllr Peter Balaam  
Cllr Carolyn Robbins
- Cabinet Member  Cllr Heather Timms
- Other Cabinet Members consulted  Cllr David Wright
- Chief Executive  .....
- Legal  Fay Ford "*comments noted*"  
Barry Juckes
- Finance  John Betts, Head of Finance
- Other Strategic Directors  .....
- District Councils  .....
- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals  Steve Smith, Head of Property  
Chairs of Area Behaviour Partnerships -  
(Secondary Headteachers)  
Chair of the PRU Management Committee  
Interim Headteacher of the PRU

**FINAL DECISION**

**YES**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee  .....
- To Council  .....
- To Cabinet  Cabinet 15.12.11
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  .....

## Cabinet – 14 July 2011

### Meeting the Needs of Pupils Excluded or at Risk of Exclusion from School

#### **Recommendation:**

In order to have arrangements in place for the full implementation of the new approach to exclusions by September 2012, it is recommended that the Cabinet:

1. Authorises public consultation to close the Warwickshire Pupil Referral Unit on 31 August 2012 and create a new arrangement that will secure short term education from a range of providers for a small number of pupils as necessary.
2. Agrees to consider the outcome of this consultation at the Cabinet meeting on 15 December 2011.

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 Warwickshire County Council is committed to raising levels of educational attainment for all children in Warwickshire. As part of this commitment, there is a need to provide pupils who are permanently excluded or at risk of permanent exclusion from school with high quality education to ensure they achieve their full potential.
- 1.2 As of 10 June 2011, 81 permanent exclusions had been made by Warwickshire schools and academies in the 2010/11 academic year, and 146 children were on the roll of the Warwickshire Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Concerns about both the exclusion rate and educational provision at the PRU have led to investigations by the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the autumn term of 2010.
- 1.3 The proposal in this paper to cease current provision at the PRU is part of a wider strategy to reduce permanent exclusions and improve provision for those pupils who are permanently excluded. The strategy is based upon devolving funding to schools and making early intervention a less expensive alternative to permanent exclusion.

#### **2. Current Provision at the Warwickshire Pupil Referral Unit**

- 2.1 The Warwickshire PRU provides education for pupils that have been permanently excluded from Warwickshire schools. In June 2010 Ofsted concluded that the PRU requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.'

2.2 Despite the implementation of an action plan and significant changes to the leadership team, the monitoring inspection from HMI Ofsted in May 2011 concluded that whilst satisfactory progress had been made since their previous visit (January 2011), inadequate progress had been made overall.

### **3. New Approach**

3.1 In February 2011, Cabinet approved a strategic plan to adopt a new approach to meet the needs of pupils excluded, or at risk of exclusion, from school. A project board chaired by Cllr Timms (Portfolio Holder – Children, Young People and Families) has overseen the development and progress of the strategic plan. The plan draws upon the findings of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee investigations into exclusions and the PRU.

3.2 The new approach involves a system wide change to reduce exclusions and improve the value and the quality of provision for those who are excluded.

3.3 The main principles of this approach are:

- Devolving funding to schools
- Schools working collaboratively to:
  - fund early intervention support in order to avoid exclusion
  - implement the managed transfer process
  - purchase packages of education appropriate to the individual child from alternative providers.

3.4 From 1 September 2011, the new approach will be introduced across Warwickshire. The Schools Forum has agreed to devolve £1.5m (currently part of the secondary PRU budget) to the four Secondary Area Behaviour Partnerships (ABPs) for the academic year 2011/12. Within these Partnerships, secondary and special school Headteachers are expected to work together to share best practice on early intervention, fund early intervention programmes and engage in the managed transfer process. Where a pupil is excluded, the Area Behaviour Partnership will be able to purchase packages of support appropriate to the individual child's needs. A child may still be admitted to the PRU, however charges for this provision will now apply (£20,600 per year).

3.5 The devolvement of funding and the introduction of charges to the PRU provide financial incentives to reduce exclusions, making early intervention the less costly alternative to permanent exclusion. This approach has been broadly supported by Headteachers across the county.

3.6 Primary schools seldom exclude. So far in 2010/11, 12 primary age pupils have been permanently excluded from Warwickshire schools. From 1 September 2011, there will be no provision for primary age pupils at the PRU, in accordance with the decision of Cabinet in December 2010. Local Authority officers are working with primary Headteachers on alternative arrangements for children who are excluded or at risk of exclusion, with a budget of £405,000 (previous budget for primary element of the PRU). Five pilot inclusion support groups have been established in areas of highest exclusion to explore ways of

working together and using early intervention to avoid exclusion. In the event that a child is permanently excluded, the Early Intervention Service has been commissioned to make arrangements for provision and support.

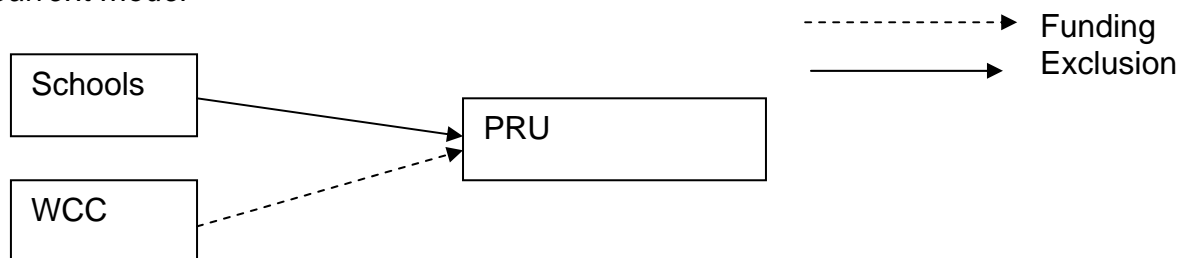
3.7 The devolvement of funding has been made possible by a significant staffing restructure at the PRU. The workforce has been reduced by over a third and the PRU will consolidate onto two sites from 1 September 2011 (Pound Lane Centre for Central/South and Keresley Centre for North/East) as agreed by the Cabinet in December 2010.

3.8 Monitoring arrangements for this new approach are set in **Appendix A**.

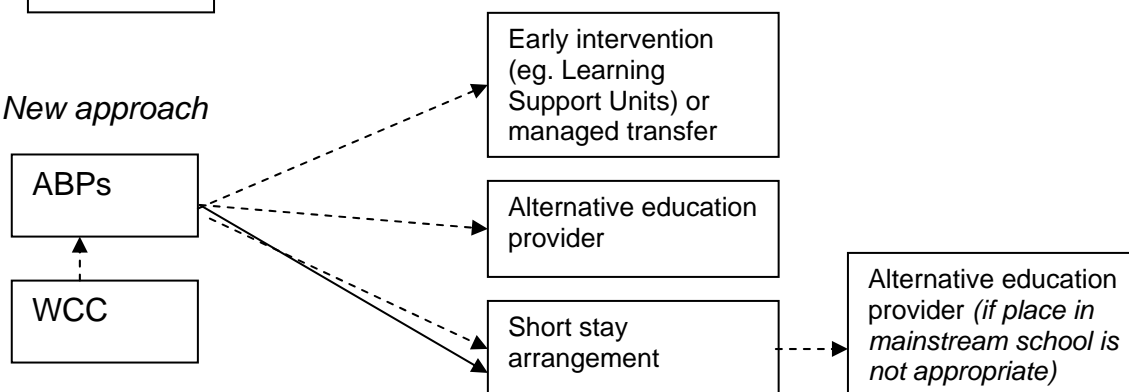
#### 4. Future Service Model

4.1 The present model for dealing with permanent exclusions is no longer fit for purpose. In order for the new approach to be adopted as the norm, a permanent shift in the ownership of resources and decision-making needs to take place. From 1 September 2012 it is proposed that *all* funding currently allocated to the PRU (£2.8m from the Dedicated Schools Grant) is redistributed to schools on an area partnership basis.

##### Current model



##### New approach



4.2 It is anticipated that this approach will reduce exclusions. Where a permanent exclusion is made, the Area Behaviour Partnership will be expected to purchase individual packages of support from a range of providers. It is not anticipated that the schools will purchase enough provision from the PRU to sustain its viability.

4.3 However, it is considered that there will still be a need to provide a short stay function to secure education and make arrangements for:

- pupils arriving in-year from out of county where a delay occurs on school admission;

- any pupil excluded where a decision on alternative provision is not made within six days (charges to apply).

4.4 The preferred option is to close the PRU on 31 August 2012 and create a new arrangement that will secure education from a range of providers for a small number of pupils. The new arrangement will meet statutory requirements and ensure that pupils emotional and learning needs are met. This will enable pupils to return to full time education or move to alternative provision within a maximum of 30 days.

4.5 An alternative option would be to maintain the PRU but reduce its size and remit to make it a short stay education unit. This is not recommended due to the current quality of provision being provided.

## 5. Statutory Responsibility

5.1 Cabinet must be mindful that the local authority will continue to have a statutory duty “to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school (including pupil referral units), or otherwise than at school, for children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, will not receive a suitable education without those arrangements”. Headteachers will also retain the right to exclude. However, it is still considered that schools working together can better meet the needs of children excluded or at risk of exclusion than the current system. This is also the view of the Government, as set out in the Schools White Paper 2010 which states:

*‘So we plan to trial a new approach. Schools will be free to exclude pupils, but they will then be responsible for finding and funding alternative provision themselves. In line with our plans to give schools greater autonomy and more control of funding, we will explore shifting the money for alternative provision from local authorities to schools so schools can purchase for themselves the alternative provision they think will best suit disruptive children.’<sup>1</sup>*

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**Head of Service:** Elizabeth Featherstone/Mark Gore

**Strategic Director:** Marion Davis

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Heather Timms

29 June 2011

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<sup>1</sup> *The Importance of Teaching* (2010), Department for Education, p.39.

**Item 5 APPENDIX A: MONITORING AND EVALUATION SCHEDULE (FROM 1 SEPTEMBER 2011)**

<b>Strategic Aim</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Further detail</b>	<b>Responsible officer</b>	<b>Date and frequency</b>	<b>Reporting to</b>
To meet the learning needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded by introducing new approaches;	Monitoring report from Chairs of Area Behaviour Partnerships on new arrangements.  Report from the Chair of the Primary Strategic Policy Group;  Report by LA School Improvement Team following visits to each area.	Reporting on the effectiveness of the new arrangements to include: - use of funding, - collaborative arrangements, - early intervention, - managed moves, - use of alternative provision.  Monitoring visit by LA School Improvement Officer	Chair of Area Behaviour Partnership and Primary Strategic Policy Group  Shona Walton	December 2011 and April 2012  December 2011 and April 2012	Project Board Elected Members (Cabinet and CYP O&S)
To improve the quality of education for young people attending the PRU.	Ofsted monitoring reports on provision for pupils in the PRU  LA monitoring reports	Monitoring letter following HMI visit  Monitoring of progress by LA School Improvement Officers	HMI  Shona Walton	Termly  November 2011 and termly after thereafter	Project Board Elected Members (Cabinet and CYP O&S)
To reduce the number of exclusions, and consequently demand on the PRU.	Exclusion data	Comparison with previous 3 years;  Comparison by area.	Exclusions Officer	October 2011 and monthly thereafter	Project Board Elected Members (Cabinet and CYP O&S)
Value for money	Financial monitoring reports on spending in each area.  Demand for out of authority SEN placements	Summary of expenditure in each ABP	Simon Smith	October 2011 and monthly thereafter	Project Board Elected Members (Cabinet and CYP O&S)