

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Committee 1 September 2011

Report Title Meeting the Needs of Pupils Excluded or at Risk of Exclusion from School – Report to Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Summary An update on the Overview & Scrutiny recommendations approved by Cabinet in December 2010 and the proposals put before Cabinet in July 2011.

For further information please contact:

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No

Background papers

- Ofsted Inspection Report – June 2010
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 24 November 2010
- Cabinet – 16 December 2010
- Cabinet – 14 February 2011
- Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 1 April 2011
- Cabinet – 14 July 2011

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN: Details to be specified

Other Committees Overview and Scrutiny Exclusions from Mainstream School 2010
Overview and Scrutiny Pupil Reintegration Unit
Primary Head teachers Consultation Group 17 January 2011.
Chairs of Area Behaviour Partnerships 26 January

2011

- 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 Cllr June Tandy
Cllr John Ross
Cllr Peter Balaam
Cllr Carolyn Robbins

- Cabinet Member Cllr Heather Timms

- Other Cabinet Members consulted Cllr David Wright

- Chief Executive

- Legal Fay Ford, Legal *“comments regarding Equality Impact Assessment noted”*
Barry Jukes

- Finance John Betts, Head of Finance

- Other Strategic Directors

- District Councils

- Health Authority

- Police

- Other Bodies/Individuals Steve Smith, Head of Property, Resources
Jane Pollard, Democratic Services Manager

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

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 1 September 2011

Meeting the Needs of Pupils Excluded or at Risk of Exclusion from School – Report to Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Recommendations:

That the Committee:

- Notes the updates on the Committee’s recommendations from November 2010
- Comments upon the monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the Area Behaviour Partnerships (ABPs) pilots
- Notes the proposed consultation document and timetable

1. Progress on O&S Recommendations

1.1 Members of the Committee made thirteen recommendations in a report in November 2010 regarding changes to the Warwickshire Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). Progress against these actions is shown in **Appendix A**. Eight of these actions are reported as complete. The progress report also provides comment on recommendations made in the Committee’s report on permanent exclusions (September 2010).

1.2 In summary:

- (1a) A staffing restructure has been undertaken with staffing being reduced from 88.3 fte to 42.7 fte for 2011/12. From September, only the Keresley and Pound Lane centres will be in use.
- (1c) Arrangements are in place to use the fully equipped science laboratories in neighbouring schools (North Leamington School and Ash Green School).
- (1d) County Caterers now provide hot meals at the Pound Lane via Lillington School. Provision at the Keresley centre is also now in place, in partnership with Keresley Newland Primary School.
- (1e) A new curriculum offer and timetable was launched in June. ICT facilities have been improved.
- (1f) No primary age children have been admitted to the PRU since March 2011. The Early Intervention Service has worked with thirteen primary age pupils since this time to ensure that provision is made other than in the PRU. Ten primary pupils attending the PRU will be either in mainstream school or specialist provision from 1 September. Two primary children attending the PRU currently do not have school places for September 2011. These two children were referred for statutory

assessment in May (estimated 20-week process). A school placement is expected to be made by October half term at the latest.

- (4) An information passport has been developed as part of the Change of School Form. However, it required further development as there is concern that the information included breaches the Admissions Code.
- (5) Funding devolved to ABPs can provide additional funding for Learning Support Units to be established within schools.

1.3 In June 2011, members of the Committee were invited to the Keresley Centre and the Pound Lane Centre of the Warwickshire PRU. Members were able to see a number of positive changes to the school environment.

2. New approach

2.1 Members of the Committee will be aware that Cabinet approved the implementation of a new approach to exclusions, including consultation on the closure of the Warwickshire PRU, on 14 July 2011. This approach was adopted following regular discussion with Headteachers (PRU Strategic Partners Group) and officers (PRU Board – chaired by Cllr Timms). The approach has had extensive discussion at both primary and secondary Headteachers' business meetings. In addition, briefing events have been held with staff and school governors.

2.2 In 2010/11, there were 80 permanent exclusions by Warwickshire maintained schools (66 secondary, 12 primary, 2 special). A further 7 exclusions were made by schools with Academy status. This is an increase on the number of permanent exclusions in 2009/10. Prior to 2010/11, the exclusion rate in Warwickshire was above the national average. Comparative data for 2010/11 is not yet available.

2.3 The new approach aims to reduce exclusions and improve the value and the quality of provision for those who are excluded. The main principles of this approach are:

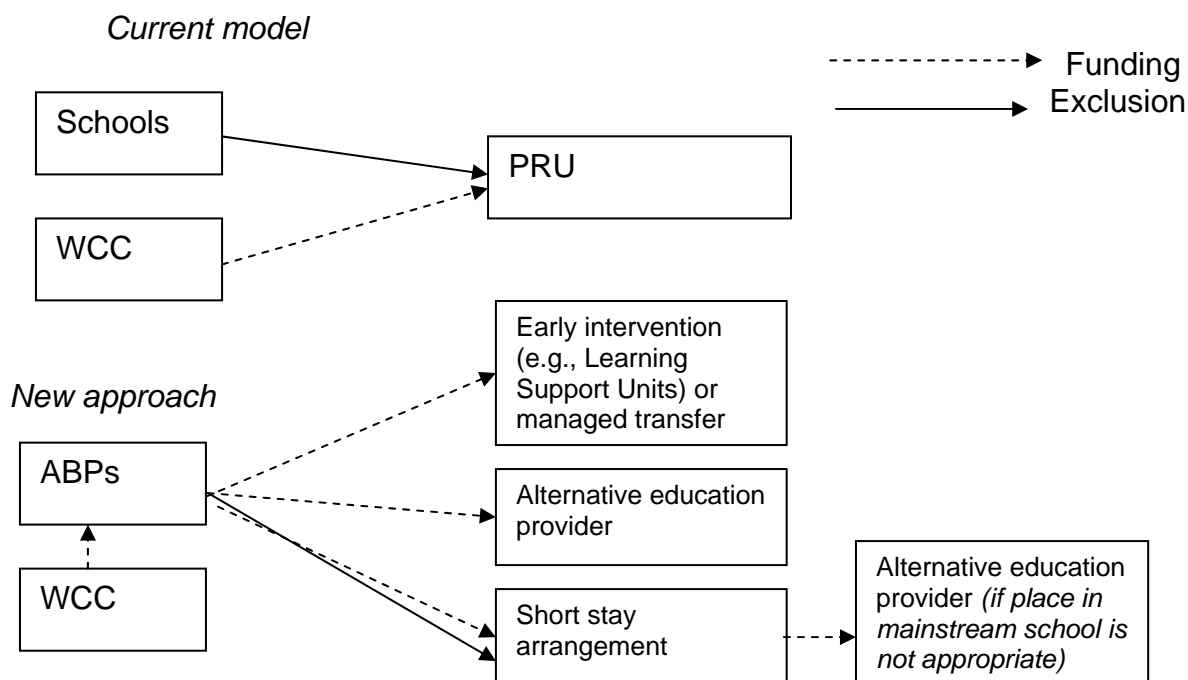
- Devolving funding to schools
- Schools working collaboratively to:
 - fund early intervention support in order to avoid exclusion
 - implement the managed transfer process
 - purchase packages of education appropriate to the individual child from alternative providers

2.4 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 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 or £528 per week).

2.5 The devolving 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.

2.6 The proposed model for school exclusions, from 1 September 2012, is set out below.



2.7 The new approach is consistent with a Department for Education trial that aims to tackle exclusions in a new way. Warwickshire is an associate of this trial.

2.8 It is intended that in a significant number of cases, investment in early intervention will avoid the need for exclusion. In some cases, it will be appropriate for a child to move schools either as a managed transfer (pre-exclusion) or as part of the In-Year Fair Access Protocol (post-exclusion). In a minority of cases, mainstream schooling may not be considered the best option. In these circumstances, packages of education will be purchased from alternative providers. These bespoke packages should improve attainment and life chances outcomes for our most vulnerable children and reduce the likelihood of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

2.9 Monitoring arrangements for this new approach are set out in **Appendix B**. The focus of the monitoring arrangements is on:

- Improving the pupil progress of those children excluded through accessing quality provision
- Reducing the number of permanent exclusions

- 2.10 A first monitoring and evaluation report will be presented to Cabinet on 15 December along with feedback from the consultation.
- 2.11 The approach for primary schools differs due to fewer permanent exclusions and the smaller amount of resource released from the closing of the primary element of the PRU. Six pilot inclusion support groups have been established in areas of highest exclusion to explore ways of 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. Consultation

- 3.1 As noted above, Cabinet has authorised consultation on the closure of the PRU. This is based upon current provision being inadequate. It is considered that education provision for this group of vulnerable pupils can be improved by adopting the model (shown in 2.6) that devolves funding to schools through Area Behaviour Partnerships.
- 3.2 A full Equality Impact Assessment will form part of the report to Cabinet on 15 December. Prior to public consultation, the relevant stakeholders and groups will be identified to ensure that all views are taken into account and the impact of change is understood.
- 3.3 Members of the Committee are asked to note the consultation paper attached at **Appendix C** and may seek to respond to the document.
- 3.4 As noted in the Cabinet paper, it is recognised 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)
- 3.5 The preferred option, as set out in the consultation document, is for the local authority to commission individual places from alternative providers, on behalf of Area Behaviour Partnerships, for example from colleges, training providers or Warwickshire maintained special schools.
- 3.6 This is the favoured option as it allows for maximum devolvement of funding to schools to invest in early intervention, but also allows the local authority to ensure that all pupils meet their entitlement to education. The costs of each placement would be met by the funds devolved to the Area Behaviour Partnership.
- 3.7 The local authority will run a competitive tender to ensure that suitable alternative providers are in place as soon as possible. Initial evaluation suggests that there are enough providers operating in the West Midlands

(including colleges) for this to be a sustainable approach. Places could also be purchased from local authority special schools as appropriate.

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Head of Service: Elizabeth Featherstone/Mark Gore

Strategic Director: Marion Davis

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Heather Timms

17 August 2011

PROGRESS AGAINST O&S RECOMMENDATIONS – 01/09/2011

	Recommendation from review of Pupil Referral Unit (Nov 2010)	Progress	Status
1a	To restructure the whole of the PRU service including a reduction in the number of centres from 4 to 2 no later than the commencement of the September 2011 term. There should be one centre in the North and one in the Central area.	A staffing restructure has been undertaken with staffing being reduced from 88.3 fte to 42.7 fte for 2011/12. From September only the Keresley and Pound Lane centres will be in use.	Complete
1b	To consult with the Strategic Director of Resources to identify possible alternative sites, particularly for the Keresley Centre, and to bring proposals forward to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity.	The strategy for change aims to reduce demand for the PRU through a new approach to exclusions. Therefore the need to find an alternative long term site for the PRU is no longer a priority.	No longer applicable
1c	To secure proper provision for the teaching of science at all the PRU centres to ensure that pupils receive their educational entitlement.	The teaching of science at the PRU is one of the stronger areas of the curriculum. It should also be noted that a significant element of the science curriculum is not dependent on the provision of a science laboratory. Currently, neither the Pound Lane nor Keresley centres have science laboratories of the specification typically found in mainstream secondary schools. In order to enable students to access the full National Curriculum, arrangements are in place to use the fully equipped laboratories in neighbouring schools (North Leamington School and Ash Green School). To the cost of building a new science laboratory is estimated at £25,000.	Complete
1d	To ensure there is provision for a hot meal at each of the PRU centres as a matter of urgency	County Caterers now provide hot meals at the Pound Lane via Lillington School. Provision at the Keresley centre is also now in place, in partnership Keresley Newland Primary School.	Complete

1e	To ensure that from September 2011 the 2 centres should be available for KS3 and 4 pupils only and have adequate provision for English, Maths and Science on site supported by adequate ICT facilities.	A new curriculum offer and timetable was launched in June. Progress is being made in teaching and learning against the Post-Ofsted action plan. This includes lesson observations, training, analysis of assessment and progress data, review of the PRU curriculum and personalised action plans where appropriate. ICT facilities have been improved.	Complete
1f	To come forward with recommendations to Cabinet for alternative arrangements as a matter of urgency to ensure that primary school children are not accommodated within the PRU from September 2011 onwards.	No primary age children have been admitted to the PRU since March 2011. The Early Intervention Service has worked with thirteen primary age pupils since this time to ensure that they do not attend the PRU. Four of those had been permanently excluded. Twelve of the thirteen children are attending mainstream school again. One child has been identified as requiring specialist provision. Ten primary pupils (all bar two) within the PRU will be either in mainstream school or specialist provision from 1 September. Two primary children currently attending the PRU currently do not have school places for September 2011. These two children were referred for statutory assessment at the end of May and the assessment process will not be completed in time for a placement to be made for 1 September. A school placement is expected to be in place by October half term at the latest.	Near completion
2	To put forward proposals to Cabinet before the end of January 2011 for a Strategic Plan to meet the needs of excluded pupils or those at risk of exclusion which includes different and separate alternative provision for excluded primary school children. The Strategic Plan should be supported by a business case and a plan for implementation.	The business case and strategic plan have been approved by Cabinet (17 February 2011).	Complete
3a	To ensure in the short-term there are standing arrangements for a CAF to be carried out where a pupil is at risk of exclusion.	All schools are provided with clear guidance on when a CAF should be carried out. Preferably, CAFs should be in place well before a child becomes at risk of permanent exclusion. All Area Behaviour Partnerships and primary head teachers have been reminded of the benefits of using CAF.	Complete

3b	To ensure in the short-term there are standing arrangements for the Head of PRU/Head of Centre to be invited to every CAF Assessment where there is the possibility of permanent exclusion	It is not feasible for the head teacher to attend every CAF where there is the possibility of permanent exclusion. Staff at the PRU will attend CAF meetings when required to do so by the Lead Professional.	Ongoing
3c	To ensure in the short-term there are standing arrangements for the PRU has contact details for a person who can give an informed view of the pupil on the referral to the PRU following exclusion	There has been a difficulty in ensuring that appropriate information is passed to the PRU. Through the new approach it is intended that this issue is addressed. Either it will cease to be an issue as early intervention practices will stop the child being excluded, or it will be incumbent on the ABP to provide this information as part of the process of planning and purchasing alternative provision. Where a managed transfer takes place, schools will be able to hold each other to account.	Ongoing
4	To develop an information passport to improve the information being passed from schools to the PRU and from the PRU to schools.	Similar to 3c above. The new approach should reduce this importance of this as an issue. Following consultation with schools it was suggested that the information passport was included as part of the 'Change of School Application Form' to ensure that only one set of information was required. However, this has been stopped due to concerns that the information may breach the Admissions Code. LA officers are looking at a two stage process for providing information. This issue is not confined to Warwickshire.	Ongoing
5	To actively encourage the development of Learning Support Units in secondary schools in consultation with Headteachers and the Area Behaviour Partnerships	Funding devolved to ABPs can provide additional funding for LSU provision. The Early Intervention Service has shared best practice of effective Learning Support Units and offer a traded service to establish and/or run a Learning Support Unit in a school.	Complete
6	That progress on implementing these recommendations should be reported to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee within 6 months.	Interim report in April 2011. Next report in September 2011.	Complete
	Recommendation from review of Pupil Referral Unit (Sept 2010)	Progress	
6	That the primary cluster model be adopted across	6 pilot clusters of primary schools are trialling new ways of working	Ongoing

	the county with agreement on early intervention protocols and processes.	using funded devolved from the primary element of the PRU. These clusters were identified based upon the trend of exclusions in the primary phase since 2004.	
7	That the Strategic Director of Children, Young People and Families encourages all secondary schools to develop in-house provision (learning support units) to ensure a full continuum of provision.	As <i>number 5 above</i> . Funding devolved to ABPs can provide additional funding for LSU provision. The Early Intervention Service has shared best practice of effective Learning Support Units and offer a traded service to establish and/or run a Learning Support Unit in a school.	Complete
	Other issues raised by O&S visit	Progress	
	Presence of Connexions on PRU sites.	<p>Pupils at the PRU remain as one of the highest priority groups for Connexions. Historically, there have never been full time Personal Advisers allocated to this provision as the numbers of pupils are small. Input has been not been reduced.</p> <p>As of June 2011, Connexions allocated 22 days to provide careers advice and guidance to 11 pupils in Pound Lane PRU and 40 days to 20 pupils in the Keresley PRU. The Advisers working with the PRU also spend additional time linked to the September Guarantee to support these young people to achieve a positive destination at the end of Year 11, as they are one of our most challenging groups of young people to place into a successful sustained outcome.</p>	
	Other premises issues.	These have been assigned either to Property Services or, if appropriate, to the PRU and its caretaking staff.	

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Strategic Aim	Measure	Further detail	Responsible officer	Date and frequency	Reporting to
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)

MONITORING SCHEDULE – 2011/12 (AUTUMN TERM)

Strategic Aim	Report	By whom	Date expected	Reporting to
To meet the learning needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded by introducing new approaches	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – Northern ABP	Chair of Northern ABP	22/11/2011	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – Central ABP	Chair of Central ABP	22/11/2011	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – Eastern ABP	Chair of Eastern ABP	22/11/2011	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – Southern ABP	Chair of Southern ABP	22/11/2011	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – LA perspective	Principal School Improvement Officer	22/11/2011	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion – primary phase	Primary Strategic Policy Group and Service Manager - Primary and Early Years	22/11/2011	PRU Project Board
	Report following outcome of consultation	Access and Organisation	November 2011	PRU Project Board
To improve the quality of education for young people attending the PRU.	Quality of education at the PRU	HMI Ofsted	November 2011	Strategic Director of People Group
	Quality of education at college places commissioned by the PRU	Principal School Improvement Officer	Half termly	PRU Project Board
	Quality of provision for primary aged pupils in transition to secondary schools	Principal School Improvement Officer	October 2011	PRU Project Board
To reduce the number of exclusions, and consequently demand on the PRU.	Permanent exclusions data	Exclusions team	Weekly report (one week in arrears)	PRU Project Board (by email)
Value for money	Financial reports for ABPs	Finance / Access and Organisation	End of each month	PRU Project Board (by email)
Project overview	Report to Cabinet - summarising all reports above.	Head of Early Intervention	15/12/2011 (Papers due 28/11/2011)	Cabinet

MONITORING SCHEDULE – 2011/12 (SPRING TERM)

Strategic Aim	Report	By whom	Date expected	Reporting to
To meet the learning needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded by introducing new approaches	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – Northern ABP	Chair of Northern ABP	March 2012	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – Central ABP	Chair of Central ABP	March 2012	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – Eastern ABP	Chair of Eastern ABP	March 2012	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – Southern ABP	Chair of Southern ABP	March 2012	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – LA perspective	Principal School Improvement Officer	March 2012	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion–primary phase	Primary Strategic Policy Group and Service Manager - Primary and Early Years	March 2012	PRU Project Board
To improve the quality of education for young people attending the PRU.	Quality of education at the PRU	HMI Ofsted		Strategic Director of People Group
	Quality of education at college places commissioned by the PRU	Principal School Improvement Officer	Half termly	PRU Project Board
To reduce the number of exclusions, and consequently demand on the PRU.	Permanent exclusions data	Exclusions team	Weekly report (one week in arrears)	PRU Project Board (by email)
Value for money	Financial reports for ABPs	Finance / Access and Organisation	End of each month	PRU Project Board (by email)
Project overview	Reports to Cabinet and O&S as requested.			

MONITORING SCHEDULE – 2011/12 (SUMMER TERM)

Strategic Aim	Report	By whom	Date expected	Reporting to
To meet the learning needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded by introducing new approaches	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – Northern ABP	Chair of Northern ABP	March 2012	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – Central ABP	Chair of Central ABP	March 2012	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – Eastern ABP	Chair of Eastern ABP	March 2012	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – Southern ABP	Chair of Southern ABP	March 2012	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have been excluded using devolved funding – LA perspective	Principal School Improvement Officer	March 2012	PRU Project Board
	Meeting the needs of pupils at risk of exclusion – primary phase	Primary Strategic Policy Group and Service Manager - Primary and Early Years	March 2012	PRU Project Board
To improve the quality of education for young people attending the PRU.	Quality of education at the PRU	HMI Ofsted		Strategic Director of People Group
	Quality of education at college places commissioned by the PRU	Principal School Improvement Officer	Half termly	PRU Project Board
To reduce the number of exclusions, and consequently demand on the PRU.	Permanent exclusions data	Exclusions team	Weekly report (one week in arrears)	PRU Project Board (by email)
Value for money	Financial reports for ABPs	Finance / Access and Organisation	End of each month	PRU Project Board (by email)
Project overview	Reports to Cabinet and O&S as requested.			

Consultation

Proposal to Close the Warwickshire Pupil Referral Unit

September 2011

Please send your comments to

consultations@warwickshire.gov.uk

or in writing to

Access and Organisation (ref JN)
Learning and Achievement
Saltisford Office Park
Ansell Way
Warwick
CV34 4UL

Deadline for responses is 24th October 2011

1. The Proposal

- 1.1 The Warwickshire Cabinet has agreed to consult on a proposal to close the Warwickshire Pupil Referral Unit (also known as the Pupil Reintegration Unit) with effect from 31st August 2012. If the proposal is supported, new arrangements for securing short term education from a range of providers will be introduced.
- 1.2 The purpose of this document is to set out the background to the proposal and the arrangements to be put in place if the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) were to close.

2. Background

- 2.1 Warwickshire Cabinet is mindful that the local authority continues 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.”
- 2.2 The Warwickshire PRU provides education for pupils that have been permanently excluded from Warwickshire schools. While the trend in the number of permanent exclusion in Warwickshire has been decreasing, schools in the county still exclude more pupils than similar authorities.
- 2.3 The majority of exclusions were for ‘persistent disruptive behaviour’ and involved boys aged 14 or 15. In most cases, the schools had worked hard to keep the pupils in the school for a number of years before feeling permanent exclusion was the most appropriate action.

3. The Rationale for Proposing Closure

- 3.1 There are three key reasons why the Authority is proposing to close the PRU. Firstly, provision is deemed to be inadequate at the moment. In June 2010 Ofsted concluded that special measures were required because the PRU was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. In almost all areas the PRU was judged to be inadequate including the quality of teaching and the support for individual pupils.
- 3.2 Secondly, the number of permanent exclusions in Warwickshire is higher than those of other similar authorities. Headteacher’s have told us is that if they were able to access additional resources at an earlier stage they could take action to ensure that a disruptive pupil is given the necessary support and guidance to enable them to continue in the mainstream school while not disrupting the learning of others.
- 3.3 The third key issue is that the costs involved in maintaining the PRU are high and do not provide value for money. In 2010/11 it cost £2.8million to maintain the Warwickshire PRU. The cost of educating an individual pupil in the PRU was £26,000 per year in 2010/11. Headteachers have told us that this resource could be better used if it was devolved to schools and Area Partnerships. The Warwickshire PRU maintained four sites across the county and employed over 90 staff. The closure of the PRU will enable this high level of resource to be better used in preventative work and early intervention.

One example of how the existing funding could be better utilised is through the development of Learning Support Units within schools. This means that disruptive pupils can be taught away from others until their behaviour improves. With this example, teachers will have the support they need to improve the behaviour of the pupil at risk of exclusion;

other pupils will not have to suffer regular disruption to their classes and consequently provision for all pupils should improve.

4. The Current Position

4.1 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. The plan draws upon the findings of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee investigations into exclusions and the Pupil Referral Unit.

4.2 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. 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 educational provision appropriate to the individual child

4.3 From 1 September 2011, funding will be devolved to the four Secondary Area Behaviour Partnerships 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. If a child is excluded the Area Behaviour Partnership will either seek to re-integrate the pupil into another mainstream school, or alternatively will be able to purchase a package of support appropriate to the needs of the individual.

5. The Proposed Future Model

5.1 The present model for dealing with permanent exclusion is no longer felt fit for purpose. However, there remains a need to make short stay arrangements for pupils of secondary school age who:

- arrive in-year from out of county where it is necessary to take sufficient time to ensure the right pupil placement is found;
- are permanently excluded where an alternative place is not agreed within a six day period. This is a statutory responsibility for the Authority.

5.2 Therefore the Authority is proposing the following arrangements from September 2012.

- The Local Authority will offer the facility to support the Area Behaviour Partnerships by *commissioning* short term places for individual pupils where no arrangement can be made within six days. The Authority will retain the responsibility for commissioning short stay arrangements from a range of appropriate providers. These might include private/third sector organisations, a neighbouring local authority service or a Warwickshire maintained mainstream or special school offering this facility as an additional part of their overall provision.
- Although the Authority would manage this service the costs of any commissioned provision would be payable by the Area Behaviour Partnership concerned. The Authority will select the most appropriate short term place from a quality assured database of providers.
- The benefits of this are that the Authority can ensure all pupils have access to full time education within the maximum time set for excluded pupils and that head teachers in

each Area Behaviour Partnership will feel supported in knowing they can consider the future long term arrangement for the excluded pupil carefully and without undue haste.

- The costs of maintaining this central service would be approximately £10,000 to cover the administration costs involved in the commissioning process. This funding would be taken from the planned £2.8 million devolved funding to the Area Behaviour Partnerships in 2012/13.
- The cost of each place will be negotiated with each provider and be on a weekly basis. The cost of funding individual places will be met by the Area Behaviour Partnership. The Authority will ensure that sufficient provision is available for excluded pupils to take these commissions at short notice.
- Warwickshire will no longer maintain provision to teach excluded pupils, should the proposal to close the PRU be approved. The present PRU buildings and facilities would be used for other purposes.

5.3 The new approach proposed will provide schools and Area Behaviour Partnerships with a financial incentive to strengthen further their behaviour management strategies. Schools and Area Behaviour Partnerships where exclusions are few will be able to use the additional funding to improve their provision. Head teachers have told us that learning can improve for *all* pupils if sufficient additional resources are made available to their schools and Area Behaviour Partnerships to improve the effectiveness of behaviour management strategies - not just those at risk of exclusion.

5.4 By commissioning provision as and when it is necessary, the Local Authority is able to meet its statutory responsibilities for excluded pupils and release the maximum resource possible for early intervention and prevention.

6. What Else Was Considered?

6.1 The Authority did consider other possible arrangements if the PRU is closed. It is anticipated that the number of permanent exclusions will be significantly reduced. Some head teachers have indicated that it may not be necessary for the Authority to offer the service described in 5.2 at all, as arrangements could be made by the Area Behaviour Partnerships themselves. This would maximise the funding available to be devolved to schools to help prevent exclusions. While the Authority has sympathy with this approach, and may support this option in the long term, it is felt that a safety net of support for Area Behaviour Partnerships is necessary in the short term.

6.2 The Authority considered continuing to maintain a smaller PRU or opening a new PRU. Both of these options were rejected. The cost of maintaining a PRU is likely to be significant. This would reduce the amount of funding available to devolve to Area Behaviour Partnerships and therefore restrict the capacity for early intervention and preventative measures to be used by schools. There would be a significant risk that the present unsatisfactory situation of high exclusions and inadequate provision would be repeated.

7. The Consultation Process

7.1 Formal consultation will run from 12th September through to 24th October 2011 inclusive. The County Council is seeking comments and views on the proposal. No decision has been made at this stage other than to consult on the proposal.

7.2 Copies of this consultation document have been sent to all members of staff currently employed by the Pupil Referral Unit, All County Councillors, District and Borough Councils, Warwickshire Members of Parliament, Teaching and non-teaching professional associations, parents of young people on roll at the Pupil Referral Unit in September 2011 and all Warwickshire schools.

- 7.3 We will be holding two public meetings for anyone interested to learn more about the proposal and to ask questions. These meetings will take place on Tuesday 27th September at The Keresley PRU and on Thursday 29th September at the Pound Lane PRU. Both meetings will begin at 6.00 p.m.
- 7.4 The proposal, together with feedback from the consultation, will be reported to the Warwickshire Cabinet on 15th December. The Cabinet may decide not to go forward with the proposal at this stage. If, however they decide to continue with the proposal, the Authority is required to publish statutory notices.
- 7.5 The publishing of Statutory Notices will give a further 6 week period to interested parties to comment on, or object to the proposal.
- 7.6 If there are no objections to the statutory consultation the matter could be determined by the Warwickshire Cabinet at it's meeting on 15th March 2012.
- 7.7 If there are objections to the statutory consultation, the proposal will be forwarded to the Schools Adjudicator for a final decision.

8. What Next?

- 8.1 Warwickshire County Council wants to hear your views on the proposal to close the Warwickshire Pupil Referral Unit with effect from 31st August 2012.
- 8.2 Your views can be submitted by email to consultations@warwickshire.gov.uk

Alternatively you can submit your views in writing to

Access and Organisation (ref JN)
Learning and Achievement
Saltisford Office Park
Ansell Way
Warwick
CV34 4UL

The deadline for responses is 24th October 2011