



Parents, Carers, and Governors

Your ref:

Our ref: MEC/bmh

Date: 24th January 2022

Dear Parents, Carers, and Governors

Schools for the Future – Principles and Policies

I am writing to inform you that on Tuesday, January 25th Central Bedfordshire Council's Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be discussing some proposed changes to the principles and policies of the Schools for the Future programme.

The aim of the ambitious and long-term programme is to raise education standards in Central Bedfordshire by ensuring the area has the right schools, in the right places, delivering the best education. Part of this is the move to the two-tier model of education and is key to improving our education offer and in attracting and retaining the best teachers.

In July 2021, the adoption of the Local Plan was a key milestone which created the opportunity for us to reconfirm the school place provision required. Whilst this review was carried out, we paused new schools entering the programme.

This review also provided the opportunity to reflect and take stock of feedback from schools involved in the programme, which has highlighted that schools would welcome more transparency and clarity about the parameters of the programme.

We have listened to this feedback, and we agree, therefore as a result of this review, we are proposing some changes to the Schools for the Future programme from 2022 onwards, while confirming that our overall aims and objectives remain the same; to raise standards of attainment for pupils.

These proposals are aimed at providing greater clarity for schools and parents and to support a fair and equitable approach across the whole of Central Bedfordshire.

Some of the changes to the Schools for the Future programme that we are proposing include:

- Support for a target to improve learning outcomes to above the national average at Key Stage 2, Key Stage S4, and Post-16.
- Consistent, clear, and honest communications via a single, agreed message to stakeholders.

Continued ...

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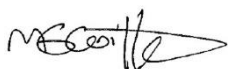
- The Council no longer making initial proposals for changes to academies, as we are not the key decision-maker. We will now welcome two-tier proposals from Academy Trusts which are supported by the DfE.
- Proposals for primary / secondary conversion will be matched against Central Bedfordshire Council-validated pupil place requirements.
- Setting out clear value-for-money principles in investing any capital funds into small schools.
- Schools for the Future capital investment will not support Early Years or Post-16 proposals.
- Proposals to improve and create SEND places will continue however SEND investment will be a parallel programme led by Children's Services and not directly managed by the Schools for the Future programme.
- Schools for the Future funds will not be available to improve existing school accommodation. Additional accommodation will be provided as standalone new-build blocks unless site constraints dictate extensions / alterations are required.
- A new Design Principles Policy that sets out what can fairly and equitably be funded across the schools still in the three-tier system.
- All building improvement works will be funded by Central Bedfordshire Council and managed by Central Bedfordshire Council and its contractors.
- A new six-point criteria against which the Council will consider all conversion proposals.
- Comprehensive feasibility studies will inform public consultations on proposed changes.

Further detail to these proposed changes and the review of the Schools for the Future Principles and Policies are outlined in [the paper](#) that will first be considered by our Overview and Scrutiny Committee on January 25th and will then be subject to discussion and approval by our Executive Committee on February 8th. [The paper](#) and [appendix 1](#) and [appendix 2](#) which will be considered at these meetings are now available to view on the Central Bedfordshire Council website.

Subject to Executive agreement for the proposals in the report, the Council will then invite all school Governing Bodies and Trusts to consider and hopefully support these proposals.

You can keep up to date with all the latest information is available on our [Schools for the Future website](#).

Yours faithfully



Marcel Coiffait
Chief Executive