<div align="center">**Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee.**</div>

**Inquiry Scope**

| Title | **Working Together to Reduce the Number of Permanent Exclusions from School** |
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| **Signed-off by** | The Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee |
| | Head of Member Services (Statutory Scrutiny Officer) |
| **Author** | Kevin Wright – Committee and Governance Adviser |
| **Date** | 5th December 2017 |
| **Inquiry Group Membership** | Cllr Dev Dhillon, Cllr Isobel Darby and Cllr Gareth Williams |
| **Member Services Resource** | Member Services will provide the following officer support:<br>• Sara Turnbull - Head of Member Services – Report Quality Assurance<br>• Kelly Sutherland - Committee & Governance Manager – Project oversight<br>• Kevin Wright - Committee & Governance Adviser – Policy Lead & project management<br>• Committee Assistant – Administrative support (as needed) |
| **Lead Cabinet Member** | • Mike Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Education & Skills |
| **Lead Service Officer** | • Sarah Callaghan – Director of Education |
| **Executive Director** | • Tolis Vouyioukas – Executive Director of Children's Services. |
| **What is the problem that is trying to be solved?** | During the past two school years there has been a disproportionally large increase in permanent exclusions from both secondary and primary schools in Buckinghamshire.<br><br>The Committee is keen to judge the effectiveness of the Council's current partnership working with schools, alternative providers and wider service providers in reducing the increase in permanent exclusions to average levels or below. |
| **What will not be considered** | Fixed period exclusions |
| **Is this topic within the remit of the Select Committee?** | Yes. The Committee has the authority to scrutinise all issues in relation to schools, the Bucks Learning Trust, quality standards and performance in education. |
| **What are the inquiry objectives** | • To understand the reasons for the increase in permanent exclusions.<br>• To assess the impact on the pupil referral units and special schools<br>• To judge the effectiveness of the Council's partnership working in reducing permanent exclusions.<br>• To identify good practice in preventing and reducing permanent exclusions and share with others.<br>• To understand the funding available to help reduce permanent exclusions.<br>• To ensure government guidance and legislation on permanent exclusions is being rigorously followed. |
| **What are the key lines of enquiry/issues to investigate/evidence needed.** | **Strategy**<br>• The overarching strategic approach to the issue including prevention work<br>• The impact of changing government educational policy and financing including the change to Progress 8 assessment on permanent exclusions |

| | **Identifying the Issues** |
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| | • The reasons for the increased numbers of permanent exclusions |
| | • Whether the increase in permanent exclusions is spread evenly across all Bucks schools or centred on a limited number |
| | • Which cohorts of pupils are permanently excluded |
| | • The reasons for the high percentage of primary schools exclusions of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) pupils. |
| | **Working in Partnership** |
| | • How effective are the processes and procedures aimed at preventing permanent exclusions being used by schools. |
| | • Identifying examples of good practice that Buckinghamshire's schools are using to prevent permanent exclusions |
| | • Leverage that the local authority currently has with schools and other partners to prevent permanent exclusions and using these effectively. |
| | • The work and performance of the Pupil Referral Units (PRU) |
| **Is the topic of relevance to the work of BCC?** | Yes.  The Council has legal obligations in respect of dealing with permanent exclusions. The Department for Education (DfE) guidance on Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England on which the Council's advice to schools and practice is based relates to: |
| | • The Education Act 2002, as amended by the Education Act 2011; |
| | • The School Discipline (Pupil Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012; |
| | • The Education and Inspections Act 2006; |
| | • The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded pupils) (England) Regulations 2007. |
| | Permanent exclusions from both primary and secondary school increased by 100% in 2015/16 from the previous year with a further increase of 6% in 2016/17. |
| | Children who are permanently excluded from schools have worse long term outcomes than their peers, their educational achievements suffer, they are more likely to develop mental health issues and become involved in the criminal justice system. A survey of 15 to 18 year olds held in custody reported that 90% of the young men and 75% of the young women had been excluded from school.  In additions, there is a significant difference in the cost between educating pupils in mainstream schools, special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRU's).  In 2007 New Philanthropy Capital estimated the aggregate lifetime cost of permanent exclusions from school to be £650 million.[1] |
| | Permanent exclusion from school is damaging to the pupils and distressing for the parents and carers. In some cases, these are families with a range of problems already and the exclusion from school is a further difficulty. There are also dangers in increasing the burden on families not coping well, and the result may be longer term calls on public services.[2] |

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[1] Children's Services report to Buckinghamshire County Council Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee January 2017

[2] New Policy Institute:  Second Chances – Exclusions From School and Equality of Opportunity.
http://www.npi.org.uk/files/3213/7545/1331/schools_exclusion.pdf

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| **What work is underway already on this issue?** | The Service has done some work in analysing data to understand the reasons for permanent exclusions in primary schools<br><br>The Service has held interviews with other Local Authorities, Head Teachers, Special Educational Needs Co-coordinators (SENCOs) the PRU and Education Officers within the Council – again focussing on Primary Schools.<br><br>A Buckinghamshire Inclusive Education Working Party has been set up consisting of Primary and Secondary PRU Head Teachers, Grammar, Upper and Primary Head Teachers; Local Authority lead Officers from the SEN Department, Education Psychology, Education Entitlement and Commissioning.<br><br>A SEND/Exclusions pilot is to be launched during the Autumn. It will be a multi-professional approach given funding to support children to remain in schools with a default position of "not to exclude" |
| **Are there any key changes that might impact on this issue?** | Potential changes to the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust contract<br>Educational Psychology Service  Pilots<br>Early Help Review<br>Changes to central government budget allocations |
| **What are the key timing considerations?** | Need to avoid school holidays when gathering evidence.<br>Other Select Committee Inquiry evidence gathering during Autumn/Winter |
| **Who are the key stakeholders & decision-makers?** | • Buckinghamshire children and young people and their families affected by permanent exclusions<br>• Senior management / leadership team Children's Services<br>• Commissioners of support services for excluded children<br>• School head teachers<br>• Teacher<br>• Pupil Referral Unit Head Teachers and staff<br>• Special Schools<br>• Specialist Teachers<br>• Bucks Learning Trust<br>• Exclusion and re-integration team<br>• Educational Psychology Service<br>• Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Service<br>• Inclusive Education Working Party<br>• Prevention and Support Panel |
| **What media /communications support do you want?** | • Press release to let the public know that the inquiry is taking place including call for evidence around a small no. of key questions.<br>• Press release post report publication and potential video report if possible.<br>• Publicise on social media |

**Evidence-gathering Methodology**

| What types of methods of evidence-gathering will you use? |
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| **List them here e.g.**<br>• Desktop research<br>    ○ Business Intelligence Data<br>    ○ National and peer group good practice<br>    ○ School Protocols/Procedures on exclusions<br>• Interviews and visits<br>    ○ Head Teachers (Secondary and Primary Schools)<br>    ○ Teachers and Staff and Pupil Referral Units<br>    ○ Children's Services Senior Management<br>    ○ Educational Entitlement Team<br>    ○ Inclusive Education Working Party<br>    ○ Prevention and Support Panel<br>    ○ Families and young people affected by permanent exclusion<br>    ○ Children's and young people's advocates or groups<br>    ○ Attend workshops/meetings that have already been set up focussing on exclusions. |
| **How will you involve service-users and the public in this inquiry?**<br>• Speak to families and young people affected by permanent exclusions. |

**Assessment Methodology**

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| Gather and triangulating evidence from stakeholders shown above and then make an assessment against a key list of criteria to identify what good or successful would look like identifying areas for improvement. (See attached list at appendix 1) |

**Outline Inquiry Project Plan**

| Stage | Key Activity | Dates |
|---|---|---|
| Scoping | Inquiry Outline Agreed by Select Committee Planning Workshop | Dec |
| Evidence-gathering | Evidence-gathering phase<br>  - List key events | Dec-Mar |
| | Final Evidence Session – fact finding complete | Feb/Mar |
| Developing Recommendations | Inquiry Group/Select Committee meeting – Key Findings Report & Possible Areas of Recommendations considered | Mar |
| | Testing & developing recommendations with stakeholders | Mar |
| Reporting | Final Inquiry Group report with recommendations completed (signed-off by SC Chairman) | Mar/Apr |
| | Report published for Select Committee | Apr |
| | Select Committee agrees report to go forward to decision-makers | Apr/May |
| | Cabinet/Partner considers recommendations | May |

**See appendix 1 for draft assessment criteria and what good/success might look like.**

**Inquiry:  Working Together to Reduce the Number of Permanent Exclusions from School**

**Assessment Criteria**.

Evidence shows that the Council is working well with partners to reduce the number of permanent exclusions from school.
- There is pro-active work being undertaken on preventing children and young people being permanently excluded which starts at an early stage.
- A "whole system" (i.e. partners and services within an organisation working together in a coherent way) strategic, consistent approach used to support children, young people and their families to prevent permanent exclusions.
- Policies in place in areas such as anti-bullying, inclusion, behaviour and mental health & wellbeing are well used, known about and are effective.
- Staff are supported in their development, learning and awareness in respect of early intervention and managing children and young people's health and wellbeing needs, including dealing with challenging behaviour.

What will good / success look like?

- There is a strategic partnership approach in dealing with permanent exclusions centred on the child and young person and their family.
- There is a vision promoted by Councillors to schools setting out expectations with regards inclusivity and permanent exclusions.
- There is a clear plan for reducing the number of permanent exclusions over the next 3 years to ensure underlying causes are addressed.
- The Council provides effective support, training and communication to school governors
- Good practice in preventing permanent exclusions is shared with all schools.
- School Governors are providing robust challenge of permanent exclusions decisions
- Early intervention and help is successful in reducing the need for permanent exclusions
- Innovative ways are tried and used to reduce permanent exclusions and these are shared amongst partners
- Alternative provision for educating those excluded is quality assessed and providers and their staff receive child protection training.
- There is consistency of practice in dealing with permanent exclusions across Bucks' schools
- Staff are well trained and are confident in dealing with  behavioural issues and being able to intervene and support early
- School staff are confident in referring effectively to external services including mental health services.
- Consistent support for young people at risk of permanent exclusion is provided when transitioning from primary to secondary school.
- All partners have a good understanding of the numbers of permanent exclusions
- Additional funding is used effectively by schools to support pupils with additional needs focused on reducing permanent exclusions.
- Information for families of excluded children is accessible and easy to understand for all residents and includes information on preventing permanent exclusion.
- Funding available for schools for pupils to support those at risk of exclusion is used effectively to reduce permanent exclusions.