

Central Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ



please ask for Jonathon Partridge

direct line 0300 300 4634

date 23 February 2012

NOTICE OF MEETING

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date & Time

Tuesday, 6 March 2012 10.00 a.m.

Venue at

Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford

Richard Carr
Chief Executive

To: The Chairman and Members of the SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

Cllrs D McVicar (Chairman), A R Bastable (Vice-Chairman), M C Blair,
Mrs C F Chapman MBE, Mrs R B Gammons, Ms C Maudlin, J Murray,
B Saunders and P Williams

[Named Substitutes:

D Bowater, R W Johnstone, D Jones, Mrs M Mustoe, A Shadbolt and
I Shingler]

All other Members of the Council - on request

**MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS
MEETING**

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence and notification of substitute members.

2. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 24 January 2012 and to note actions taken since that meeting.

3. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members any declarations and the nature thereof in relation to:-

- (a) personal interests in any agenda item
- (b) personal and prejudicial interests in any agenda item
- (c) any political whip in relation to any agenda item.

4. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

To receive any announcements from the Chairman and any matters of communication.

5. **Petitions**

To receive petitions from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 2 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

6. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

To receive any questions, statements or deputations from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of part A4 of the Constitution.

7. **Call-In**

To consider any decision of the Executive referred to this Committee for review in accordance with Procedure Rule 10.10 of Part D2.

8. **Requested Items**

To consider any items referred to the Committee at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

REPORTS

Item	Subject	Page Nos.
9	<p>Development Brief for land at Stanford Road, Shefford</p> <p>To receive a report regarding the development brief and comment prior to consideration by the Executive to adopt the brief as technical guidance for development management purposes.</p>	* 13 - 72
10	<p>Planning and Development Briefs for Bridge Meadow and Land South of High Street, Leighton Buzzard</p> <p>To consider the outcome of consultation in relation to this document, which is proposed to be approved by Executive as technical guidance for development management purposes. The Committee is asked to provide comments to be considered at the Executive meeting on 27 March 2012.</p>	* 73 - 94
11	<p>Central Bedfordshire Council Library Service Strategy</p> <p>To consider the outcomes of the Library Service Review, including public consultation findings and to consider the Library Service Strategy. The Committee is asked to provide comments to be considered at the Executive meeting on 27 March 2012.</p>	* 95 - 182
12	<p>Local Transport Plan Scheme Prioritisation Framework</p> <p>To consider and comment on the scheme prioritisation framework that will be used to determine the funding priorities for the authority through the Local Transport Plan. The Committee is asked to provide comments to be considered at the Executive meeting on 27 March 2012.</p>	* 183 - 196
13	<p>Draft Work Programme 2011-12 and Executive Forward Plan</p> <p>To consider details of the currently drafted Committee work programme and Executive Forward Plan.</p>	* 197 - 218

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CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 24 January 2012.

PRESENT

Cllr D McVicar (Chairman)
Cllr A R Bastable (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs M C Blair
Mrs R B Gammons
Ms C Maudlin

Cllrs J Murray
B Saunders
P Williams

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mrs C F Chapman MBE

Substitutes: Cllrs A Shadbolt (In place of Mrs C F Chapman MBE)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs P N Aldis
P A Duckett
J G Jamieson
K C Matthews
A Zerny

Chairman of Customer and Central Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Executive
Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development

Officers in Attendance: Mr G Alderson – Director of Sustainable Communities
Mr R Fox – Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy
Mrs J Keyte – Community Safety Manager
Mr J Partridge – Scrutiny Policy Adviser
M Saccoccio – LDF North Team Leader
Ms S Wileman – Service Development Manager

Others in Attendance Ms P Fletcher Bedfordshire Police Authority
Mr L Mitchell Bedfordshire & Luton Joint Fire Authority
Ms K Morgan Bedfordshire Probation Trust

SCOSC/11/50 Minutes

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 December 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SCOSC/11/51 Members' Interests

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

None.

(b) **Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-**

None.

(c) **Any political whip in relation to any agenda item:-**

None.

SCOSC/11/52 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman informed the Committee that public questions, statements or deputations had not been included in the agenda. This item was required in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure set out in Part A4 of the Constitution. This item would be considered following Item 7, "requested items."

RESOLVED

That in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure set out in Part A4 of the Constitution the item "questions, statements or deputations" be added to the agenda.

SCOSC/11/53 Petitions

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part D2 of the Constitution.

SCOSC/11/54 **Call-In**

The Panel was advised that no decisions of the Executive had been referred to the Panel under the Call-in Procedures set out in Appendix "A" to Rule No. S18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

SCOSC/11/55 **Requested Items**

No items were referred to the Committee for consideration at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

SCOSC/11/56 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

The Committee were told that one speaker had registered to speak at the meeting in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 to Section A4 of the Constitution. The speaker raised issues in relation to Item 8 (Minute SCOSC/11/57 refers), including the following:-

- Openness, transparency and accountability in Council meetings. Public attendance at Task Force meetings in particular needed to be ensured.
- The input of Members in the development plan process and the definition of 'Member Briefings'.
- The benefits of forming a formal sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

SCOSC/11/57 **Member Involvement in the Preparation of Planning and Related Strategy Documents**

The Committee received a report from the Director of Sustainable Communities that outlined proposals for future working arrangements for Member involvement in the plan preparation process and related housing and transportation strategy documents. The Director commented that a single Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire would be prepared for adoption in 2014. The process of public consultation required throughout the development of the Strategy was extensive. Attention of Members was drawn to the legal implications outlined in the report.

Councillors sought clarification on issues relating to expediency, the role of Town and Parish Councils and whether all Councillors would be able to attend Sub-Committees, informal Task and Finish groups or Member briefings. A Member also commented that a large workload had been undertaken by the previous Task Force and whatever option was chosen there would be a considerable amount of work to be carried out.

Councillor Zerny stated that meetings of all Task and Finish groups should be open to the public to inform discussion and provide evidence. It was also

commented that all Members should be able to attend meetings of Task and Finish groups.

In response the Director commented that formal sub-committees, Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Member briefings would be open to all Members of Central Bedfordshire Council. Decisions could only be taken by the Executive or in some cases Full Council. Under options A or B every issue would be considered by Members twice. Visits would continue to be arranged for Members under any of the options.

In response to the report and the issues raised by other Members the Committee raised and discussed the following issues in detail:-

- A considerable workload would be involved in producing a Development Strategy. Member briefings would assist in the explanation of documentation and help Members understand key issues. If the Committee resolved to approve option C a considerable amount of work would be undertaken by the OSC that would have previously been undertaken by the Task Force.
- Extensive public consultation was required to develop a strong evidence base for the Development Strategy.
- The importance of the public being able to contribute and the need for Members to lead the process of producing a Development Strategy. It was important that whatever option was chosen Members could call on witnesses as they felt appropriate. The public and press could be excluded from meetings under the provisions of the Local Government Act if exempt information was likely to be disclosed.
- Inadequate levels of public or Member engagement in the production of the Development Strategy would likely result in the Strategy failing at the Examination in Public.
- Meeting in private allowed the previous Task Force to discuss sensitive issues freely without creating undue distress as a result of media coverage.
- There might not always be adequate time in Member Briefings to discuss all of the issues that Members wanted to discuss.
- Option A would lead to a considerable amount of duplication as issues would be considered by Members twice.
- The importance of the Development Strategy being considered in a holistic way and not segregated into sections or areas.

Cllr Williams proposed (and was seconded) the following motion for approval by the Committee:-

To form an informal group made up of all Members, meeting in private, to receive and digest officer reports and be able to call in relevant witnesses to

gather information and take it back to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which would debate and discuss information outlined in public.

In debating this proposal Members discussed the legal implications of their decision and what formal record might result from the Member briefings outlined in option C. Members also discussed access to private meetings for the public, other Central Bedfordshire Councillors and witnesses.

Following debate Cllr Williams withdrew his motion and Cllr Mrs R Gammons proposed (and was seconded) the following motion:-

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives officer reports directly but preceded by Member briefings open to all Members as considered expedient including the calling of witnesses as deemed appropriate.

RESOLVED

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives officer reports directly but, when considered expedient, these meetings will be preceded by Member briefings open to all Members including the calling of witnesses as deemed appropriate.

(Councillor Murray requested that his vote against this resolution be recorded).

(Note: the Committee adjourned for a short break from 11.30am and reconvened at 11.45am)

SCOSC/11/58 Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment, Identified Priorities for 2012-13

The Committee received a report informing Members of the three priorities that had been identified through the Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment. The Head of Community Safety outlined the specific priorities that had been proposed and the consultation to which they had been subject.

In response to the report and the issues raised by other Members the Committee raised and discussed the following issues in detail:-

- Significant levels of advice and support that were provided to victims of anti-social behaviour. The response of the police force was determined by the levels of threat, harm and risk in each individual case.
- The importance of encouraging greater reporting of incidents of domestic abuse.
- Integrated offender management (IOM) enabled a range of agencies to work together to reduce reoffending. The Council was a key partner in IOM.
- Bedfordshire Police would continue to take action in relation to priorities that had been identified in local communities via police community support. In addition the Community Safety Partnership Tasking Group

reviewed local issues and developed specific short-term action plans to address these.

- There were currently sufficient numbers of domestic abuse refuges located throughout Central Bedfordshire.
- The importance of encouraging offenders to be personally responsible for their offences.
- The importance of agencies providing feedback to victims, particularly in relation to anti-social behaviour, in order to increase public confidence.

RECOMMENDED TO EXECUTIVE

That the three Partnership Strategic Assessment Priorities for 2012-13 be approved as follows:-

- (i) Anti-Social Behaviour**
- (ii) Reduce Reoffending**
- (iii) Domestic Abuse**

SCOSC/11/59 Development Brief for Land West of Abbey Lane, Ampthill

The Committee received a report from the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Economic Development that proposed a development brief for land west of Abbey Lane, Ampthill. The Committee also received a presentation from George Gardner, Gardner Stewart Architects, that outlined previous consultation that had been undertaken and the technical constraints that had been identified in the brief. The Committee were also informed that the brief had been developed in line with national policy and that it presented a resolution to the constraints that had been identified.

Councillor Duckett told the Committee he had been then Chairman of a Stakeholder Group in Ampthill that had been consulted throughout the process. The development of this brief had been an exemplar for public engagement and the plans had the support of the local community. The Committee heard that there were infrastructure problems in Ampthill that needed to be resolved and whilst those should not prevent the approval of the development brief the Council needed to be mindful of these as the area expanded.

In response to the report, presentation and the issues raised by Cllr Duckett the Committee raised and discussed the following issues in detail:-

- The importance of the Council addressing current infrastructure problems throughout Central Bedfordshire, including Ampthill, that could be addressed through a range of means such as the Local Area Transport Plan or Town Plan.

- The use of the Planning Obligations Strategy to meet infrastructure requirements without unduly burdening developers with existing requirements.
- The continued operation of the Stakeholder Group if the development brief were approved.
- The importance of having an approved Development Strategy by 2014 as a means of receiving funding through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

RECOMMENDED TO EXECUTIVE

That the Development Brief for Land West of Abbey Lane, Amptill, be adopted as technical guidance

SCOSC/11/60 Quarter 2 Performance Report

The Committee received the quarter one performance for the Sustainable Communities directorate for 2011-12. In addition to the report the Committee was informed that significant improvement had been made in relation to SC4 (number of affordable homes created) and if assessed today it would be scored 'green'.

In response to questions from Members it was commented that the identification of 35% affordable homes in developments was deemed to be appropriate as schemes had to be commercially viable. It was also commented that increases in the percentage of waste sent to landfill in quarter 2 could be due to seasonal reasons.

NOTED the report

SCOSC/11/61 Draft Work Programme 2011-2012 and Executive Forward Plan

The Committee received their work programme and Executive Forward Plan. It was noted that in light of the Committee's earlier decision to receive all development plan documents at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee this would have an effect on their work programme. Members requested that a revised work programme be presented to them at their next meeting.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the work programme for the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved.**
- 2. That the Scrutiny Policy Adviser submit a revised work programme to the next meeting to include development plan documents that were required to be considered by the Committee at future meetings.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.56 p.m.)

Meeting: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 06 March 2012

Subject: Development Brief - Land at Stanford Road, Shefford

Report of: Cllr Ken Matthews, Executive Member Sustainable Communities – Strategic Planning and Economic Development

Summary: The report recommends that Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the Development Brief and that Executive adopt it as technical guidance for Development Management purposes.

Advising Officer: Gary Alderson, Director of Sustainable Communities

Contact Officer: Carry Murphy, Principal Planning Officer, Local Planning and Housing Team

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Shefford

Function of: Executive

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS
Council Priorities:
1. The Development Brief will support the Council priority of managing growth effectively.
Financial:
2. The creation of the development brief will not represent a financial burden on the Council. Many of the costs for creating the development brief have been borne by the promoters. Furthermore, a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA), a collaborative project management tool, has been entered into which secured funding for the administration and supervision of the development brief and subsequent determination of any future planning applications.
Legal:
3. None.

Risk Management:

4. Policy HA10 of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) makes clear the requirement for the production of a development brief for the site. A failure to endorse the development brief and determine any subsequent planning applications in accordance with the agreed PPA timelines may result in the Council being forced to pay back a meaningful proportion of the monies secured through the PPA. An adopted development brief will give more certainty to the development management process, although there are still risks associated with this separate statutory stage such as securing adequate planning obligations to meet the needs of the development and a failure to meet the public's expectations of the development.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. Not Applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and to foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
7. The Site Allocations DPD Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) highlighted the need for:
 - The delivery of affordable housing within towns and villages throughout Central Bedfordshire north area.
 - The selection of housing sites on the basis that future residents live in locations close to services and public transport routes.
 - Provision of land for community facilities.
 - New employment units allocated close to centres of population in order to increase job opportunities locally and help to address unemployment and out-commuting.
8. The DPD EIA concluded that the emphasis placed on ensuring that developments are allocated within sustainable locations and ensuring that residents are able to access employment opportunities, facilities and services to meet their everyday needs should help to ensure a positive impact for all sections of the community.
9. In addition data suggests that there will be also be a rapid increase in the elderly population in coming years. Providing appropriate accommodation for this age group will therefore also become a priority. In order to provide accommodation for the increasing elderly population, and development briefs for large housing sites should make provision for housing suitable for the increasing elderly population and for disabled people, through the provision of Lifetime Homes.

10. Sections 21- 28 of the report highlight the key design principles of the development brief, many of which will address key equality issues such as affordable housing and Lifetime Homes.

Public Health

11. The Assistant Director of Public Health is currently considering any implications and a formal response is expected shortly. This will be verbally reported at the committee meeting.

Community Safety:

12. The Council will need to ensure that it complies with its statutory duties under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and that all plans fulfil the criteria set down for community safety within planning design guides.

Sustainability:

13. The Site Allocation DPD was assessed under the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment requirements as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 (PPS12). The entire document is aimed at promoting and enabling sustainable development and Shefford has been identified to take further housing and employment land growth. The proposed development would contribute toward the vitality and viability of local facilities, thereby reducing the need to travel.

Procurement:

14. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to endorse the Development Brief and recommend to Executive that it be adopted as technical guidance.

Purpose of the Development Brief

15. The draft Development Brief (at Appendix A) provides the background and policy context for this site and its allocation for residential development. It also sets out the aims for the development identifying the particular constraints and opportunities of the site and confirms the range of technical work which any planning application must address.

16. The brief is a high level document whose purpose is to set out general principles; the more concentrated and detailed work is a matter to be addressed at the planning application stages. Nevertheless, it does provide a mechanism through which members of the public and other interested parties can have a greater involvement in the development of proposals for the site and provide some certainty as to the future development of the site. Once approved, the brief will act as development management guidance and any future planning applications will be considered against the background of the adopted brief.
17. The Council has been working in partnership with the developers for the site, Bloor Homes, on the preparation of a development brief for this site. Representatives from Bloor Homes have been invited to carry out a short presentation to the Committee to explain the work carried out and to be available to answer any queries relating to their development proposals.

Background

18. In November 2009, the Council adopted the Core Strategy and Development Management DPD (for the former Mid Bedfordshire Area) following an Examination in Public that same year. The Core Strategy required the delivery of at least 17,950 new homes between 2001 and 2026 with 5,000 new homes required in addition to those already committed (such as those allocated in the Mid Bedfordshire Local Plan 2005). Of these 5,000 the Core Strategy stated that 150-250 should be provided in Shefford (Policy CS5: Providing Homes).
19. In April 2011, the Council formally adopted the Site Allocations DPD following an examination in late 2010. Policy HA10 allocates the land at Stanford Road for approximately 100 dwellings, open space provision and associated infrastructure. There is also a requirement in the policy for a Development Brief to be prepared to help inform subsequent planning applications and guide the development.
20. In preparing the draft brief the Council Officers from a wide range of service areas have been working with the developers Bloor Homes to identify the design principles for this site. A planning performance agreement (PPA) has been entered into between Central Bedfordshire Council and the developer. The agreement identifies a shared vision and identifies key milestones and timescales for the delivery of a planning decision by both Central Bedfordshire Council and the developer. Whilst it offers project management certainty, this does not mean a favourable planning application outcome is guaranteed.

The Development Brief

21. Land off Stanford Road, Shefford comprises of an 8 hectare site located northwest of the town centre. A location plan is shown on page 6 of the brief.
22. The site is in single ownership and may be described as comprising three distinct areas, as illustrated on page 8 of the document:
 - (a) The developable area to the north of the river Flit beyond its floodplain. Within the curve of Stanford Road, used as arable land;
 - (b) The County Wildlife site, on the north bank of the River Flit; and

- (c) The island meadow to the south of the River Flit adjacent to the Millennium Green.
23. In accordance with policy HA10, the brief outlines the range of uses that are considered suitable, subject to details, for the site. The brief aims to ensure that quality design is achieved throughout the development, providing an attractive environment that enhances the existing character of Shefford and its environs.
24. The brief sets out a number of design principles (page 11 onwards with accompanying concept diagram on page 12) to which any development proposals will need to adhere. In particular, housing mix and type (including affordable housing and lifetime housing provision), scale, massing, layout, drainage and landscape requirements will need to be carefully considered. In response to addressing these issues in any layout scheme the developer will need to take account of the site constraints and opportunities associated with the site (identified on pages 9 and 10) together with other relevant urban design principles set out in the Council's adopted Residential Design Guide to address, for example, parking and the street hierarchy.
25. The brief also sets out the Council's specific requirements for access and connectivity both within and immediately surrounding the site. There will be the provision of new roundabout on Stanford Road to serve the new development. There is also an opportunity to improve linkages to existing paths to the south of the site including the provision of a new pedestrian bridge over the river to promote sustainable modes of transport to other parts of Shefford.
26. Given the extent of the green infrastructure to be provided and enhanced as part of the proposed development a high quality landscaping scheme is crucial to its overall success. A landscape concept plan has therefore been prepared and is shown on page 15 of the brief.
27. As set out in the policy HA10, the brief is explicit in that appropriate solutions for dealing with the drainage requirements of the development will need to be investigated and addressed as part of any planning application package.
28. The brief also sets out the Council's requirements for developer contributions in line with the adopted Planning Obligations Strategy.

Public consultation

29. Informal public consultation was carried out jointly with the developer during September 2011. The purpose of the consultation was so that residents and other stakeholders could engage in the process to help shape the brief at an early stage. This included holding a public exhibition in the town at which over 100 people attended and a number of completed questionnaires returned. A copy of the details of the consultation undertaken are summarised in a draft consultation report – see Appendix B.

30. On 22 December 2011, delegated authority was given for the commencement of a formal public consultation exercise. In doing this the Director of Sustainable Communities consulted the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development and Ward Members in respect of the draft document. At their request some amendments to the document were taken on board, prior to the document being finalised for consultation purposes.
31. The consultation period ran for a total of four weeks (from 9 January to 10 February 2012) which was considered an appropriate timescale given the previous consultation undertaken. Residents, consultees and other interested parties were written to by letter and appropriate advertising of the consultation in accordance with established procedures took place. Copies of the document were made available to view on the Council's web-site, at the various Council Offices as well as Shefford Library and Shefford Town Council's offices. A questionnaire was available to fill in and return.
32. A total of 77 completed questionnaires and responses have been received which has shown a good level of interest in the proposals. The comments have primarily been from members of the public residing in a number of different locations within the town. A breakdown of the comments may be found in Appendix C and these will be included in an updated version of the draft consultation report for the Executive meeting on 27th March.
33. A number of comments received have been about the principle of development itself and in the context of Shefford being able to absorb further development. Adopted planning policies also prevail and therefore comments which relate to dwelling numbers, mix and tenure, for example, are not pertinent. Comments have also included suggestions about what residents would like to see included within the development. Whilst valuable, they are not salient to informing the development brief given its purpose is to identify key principles for the site, opportunities and constraints and are therefore more relevant to any subsequent planning application.
34. Some comments of a technical nature from Officers of the Council have also been received and are largely concerned with clarification being made in the brief on the requirements for the development.
35. One further formal response from the Environment Agency has been submitted. This confirms that the Agency is content with the proposed layout of the site and a sequential approach (as detailed within Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk) to locating the more vulnerable built residential development outside of the floodplain and the retention of existing (water compatible) uses within it.

36. As a result of earlier discussions between Officers and Bloor Homes regarding the nature of the links from the site to other parts of Shefford, the questionnaire did ask for views on whether connections should consist of both a footpath and cycle way across the meadow area linking in with existing paths to the south of the site. The results of the consultation indicate that whilst there is support for improved links there are significant concerns about practical arrangements of introducing a cycle track (either separate or shared with a footpath) across the meadow. Also, it has been highlighted any route would need to link in with areas directly beyond the site boundary where there are restrictions for cyclists along some of these routes, for example, the Millennium Green. This feedback has been extremely useful on firming up the extent of the proposed improvements to the paths – see section 38 to 41 below on the proposed changes to the brief.
37. Other comments received of relevance to the development itself are as follows:
- a) Access to and from the site (vehicular, pedestrian and cyclists)
 - b) Use of the meadow area located to the south of the site
 - c) Housing numbers and housing mix
 - d) Density of development
 - e) Heights of buildings
 - f) Drainage and flooding
 - g) Potential impact on the natural environment (including the County Wildlife Site and the river setting)
 - h) Provision of play areas
 - i) Integration with the existing neighbourhood

Changes to the Development Brief

38. Some proposed changes to the development have been identified and these are indicated as underlined text or deletions in the following sections of the document.
39. i) Section 1.6 - has been amended to include details of the most recent public consultation exercise.
- ii) Section 5.14 - further details added on the need for the development to reflect 'Manual Streets 2' technical guidance in relation to the use of shared surfaces for different road users.
- iii) Section 5.15 – The text has been updated to reflect the outcomes of the public consultation referred to in paragraph 36. The intention is that new footpaths to be created in the meadow area should be dedicated as public rights of way. (Section 3.2 – The Context Plan will be updated to illustrate the status of the footpaths in close vicinity to the site.)

- iv) Section 5.18
 - Bullet points 6 and 9 - the document now provides more details on the intended positioning and form of the structural planting.
 - Bullet point 7 - To clarify a locally equipped area of play is to be provided as part of the play facilities for the site.
- v) Section 5.22 - to include a reference on the need to put in place the necessary on-site infrastructure to ensure future connectivity to superfast Broadband services.

40. The updates to diagrams are as follows:

- i) Constraints and Opportunities Plans (pages 9 and 10)
 - Exact locations of Otter Holts removed as this is potentially sensitive data.
- ii) Concept Plan (page 12)
 - Some urban design features have been added to emphasis important design parameters such as key frontages, arrival points and gateway features.
 - Additional footpath through the meadow on a south west desire line has been added.
 - Notation "Future Access" arrow removed.
 - Notation "Village Green" replaced with "Central Open Space".
- iii) Landscape Concept Plan (page 15)
 - Clarity added regarding on-site and off-site buffer planting

Conclusion

- 41. Consideration has been afforded to the consultation exercise and where appropriate amendments have been made to the Brief. As a technical document, the Development Brief is fit for development management purposes.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Draft Development Brief and proposed changes (February 2012)

Appendix B – Draft Statement of Community Involvement (January 2012)

Appendix C – Summary of consultation responses (February 2012)

Background papers and their location:

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD

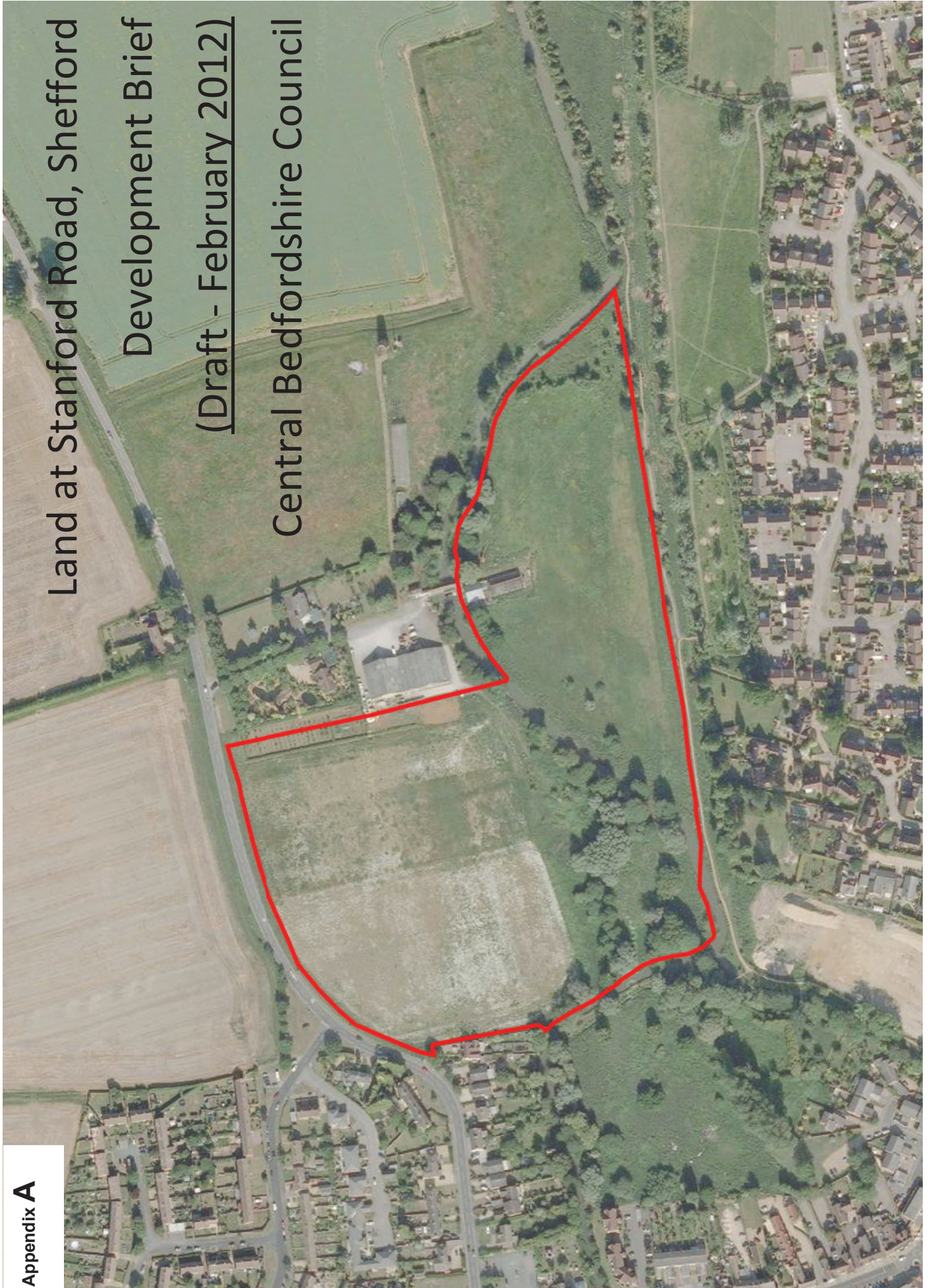
Site Allocations Development Plan Document

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands

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Appendix **A**

Land at Stanford Road, Shefford
Development Brief
(Draft - February 2012)
Central Bedfordshire Council



1. Introduction

Status

1.5 It is intended that Central Bedfordshire Council (the Council) will endorse the Development Brief as technical guidance. The approved Brief will be a material consideration in guiding and informing development management decisions in respect of any future planning application for the site. (TO BE UPDATED AT POINT OF ADOPTION.)

Context

1.1 This Development Brief has been prepared to guide the development of the land off Stanford Road, Sheffield.

1.2 The land at Stanford Road is allocated for residential development together with public open space and a nature reserve by Policy HA10 of the Site Allocations for Central Bedfordshire (North Area) Development Plan Document April 2011 (the 'Site Allocations DPD').

1.3 The Development Brief aims to ensure that quality design is achieved throughout the development, providing an attractive environment that complements the existing character of Sheffield.

Purpose

1.4 The purpose of this Development Brief is to:

- Establish an urban design framework for the site, based on site constraints and opportunities and planning policy requirements;
- Provide an indication of the likely planning obligations required to support development on the site;
- Confirm the nature of the technical work required to support any planning application for the development of the site;
- Provide a mechanism through which members of the public can have greater involvement in the development of proposals for the site; and
- Provide certainty for prospective developers and members of the public as to the future development of the site.

Email: ldf@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Consultation

1.6 The Council adopted a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in February 2006. The SCI sets out how the Council will engage with the community as part of the planning process.

1.7 Although the SCI does not set out specific proposals for consultation on technical guidance, ~~it is intended that consultation on~~ this brief ~~should be carried out~~ has been prepared in accordance with the broad principles established in the SCI. The Development Brief was subject to two stages of public consultation and the results of these are summarised in an accompanying consultation report.

1.8 ~~This draft Brief will be made available for a four week consultation period. During this period members of the public, groups and organisations can comment on the draft proposals.~~

1.9 ~~All comments should be made in writing by 5pm on 10th of February 2012, posted or emailed to:~~

~~For the attention of: Carry Murphy, Principal Planning Officer~~

~~Local Planning and Housing Team~~

~~Development Planning and Housing Strategy~~

~~Central Bedfordshire Council~~

~~Technology House,~~

~~Amphill Road~~

~~Bedford MK42 9BD~~

1.10 ~~Following this consultation period, the Brief will be updated, taking account of any relevant suggestions or comments received. The revised Brief will then be placed before the Executive Committee of the Council for endorsement as technical guidance.~~

2.2 Relevant policies from the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD are referred to as required throughout this Brief. The full text of the policies can be viewed on the Council's website (<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk>).

2.3 Developers are also advised to have regard to the Design in Central Bedfordshire: A Guide for Developers SPD and its companion Design Supplements in preparing proposals for the site



2. Planning Policy

2.1 Policy HA10 of the Site Allocations DPD states:

“Land at Stanford Road, Shefford, as identified on the Proposals Map, is allocated for Residential development providing approximately 100 dwellings, nature reserve and an extension to the Millennium Green.

In addition to general policy requirements in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD and appropriate contributions to infrastructure provision in the Planning Obligations SPD, development on this site will be subject to the following:

- *The production of a Development Brief to guide development;*
- *Preservation and enhancement of the River Ivel and associated meadows, including the River Flit County Wildlife Site;*
- *Provision of a new roundabout on Stanford Road to provide safe and convenient access to the development;*
- *Provision of sufficient capacity within the public foul sewerage system to meet the needs of the development;*
- *Provision of a buffer zone and a mechanism for the long term management of the River Flit County Wildlife Site; and*
- *Provision of an appropriate landscaping scheme in order to help assimilate the development into the surrounding countryside in accordance with the landscape character.”*

3. Site Context

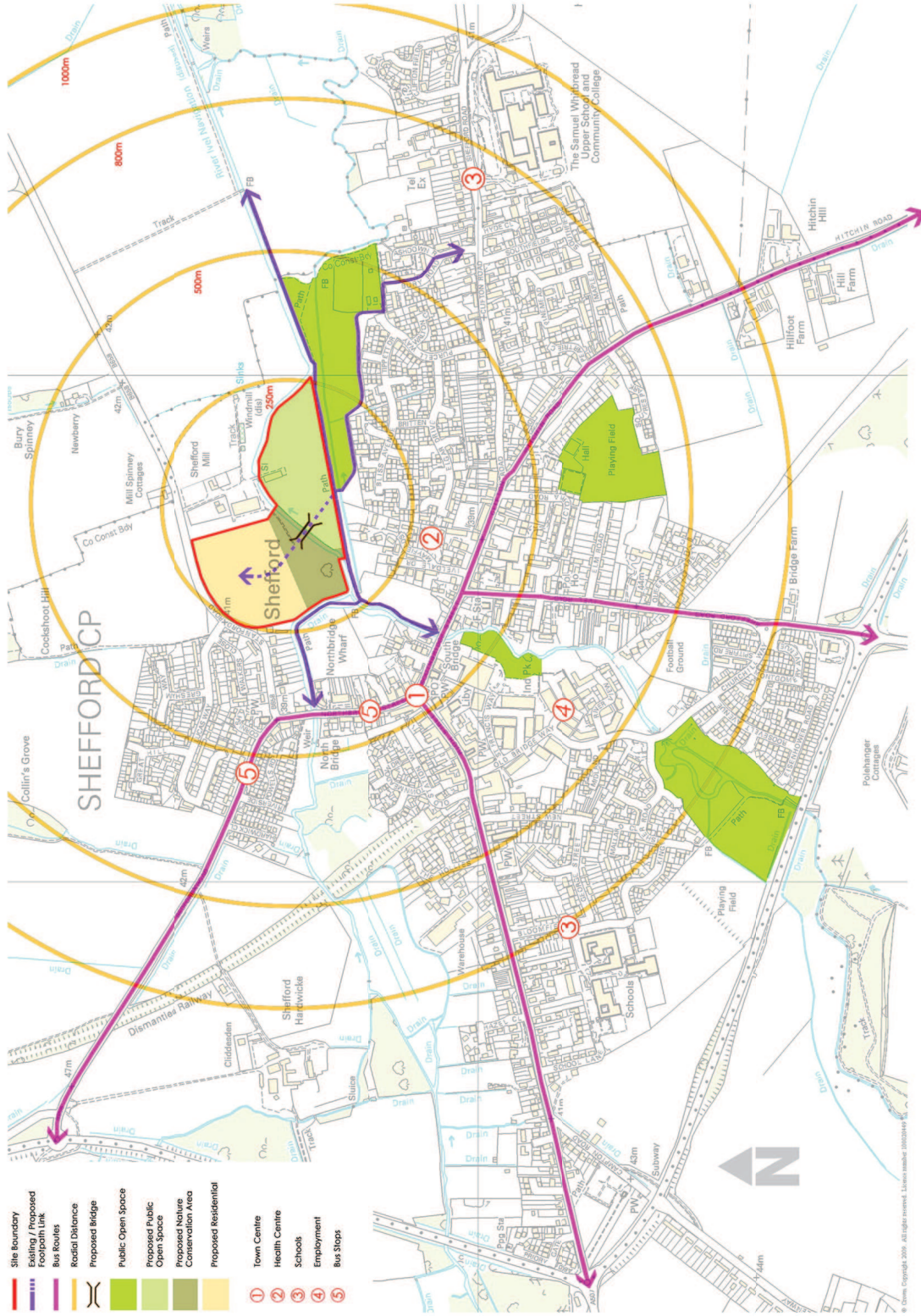
3.1 Shefford is a small historic market town situated at the confluence of the Rivers Hit and Flit. Detail on the historical development of the town can be found on the Town Council's website (<http://www.sheffordtown.co.uk>).



Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2011. All rights reserved. Licence number 100020449

Stanford Road, Shefford – Location Plan – Not to scale

3.2 The Stanford Road site is located northwest of the town centre, and is shown in context on the plan below.



[NOTE PLAN TO BE AMENDED – STATUS OF FOOTPATHS TO BE DETERMINED] Stanford Road, Sheffield – Context Plan – Not to scale

3.3 It is 8.02 hectares in area, in single ownership and comprises three distinct areas, shown on the photographic record overleaf:

- The developable area to the north of the River Flit beyond its floodplain, within the curve of Stanford Road, comprising neglected arable land;
- The County Wildlife Site, comprising of an area of reedbeds and developing carr¹ woodland on the north bank of the River Flit (this is part of the wider River Flit County Wildlife Site); and
- The island meadow, to the south of the River Flit adjacent to the Millennium Green.

3.4 Residential development along Stanford Road adjoins the developable area to the west, whilst to the east there are light industrial and residential uses.

¹Woodland in a wet or boggy area, usually containing alder or willow. Source: The Woodland Trust <http://www.british-trees.com/glossary/index>



≡ Aerial photograph



≡ River level



≡ Stanford Road frontage



≡ County Wildlife Site



≡ Millennium Green

Stanford Road, Shefford – Photographic Record

4. Constraints and Opportunities

4.1 The constraints and opportunities associated with the Stanford Road site are shown on the plans below and overleaf. Prospective developers will need to demonstrate how these have been addressed as part of their proposals.



(PLAN AMENDED TO REMOVE REFERENCE TO OTTER HOLTS) Stanford Road, Sheffield – Constraints Plan – Not to scale



(NOTE AMENDED TO REMOVE REFERENCE TO OTTER HOLT) Stanford Road, Shefford – Opportunities Plan – Not to scale

5. Design Principles

5.1 Central Bedfordshire Council's commitment to achieving high quality design is clearly set out in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD² and the Design Guide for Central Bedfordshire. Prospective developers should ensure they are familiar with these documents and that their proposals for the development of the Stanford Road site adhere to the principles contained therein. Of particular importance is the need to ensure the development successfully incorporates local vernacular architecture and is recognisably part of Shefford. It is considered pastiche design will not be acceptable.

Use and amount

5.2 Policy HA10 of the Site Allocations DPD clearly establishes the parameters for the Stanford Road site in respect of use and amount.

Housing mix

5.3 In accordance with Policy DM10Housing Mix, prospective developers will be expected to provide a mix of both market and affordable dwellings on the site, a proportion of which will be required to meet Lifetime Homes standards.

5.4 Prospective developers are expected to provide justification for the mix of market dwellings proposed, and to seek the advice of the Council's affordable housing team in determining an appropriate mix of affordable housing that best meets local needs.

Affordable housing

5.5 Policy CS7 Affordable Housing requires that, subject to viability, 35% of the total dwellings provided on the site are to be affordable. The affordable housing proposed should fall within the definitions contained within Planning Policy Statement 3, and the exact tenure mix will be agreed with the Council's Housing Strategy team.

5.6 The affordable housing should be distributed in clusters across the development site and should be indistinguishable in appearance from the market housing.

Layout

5.7 The layout of the scheme should respond to the site constraints and opportunities together with the urban design principles set out in the Design Guide. It should be based on the perimeter block approach, providing strong frontages throughout, corner turning buildings as required and focal points at key locations.

5.8 From a design perspective, the following areas of the site are key to the success of any scheme:

- The site entrance from Stanford Road;
- The Stanford Road frontage;
- In and around a central feature square;
- Overlooking the County Wildlife Site; and
- Around the pedestrian link over the River Flit



(NOTE PLAN AMENDED – URBAN DESIGN COMMENTS, FOOTPATH NETWORK IN MEADOW, LINK TO EAST, 'VILLAGE GREEN' REFERENCE). Stanford Road, Sheffield – Draft Concept Plan – Not to scale

Scale & massing

5.9 Development is to be no greater than two storeys in height.

Architectural detailing

5.10 As set out above, the Council expect the design of the proposed dwellings to reflect the best features of local vernacular architecture. Prospective developers will need to undertake a contextual analysis to inform the design process, which should form part of a Design and Access Statement accompanying any planning application. Subtle distinctions in architectural detailing (and landscaping treatment) between groups of buildings within the site will also assist legibility.

Sustainability

5.11 In accordance with Policy DM1, prospective developers will need to demonstrate how 10% of the predicated energy requirements of the development will be generated either on or near the site by renewable or low carbon energy generation technologies.

5.12 Policy DM2 requires all dwellings on the site to be built to meet the mandatory standards at the level within Code for Sustainable Homes applicable at the time a planning application is submitted. The policy also requires the incorporation of measures to reduce white water consumption in all major developments. As such, prospective developers will need to demonstrate how these requirements will be met.

Access, street hierarchy and connectivity

5.13 Policy HA10 requires the provision of a new conventional, non traversable roundabout is proposed on Stanford Road to serve the new development. The

optimum location of this roundabout is at the existing junction of Stanford Road with Lucas Way, and this will help to calm traffic arriving in Shefford from the east. An opportunity also exists for the creation of a gateway feature along Stanford Road to the east of the site access to further assist with traffic calming, and this opportunity should be explored by prospective developers.

5.14 Within the site, a clear hierarchy of streets should be created, all of which should be pedestrian and cyclist friendly, in accordance with the principles contained in Manual for Streets 2. In particular, the scheme should exhibit 'Shared Space' characteristics³. The design of the scheme should result in low vehicle speeds, for example via the use of restricted forward visibility, contrasting surface treatments and horizontal build outs.

5.15 Prospective developers are required to maximise access to Shefford and the wider area by sustainable modes. In particular, links to existing footpaths on Shefford Road and to the south of the River Flit should be created, the latter by way of a new footbridge over the river. New paths created in the meadow area should be dedicated as public rights of way. Improvements to existing footpaths may also be required to promote walking as a desirable transport mode all year round.

Parking

5.16 In accordance with Policy CS4 and the Council's Design Guide, adequate space for the parking of vehicles for each dwelling will need to be made, in order to avoid excessive on street parking.

³ Shared Space is defined in Manual for Streets 2 as 'a street or place accessible to both pedestrians and vehicles that is designed to enable pedestrians to move more freely by reducing traffic management features that tend to encourage users of vehicles to assume priority.'

5.17 A variety of parking solutions should be provided within the site with the aim of removing the on plot parked vehicle from the street scene as far as is possible. Parking solutions should, as far as is practicable, ensure that parking spaces are conveniently related to the plot that they serve.

Green Infrastructure

5.18 Given the extent of Green Infrastructure to be delivered as part of the proposed development, a high quality landscaping scheme is crucial to its overall success.

The scheme should, as shown on the landscape concept plan overleaf:

- Retain and enhance existing landscape features where possible;
- Provide a variety of linked accessible and inaccessible landscape types which meet the needs of residents and wildlife;
- Use native planting species consistent with those found in the Upper Flit Clay Valley landscape character area;
- Ensure that green infrastructure is overlooked by dwellings as far as is possible;
- Incorporate suitable street trees throughout the development to break up the built form;
- ~~Provide a green link through the development area linking Stanford Road with the proposed open space;~~
- Provide native buffer planting along the Stanford Road frontage (ensuring that built development is able to provide surveillance over Stanford Road);
- Provide a high quality, locally equipped area for play (LEAP);
- Introduce an area of structural landscaping on the eastern boundary of the site to soften the rural to urban transition (opportunities for appropriate off site structural landscaping as an alternative should also be explored); and

- Include an appropriate 'light touch' management regime to ensure the scheme has long term benefits whilst avoiding costly regular intervention.

5.19 Policies DM14, DM15, DM16 and DM17 together with the Mid Bedfordshire Landscape Character Assessment provide further guidance on green infrastructure matters.



DRAWING AMENDED TO CLARIFY STRUCTURAL LANDSCAPING POSITION Stanford Road, Shefford – Draft Concept Landscape Plan – Not to scale

Drainage

5.20 As set out in Policy DM2, the Council expects the provision of a Sustainable Urban Drainage system as part of any development scheme, and prospective developers will need to carry out appropriate investigations in order to determine the most suitable method of sustainable surface water disposal. Details of the proposed Sustainable Urban Drainage system will need to be provided as part of any planning application package.

5.21 In light of the requirements of Policy HA10 and the capacity constraints of the local sewerage network, prospective developers will also need to provide details of the proposed foul water disposal strategy.

Services

5.22 The scheme should include provision for the necessary on-site infrastructure to ensure future connectivity to superfast broadband internet services.

7. Planning Obligations

- 6. Application Requirements**
- 6.1 Given the extent of guidance available, brought together in this Brief, the Council expect prospective developers to make a full application for planning permission for the development of the Stanford Road site.
- 6.2 An Environmental Impact Assessment screening opinion has been adopted by the Council confirming that the likely environmental effects of the proposed development would not warrant the preparation of an Environmental Statement to accompany any planning application. However, due to the issues highlighted in this Brief, in addition to statutory national requirements, the technical and design work required to support any future planning application are as follows⁴:
- Landscape Design and Management Strategy;
 - Tree Assessment (including Tree Protection Plan);
 - Transport Assessment and Framework Travel Plan;
 - Sustainability Statement;
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy;
 - Habitat and Protected Species Survey;
 - County Wildlife Site Enhancement and Management Plan;
 - Heritage Asset Assessment; and
 - Draft Section 106 heads of terms.
- 7.1 In order to mitigate the impact of the development on local community facilities and services, as well as to secure the implementation of the community benefits proposed as part of the development, prospective developers will be required to enter into a planning obligation.
- 7.2 As such, prospective developers are advised to enter into early discussions with the Council in order to determine appropriate draft heads of terms, although it is acknowledged that the precise terms of any planning obligation will not be agreed until a resolution to approve planning permission has been made.
- 7.3 The Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (2009) will provide a starting point for negotiations, although the Council acknowledges that any obligation sought will need to comply with the statutory tests laid out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010.

⁴ The Council reserves the right to amend this list in light of any relevant amendment to national or local planning policy.

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Appendix B

Policy HA10: Stanford Road, Shefford
Development Brief Preparation Stage Consultation Report
January 2012

Prepared by Central Bedfordshire Council and Bloor Homes Ltd

1. Introduction

1.1 This note provides details of the consultation undertaken in advance of the publication of the draft Stanford Road, Shefford Development Brief for public consultation, in accordance with adopted guidelines. The consultation comprised a joint public exhibition by Central Bedfordshire Council and Bloor Homes Ltd, together with technical responses provided by Council officers and other consultees on draft documents prepared by Bloor Homes Ltd.

2. Public exhibition

2.1 An exhibition was held on 13th of September 2011, between the hours of 5pm and 9pm, at the Shefford Community Hall on High Street.

2.3 The exhibition was publicised by a notice in the Biggleswade Chronicle (**Appendix 1**) and on the Council web pages (**Appendix 2**), together with the distribution of more than 2,200 letters to properties within the local area (see **Appendix 3** for details). In order to ensure as many people as possible were able to be involved in the consultation information boards were also put on exhibit at Shefford Library prior to this event between 9th and 13th September.

2.4 Central Bedfordshire Council and Bloor Homes representatives were available during the exhibition to discuss the proposals with members of the public attending. Copies of the display boards used at the exhibition are at **Appendix 4** of this report. A copy of the questionnaire available for members of the public to complete and return is at **Appendix 5**.

2.5 36 completed questionnaires were received, of which:

- 13 were left at the exhibition;
- 6 were sent to a dedicated email address; and
- 17 were posted directly to Central Bedfordshire Council or Bloor Homes.

2.6 A summary of the breakdown of responses from the questionnaire and other comments raised during the consultation are set out in **Appendix 6**, along with details of how the issues raised – where appropriate – have been dealt with in the drafting of the Development Brief.

APPENDIX 1



DEVELOPMENT BRIEF PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Bloor Homes invites you to a public exhibition event to view and have your say on their emerging development proposals at land on Stanford Road, Shefford.

When: **TUESDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER, 5.30PM - 9PM**

Where: **SHEFFORD COMMUNITY HALL, HIGH STREET, SHEFFORD**

Some boards will be available to view at the Shefford Library from 9th September 2011



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Environment and planning

Planning

Local Development Framework

LDF- North Area

Core strategy and Development Management

LDF task force

Site allocations

Technical planning guidance

The Local Plan

Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan

Local development scheme

Monitoring

Proposals maps

Statement of community involvement

Contact

Do you need more help?
[Contact us online](#) if you are not able to find the information you require using our A to Z or the

Local Development Framework for North Area

The Local Development Framework (LDF) for the North area covers the former Mid Bedfordshire area. Seven documents comprise the LDF (North) as set out below.

[Current Consultations](#)

There are no documents currently on consultation.

Land off Stanford Road, Shefford - Public Exhibition - Tuesday 13th September

Central Bedfordshire Council and Bloor Homes are inviting residents of Shefford to attend a Public Exhibition that will be taking place for emerging development proposals at land off Stanford Road, Shefford. The site is allocated in the recently adopted Site Allocation DPD for 100 dwellings and there is a requirement for a development brief to be prepared to help guide this development. Bloor Homes are currently working with the Council on the preparation of a brief. Comments received during the exhibition will help to guide and influence the detailing of the development brief and all feedback will be compiled into a report which will then be made available to view upon request.

The exhibition will be take place at Shefford Community Hall on Tuesday 13th September 5.30pm - 9pm.

Shefford Community Hall
60 High Street
Shefford
SG17 5BD

[advanced search](#) on our site.

The exhibition boards will also be on display at Shefford Library from 9th - 13th September

LDF Feedback Survey

The LDF Team has produced a survey to gain feedback on their recent consultations. The results of this survey will help to inform future consultations and may help us to improve our service. There are hard copies of this survey available or you can find the survey online by following this link:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/surveys/LDF/Feedback.htm

If you have any queries or to request hard copies of the survey, please call us on 0300 300 4353 or send an email to ldf@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

Please return your completed survey by Friday 12th August 2011. We look forward to hearing from you.

News

15/04/11 Site Allocations DPD - adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council on 14th April, following receipt of Inspectors Report (Jan 2011). More details are provided on the Site Allocations DPD page.

[Gypsy and Traveller \(DPD\)](#)

Identifies the amount and location of gypsy and traveller accommodation required in the area and includes criteria based policies against which gypsy and traveller associated development will be determined.

[Planning Obligations Strategy \(SPD\)](#)

Provides advice to securing development related matters in association with planning permissions granted.

[Local Development Scheme \(LDD\)](#)

The timetable for the LDF process.

[Statement of Community Involvement \(LDD\)](#)

Sets out how the LDF consultation will happen.

There is also a requirement for the [Monitoring and Review](#) of all the documents making up the LDF (North)

Member Involvement

The LDF Task Force oversees the preparation of the Local Development Framework. More detail and the Terms of Reference of this group is available on the [Local Development Framework Task Force web page](#)

Related links

No related pages are available

Related documents

No associated documents are available

Related faqs

No related FAQs are available

[Copyright](#) | [Terms and conditions](#) | [Privacy policy](#) | [Website availability and visitors](#)

Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford,
SG17 5TQ

Telephone 0300 300 8000 or [Contact Customer Services](#)



Owner / Occupier
Shefford
Bedfordshire

Our ref: Shefford.Public.Exhibition
Your ref.
Email: sheffordconsultation@bloorhomes.com

31st August 2011

Dear Shefford Resident,

**PUBLIC EXHIBITION – RE: Land off Stanford Road, Shefford
Shefford Community Hall, High Street, Shefford
Tuesday 13th September 2011, 5.30pm – 9pm**

On behalf of Bloor Homes, it is my pleasure to invite you to a Public Exhibition for our emerging development proposals at land off Stanford Road, Shefford.

The site is allocated for residential development within Central Bedfordshire Council's Site Allocations (North) Development Plan Document (adopted April 2011). Under Policy HA10, there is a requirement for a Development Brief to be prepared in order to help guide the residential development of approximately 100 dwellings (including affordable), open space provisions and associated infrastructure.

Bloor Homes, an active developer in the region (see Amphill Heights at Amphill), is holding this Public Exhibition to introduce ourselves, update the community on the preparation of the Development Brief and discuss the key design considerations influencing our emerging Masterplan.

As a Shefford resident, we value your knowledge and comments and therefore seek your contribution to help guide the design parameters within the Development Brief and thoughts on our Masterplan proposals.

If you are not able to attend the exhibition, information will be made available to view at Shefford Library from Friday 9th until Tuesday 13th September. Questionnaire's will also be provided to obtain your feedback.

We look forward to meeting you at the Public Exhibition.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Clark', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Phil Clark
Planning Director

bloorhomes.com

BLOOR HOMES SOUTH MIDLANDS is a division of BLOOR HOMES LIMITED
PRIMUS HOUSE, CYGNET DRIVE, SWAN VALLEY, NORTHAMPTON NN4 9BS
TELEPHONE 01604 684400 FACSIMILE 01604 684401 EMAIL smids@bloorhomes.com

BLOOR HOMES LIMITED. REGISTERED No. 2162561 ENGLAND

REGISTERED OFFICE: LAUREY ROAD, MESHAM, GUARDINGSTONE, BEDFORDSHIRE, MK43 7JF. VAT REG. NO. 455 488 00

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land at stanford road s h e f f o r d

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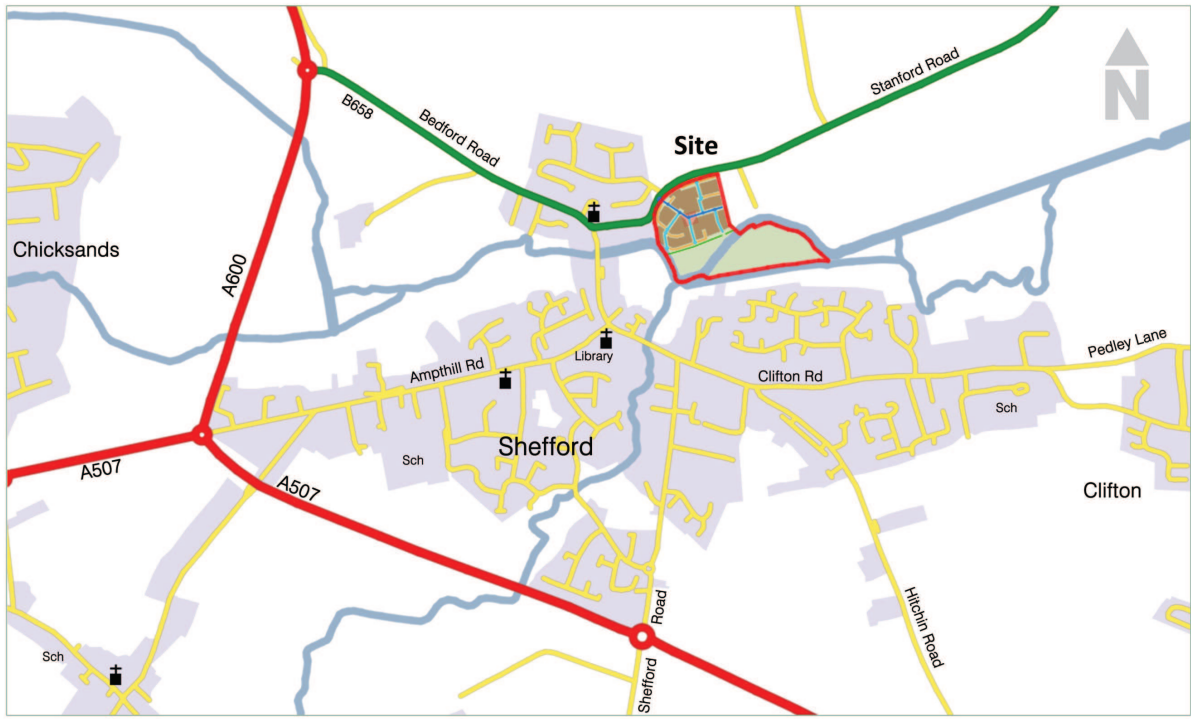
Welcome

Bloor Homes welcomes you to this public exhibition for our development proposals for land at Stanford Road, Shefford.

Introduction

The evolution of the site's development proposals has been carried out in conjunction with Officers from Central Bedfordshire Council. Together, we met with Shefford Town Council in June 2011, to discuss the general development principles for the site and tonight's exhibition is an opportunity for local residents to be informed of the design process.

We seek your feedback regarding the details presented within this exhibition. In particular, we would like your views about how our scheme should relate to Shefford in terms of layout, highways, architecture, design, materials, connectivity, landscaping and biodiversity. A questionnaire is provided for you to complete – see the last board for more details.



≡ Location Plan



≡ River Ivel



≡ Stanford Road frontage



≡ Island / meadow

land at stanford road s h e f f o r d

Background and Development Brief

Background

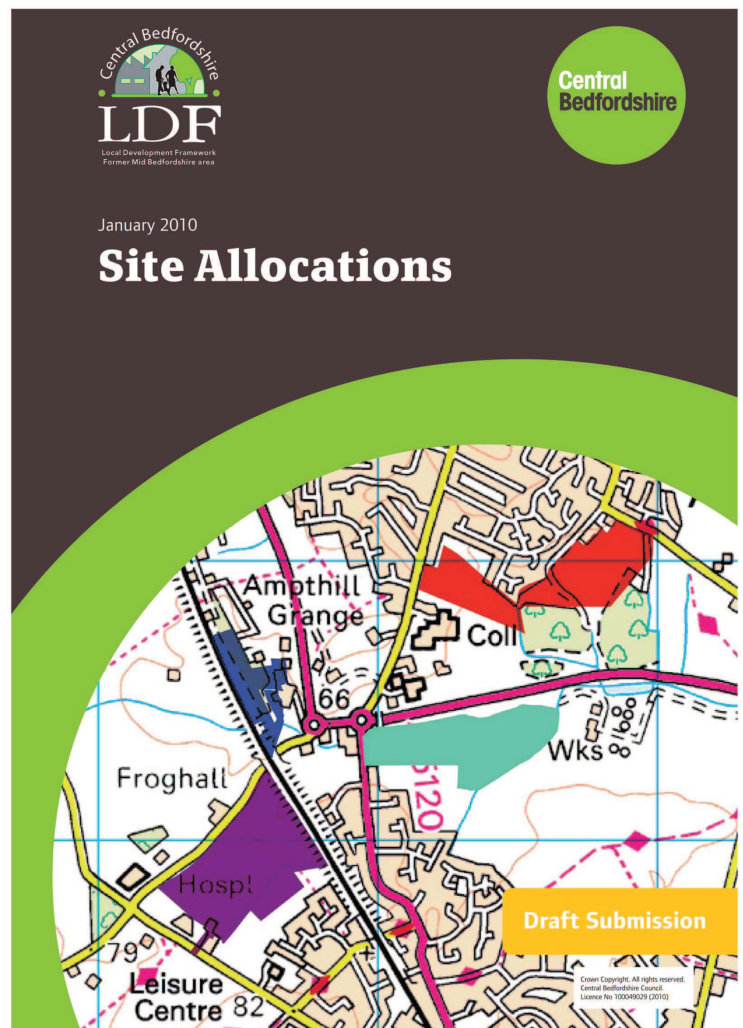
The site is allocated for residential development within Central Bedfordshire Council's Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD), adopted 14th April 2011. Under Policy HA10 – (Land at Stanford Road, Shefford), the following requirements are outlined for the site:

- Development of approximately 100 dwellings (including affordable housing);
- Production of a site specific Development Brief;
- Preservation and enhancement of the River Ivel, including the River Flit County Wildlife Site;
- Provision of a new roundabout on Stanford Road to provide safe and convenient access to the development;
- Provision of sufficient capacity within the public foul sewerage system to meet the needs for the development;
- Provision of a buffer zone and a mechanism for the long term management of the River Flit County Wildlife Site; and
- Provision of an appropriate landscaping scheme in order to help assimilate the development into the surrounding countryside in accordance with the landscape character.



Development Brief

In terms of future proposals, as outlined in Policy HA10, a Development Brief is being prepared in a collaborative effort with Central Bedfordshire Council Officers, for which this exhibition will help influence. This Brief will then undergo a statutory 4 week consultation in the Autumn 2011, with its adoption anticipated for early 2012. The Brief's purpose is to help influence and guide the principles behind any full planning application for residential development at this site.



land at stanford road s h e f f o r d

Locality

Location and Context

The entire site is 8.02ha in area located to the northwest of Shefford and is comprised of three key areas:

1. The actual **developable area** is located along the southern kerb of Stanford Road (B658), opposite Lucas Way. The site is former arable land, which is flanked to the east and west by residential properties and light industrial units. The River Flit County Wildlife Site and River Ivel sit to the south of the site;

2. The **River Flit County Wildlife Site** is a land designation as such that sits south of the developable area along the northern banks of the River Ivel and is to be improved and managed as a nature reserve; and

3. The **Island or Meadow** lies on the southern bank of the River Ivel. Formerly arable land, now a natural grassland that adjoins an existing Bridleway. This Bridleway forms part of the Millennium Green connecting to Shefford town centre, schools, residential areas and neighbouring villages.



≡ Aerial photograph



≡ River Ivel



≡ Stanford Road frontage



≡ County Wildlife Site



≡ Millennium Green

land at stanford road shefford

Constraints and Opportunities

Development proposals on this site will be influenced by many natural and man-made constraints and opportunities. These are identified below.



≡ Constraints & Opportunities

land at stanford road shefford

Design Harmony



≡ Design Concept Plan

Our Influences

It is our intention to develop a scheme which successfully integrates with the existing character of Shefford, which is defined by a wide variety of architectural styles, forms and materials with a number of distinguished houses and groups of houses. The attractiveness of the town is improved by the overall composition of buildings, gardens and streetscape. Our design team recognises that it is essential to compliment these compositions and provide a development that will enhance the existing built environment.

Bloor Homes' proposals be take influenced by the architectural merits evident within Shefford and the immediately surrounding villages.

land at stanford road s h e f f o r d

Illustrative Layout

Bloor Homes have worked closely with Central Bedfordshire Council to prepare the following illustrative layout.



≡ Illustrative Layout

The indicative streetscenes provide an interpretation of how Bloor Homes expects the character of the development could appear. We welcome your comments on these aspects of our proposals.



land at stanford road s h e f f o r d

Bloor Homes

Examples of our Work

The following photographs are examples of schemes Bloor Homes have recently built, or are building, in Central Bedfordshire. They emphasise our understanding of the local characteristics and demonstrate the quality of our developments.



≡ Ampthill Heights



≡ Houghton Conquest



What Happens Next...

Thank you for taking the time to read through our proposals. Please let us know what you think of our proposals by filling in a Response Form Questionnaire. You can put these forms in the ballot box or post / fax them to us by the date below. Additional comments could also be emailed (please see the questionnaire for contact details).




Your comments made in respect to this evening's exhibition will help evolve the design and layout of the scheme, which will influence the detailing of the Development Brief. A report will be prepared, compiling all feedback received, which we would be happy to forward to you upon request (when completed).

Please let us have your feedback by **FRIDAY 30th SEPTEMBER 2011.**

Should you have any questions or queries about the proposals presented tonight, please don't hesitate to ask any of the Central Bedfordshire Council or Bloor Homes representatives.

Public Consultation Questionnaire – Contact Details

Thank you for taking the time to read through our proposals. Now you have seen what ideas are being proposed we would like to know what you think about them. You can put the form in the ballot box or send it to the address below . Please send us your comments by **Friday 30th September**. Bloor Homes will then compile a report summarising all comments and upon request, we will send you copy.

You can submit your views	Your Details
<p> Post Phil Clark Bloor Homes (South Midlands) Primus House Cygnet Drive Swan Valley Northampton NN4 9BS</p> <p> Email sheffordconsultation@bloorhomes.com (mark FAO Phil Clark)</p> <p> Fax 01604 684 401</p>	<p>Title _____ Initial _____ Surname _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p>Email _____</p> <p>Are you: <input type="checkbox"/> Local Resident (home owner) <input type="checkbox"/> Local Resident (tenant) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) _____</p> <p>If you require additional copies of the questionnaire, please email Rachael Brydges on: rachael.brydges@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.</p>
<p>Under the Data Protection Act 1998 we will ensure that the data you supply to us is processed with care and in accordance with the legislation and codes. Your details will not be passed to any third party outside Bloor Homes Ltd (South Midlands). We take our responsibilities in respect of your Personal Data extremely seriously. We will not contact you for promotional purposes, unless you specifically agree to be contacted for such purposes at the time you submit your information. Please tick the box if you would like to be contacted for promotion purposes <input type="checkbox"/>.</p>	



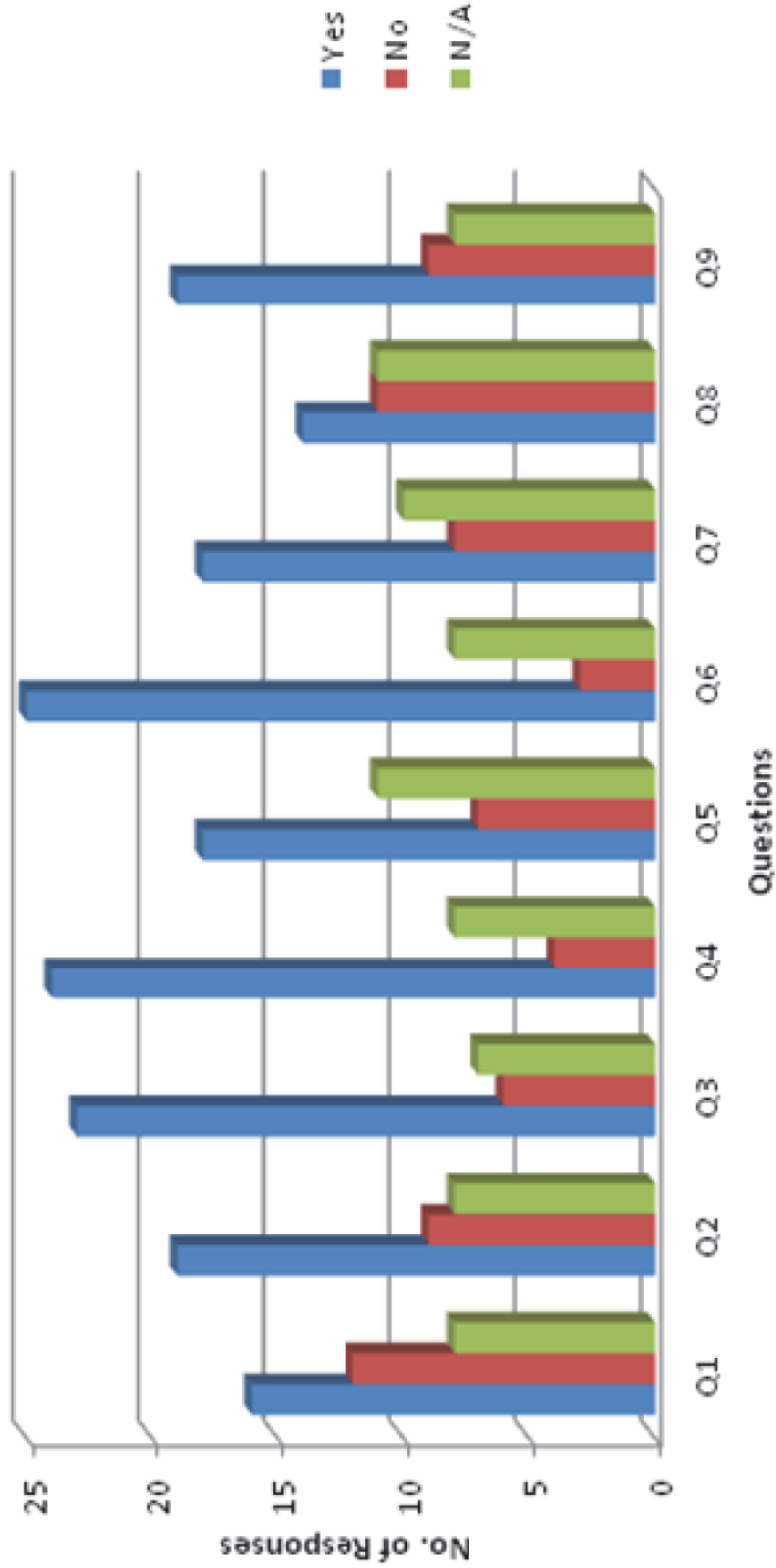
Public Consultation Questionnaire – Questionnaire

1. Do you feel that the proposals relate well to Shefford's built environment / town centre?
Yes No
2. Do you like the idea of a new "gateway" feature along Stanford Road?
Yes No
3. Do you like the idea of introducing a roundabout and extending the 30mph zone to help reduce speeding along Stanford Road?
Yes No
4. Do you consider it important to provide a pedestrian / cycle connections from the site to the southern banks of the River Ivel to the Millennium Green and beyond?
Yes No
5. Do you think the preservation of the County Wildlife Site is adequate?
Yes No
6. Do you think that it is important to improve the amenity benefit of the River Ivel?
Yes No
7. Do you agree that meeting Shefford's local housing needs, including private and affordable housing, is important?
Yes No
8. The proposed scheme provides approx. 100 dwellings up to 2.5 storeys in height, with a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bed dwellings. Do you agree that this is appropriate for Shefford?
Yes No
9. Do you consider that the use of the Island / Meadow for informal play will benefit the community?
Yes No

Additional General Comments :



Public Consultation Responses



COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC EXHIBITION 13TH SEPTEMBER 2011		
SUBJECT	COMMENT	
RESPONSE		
Principle of Development	Too many residential estates are being built without supporting amenities	The land at Stanford Road is allocated for residential development together with public open space and a nature reserve by Policy HA10 of the Site Allocations for Central Bedfordshire (North Area) Development Plan Document April 2011. The proposed development will help to meet the overall development strategy for the northern part of Central Bedfordshire as set out in the adopted Core Strategy. The principle of development has been subject to public consultation and independent scrutiny and the proposals have been found to be sound.
	Too much building work in the area	
	Development on this site will ruin open / rural feel of this part of town and will spoil views from Cockshoot Hill	
	There is no need for the proposed development	
	The site is not suitable for the proposed development	
	This is prime agricultural land and should not be developed	
	Is there sufficient employment in Shefford for residents of the new development?	
Access / Highways	Safety concerns regarding the proposed roundabout – would HGVs be able to negotiate it?	The roundabout will be designed in accordance with the Council's up to date standards which address matters of safety and capacity. Support noted. Additional speed reducing features will be considered as part of the detailed design. Noted. Kissing gates will be considered as part of the detailed landscape design. Support noted. A full transport assessment will be prepared to support any planning application that will consider in detail the impact of development traffic on the existing highway network. However, initial investigations by highways consultants indicate that the existing highway network will be able to accommodate development traffic without additional capacity improvements (note these conclusions were based on a development of between 130 and 150 dwellings). A new non traversable four arm roundabout is proposed to facilitate site access. Mini roundabouts are not normally acceptable for new site access junctions. A single point of access is appropriate for the quantum of
	Support for proposed speed reducing features on Stanford Road – roundabout and gateway feature – consider the addition of rumble strips and vehicle activated speed warning sign	
	The development should not facilitate cycle or motorcycle access to the Millennium Green – this is illegal and there are no bridleways or cycle paths to connect to in this area. Consider the use of kissing gates	
	Support for improved footpath and cycle connections	
	Concerned about the impact of additional traffic in the town	
	The roundabout should be full size and not a 'mini'	
	Concerned about the development having a single point of access	

		development proposed, in accordance with the Council's highways design guidance.
	The proposed site access is located on a dangerous bend	The proposed site access and gateway feature will help to slow traffic down entering Shefford from the east and the required visibility at the new roundabout is available.
	Public transport in Shefford is not brilliant	Noted.
	Providing pedestrian and cycle links is a waste of money	Improvements to non motorised user links are a requirement of policy
	Consideration needs to be given to the impact of extra traffic on the structure of existing, older properties	Noted.
	Could the bypass be extended to this part of town?	This is not a requirement of the development.
	Would the roads on the development be adopted by the Council?	It is intended that the majority of roads on the site will be constructed to an adoptable standard, although smaller private drives serving small clusters of dwellings may be utilised for design reasons.
Design	Development should be limited to two storeys	Generally development on this site is intended to be 2 storeys in height.
	Houses are too high and are not in keeping with existing properties	The houses will be designed to complement existing properties in Shefford in accordance with policy requirements and the Council's Design Guide.
	The development is too large and imposing	See response above.
	Development should provide properties suitable for the elderly / disabled	A proportion of the dwellings on the site will be constructed to Lifetimes Homes standards which mean they can be easily adapted to meet the needs of elderly or disabled residents.
	The proposed development will be too dense – 100 houses is too many	A development of 100 houses will equate to a density around 30 dwellings per hectare which is considered to be an efficient use of land not out of character with existing development in Shefford.
	Careful design is required to ensure impact of new housing on existing neighbouring properties is limited	Noted – this will be addressed as part of the detailed design process.
	Lighting within the development needs to consider both existing residents and wildlife	Noted – this will be addressed as part of the detailed design process.
	4 bedroom housing should be a limited part of the overall mix	The mix of dwellings on the site remains subject to discussion but in order to deliver the required level of affordable housing on the site the market housing mix must provide the developer with a viable development.
	Support for the proposed preservation and enhancement of the	Support noted.
	Green Infrastructure	

	<p>County Wildlife site</p> <p>Informal play areas and landscaping should be made available to the community</p> <p>Informal open space is not needed</p> <p>Who will maintain the green spaces?</p> <p>Could a skate park be provided in the meadow? This would be of great benefit to youngsters in the town</p> <p>Unsure as to the merits of the proposed landscaping around the edges of the development area – this is not something found elsewhere in Shefford</p> <p>The proposed bridge over the River Flit is welcomed – can it be moved closer to the town centre?</p> <p>Development will place additional strain on local facilities</p> <p>Why does the pumping station need to be located so close to the site boundary?</p> <p>Additional amenities are needed in Shefford – schools, shops, health centre, cinema, swimming pool, skate park, tennis courts etc</p> <p>What plans are in place to accommodate foul and surface water generated from this development – there is an issue with sewerage in this area?</p> <p>How will you mitigate flood risk from the River Flit?</p>	<p>Policy HA10 requires the delivery of publically available open space as part of the development proposals.</p> <p>See comment above.</p> <p>It is intended that the open space will be transferred into the ownership of a public body (Central Bedfordshire or Shefford Town Councils) and financial contributions will be made to the public body to fund the on going maintenance of the green spaces.</p> <p>This is not part of the current proposals and is unlikely to be an acceptable use in functional flood plain.</p> <p>This is a requirement of Policy HA10, and is intended to soften the rural to urban transition.</p> <p>Moving the bridge further to the west would encroach on the County Wildlife Site and is not therefore acceptable.</p> <p>Where development can be demonstrated to have an impact beyond the capacity of existing publicly funded facilities, financial contributions will be sought to address any capacity issues, in line with national and local policy tests.</p> <p>It is technically feasible to locate the pumping station away from the western site boundary and this will be shown on revised plans included within the brief.</p> <p>See comment above.</p> <p>The issues relating to foul sewerage in the area are known and a requirement of Policy HA10 is to ensure the system has sufficient capacity to accommodate foul water flows from the development. It is proposed to construct a new pumping station and a new rising main to avoid existing at capacity sewers.</p> <p>The method of surface water disposal is yet to be determined as it is subject to ongoing ground investigations, however, a sustainable urban drainage system will be required that maintains the rate of surface water discharge from the site to current undeveloped levels.</p> <p>To account for climate change, the developable part of the site will</p>
<p>Infrastructure</p>		

		<p>be limited to the area above 37.66mAOD, which is 100mm above the 1% (1 in 100 year) annual probability storm event flood levels for the River Flit as provided by the Environment Agency. Additionally, the finished floors of the proposed dwellings will be set at 38.23mAOD, which is 300mm above the highest recorded historic flood depth provided by the EA to protect the residences from extreme flood events.</p> <p>Surface water runoff from the site will be managed so as not to increase off site flood risk of all types.</p>
<p>Miscellaneous</p>	<p>Stanford Road occasionally floods as a result of surface water runoff from Cockshoot Hill – this may be worsened by the proposed roundabout.</p> <p>What steps will be taken to reduce the impacts of construction on existing residents (noise, dust, mud on roads etc)?</p>	<p>These matters can be controlled by standard planning conditions attached to any planning permission granted for the development of the site.</p>

Appendix C

Summary of consultation responses Draft Development Brief (January 2012) Land at Stanford Road, Shefford

76 responses received from members of the public.

A written response from the Environment Agency was also received.

Question 1: Connectivity

How important is it to provide connections from the site to the surrounding area? We are particularly interested to hear your views on a shared footpath/cycle way across the meadow area linking in with existing paths to the south of the site in order to access other parts of Shefford.

The majority of responses commented on this question. There was support for good connections from the site to other parts of Shefford. Whilst some did support a cycleway there were concerns about the practical arrangements for a shared or separate track across the meadow area and neighbouring areas. The following detailed comments were made:

- Concerns of having footpath(s) or other on the meadow area which is liable to flooding.
- Question over the timing of any improvements work in relation to the commencement of the development.
- Issue over whether footpaths should be 'upgraded' or formalised more and impact on the wildlife with more people using the site for recreation use.
- Concerns about the sharing of paths between pedestrians and cyclists and calls for keeping them separate.
- Potential for conflict between cyclist and walkers including young children using paths.
- Recognise the benefits of the paths connecting the site with other parts of the town to the south and reducing car journeys, for example, to access schools.
- Footpaths/footbridge could be better located elsewhere e.g. in the south west part of the site which would link well with the town centre.
- Accessibility for all required e.g. wheelchair users.
- Would lighting would be required. Impact on wildlife.

- Potential effect on those whose properties back on to the meadow area. In particular, issue over whether other vehicles like motorbikes and cars will get on to the meadows and other green area. Need some form of protection/ policing measures.
- Any new cycleway would link to existing footpaths which have cycle restrictions on them. They are not bridleways.
- A cycleway would be better located along Stanford Road.
- Path will make a pleasant amenity and shortcut into town but should not be main route into town given the potential for anti-social behaviour and crime in this area with people being able to congregate etc. in this area.
- Could the Shefford end of footpaths 3 and 4 be improved by s.106 monies from the development?
- Cycleway – present footpaths are too narrow to accommodate a cycleway. A very good idea to have a cycleway to the Millennium Green where there is room to widen the footpath, but there isn't the other way into Shefford. A cycle route to Samuel Whitbread College would be good to implement.
- A connecting path from the new bridge over the river a better cycle way link would be to follow the river downstream and join the corner with the Millennium Green for a route to school. There would be enough room.
- Difficult to stop cyclists using the footpaths illegally to the detriment of walkers.
- Object to Shefford footpath 3 being proposed to be upgraded to cycleway.
- Suggest that the path, after crossing a new bridge, should then follow the line of the River Flit to its junction with the River Hit. Pedestrians and cyclists would then have a choice of existing routes – ahead for the town centre, left towards the Millennium Green and schools or right to access the town via the old town wharf.

Environment Agency - Consider it to be very important that the site provide appropriate connections to the surrounding area. New development should always incorporate green infrastructure in order to facilitate natural habitats for wildlife and inter-connectivity between such habitats. These areas have multi-functional uses, also serving as walking/cycling links and amenity areas.

Question 2: Opportunities and Constraints Plan

Do you have any comments on the draft Concept Plan?

Flooding and drainage

- Floodplain – housing seems to be close to the floodplain line.
- The marked flood plain is misleading as field does flood and rivers raises to dangerous levels after several days of rain.
- Concerns about current infrastructure not being able to cope. Could lead to inadequate sewage drainage and flooding as well as other infrastructure and services like electricity, schools and shops not being able to cope with extra demand.

Natural environment

- Disturbance to nature area.
- Otter Holts need appropriate protection.
- Nesting birds on the site. Need to take account of nesting season.
- Trees should be of a mature size when planted.
- Loss of good arable land.
- Greater protection of the river is required.

Access and connectivity

- Reduce speed limit to 20mph in direction of the town.
- Reduce speed limit before the boundary of the site and also prior to development commencing.
- Footpaths need to be of an adequate width.
- Location of footbridge questioned as well as there being a need for including more footpaths.
- Question who will pay for upgrade and new bridge onto the Millennium Green?

Facilities

- Need an activity area for youths – skateboard park, cycleway paths etc.

Environment Agency – Under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991 and the Land Drainage Byelaws, the prior written consent of the EA is required for any proposed works or structures in, under, over or within 9 metres of the top of the bank of the main river (River Flit). The proposed development does not appear to have any implications on our statutory byelaws.

Question 3: Concept Plan

Do you have any comments on the draft Concept Plan?

Built environment

- There appears to be a lot of emphasis on the built environment aspects of the development.
- Density too high.
- Development should repeat existing property design.
- Development should not comprise of housing of more than 2 storeys high.
- More affordable housing required.
- No.16 Stanford Road – need to have better regard to privacy of this neighbouring property. Position bungalows in this part of the site? Ensure an appropriate buffer zone?
- Further details required on what protection of existing amenity will entail.
- The development ignores local resident's rights to have a view of the open countryside. Increase in noise pollution and devaluation of neighbouring properties.
- Reinstate Mill feature as part of S.106 agreement.

Access and connectivity

- Requires a second vehicle access point and the opportunity for another roundabout on Stanford Road.
- New boundary planting will impair visibility on Stanford Road.
- Disappointed over the path positioning relative to existing footpath at Lucas Way. Consider a safety hazard. Entry needs to be adjacent to existing housing and site of ancient access to field.
- Should have a 40mph speed limit prior to the 30mph speed restriction.
- The position of the roundabout on Stanford Road and safe access into and out of the site questioned, especially with the close proximity of the nearby bend in the road west of Lucas Way.
- The proposed roundabout should be positioned at least two thirds of its diameter offset to the traffic flow into the town. This will have the effect of slowing traffic past the site entrance and into the town. The bend adjacent to the existing houses has been the site of many road traffic collisions due to the high speed traffic being out of position as it enters the road.
- Paths need to be wider along Stanford Road.
- Need to take account of ancient access to field from nearby house on Stanford Road across site to field. Disappointed over footpath positioning relative to existing footpath at Lucas Way. Consider this to be a safety hazard. Entry needs to be adjacent to existing housing and site to ancient access to field.
- Would like to see more footbridges across from the site to the meadow area to link the site to other parts of the town.
- Starting position of the speed limit should be reviewed.

- Will highway network be able to cope with the extra traffic especially at peak times and the speed of this traffic?
- Will more housing be proposed on neighbouring sites as a result of a new access road?
- Need to have footpaths which are well lit and wide enough for wheelchair users.
- Don't wish to see a bridge and paths across to the meadow area.
- Need to have good links to the High Street, not just via Stamford Road.

Natural Environment

- Encroachment of the development onto the open space.
- Otter Holts and location of new housing look very close.
- Impact on the County Wildlife Site has not been taken account of.
- No provision for green infrastructure e.g. tree planting.
- Issue of motorbikes and cycles etc. entering parts of the meadow area. Needs gates and barriers.

Play facilities

- Pumping station and children's play area are located too close together.
- Position of the play area near to the river is of concern. The play area is not considered to be in a prominent enough position. (Although, one comment was that it should be located away from residential properties.)
- Proposed play area and the green are too small.
- Play area to be suitable for up to 10 year olds, not just toddlers.

Flooding and drainage

- Flooding of other areas and effect on river.
- Page 16 – does not make it clear the necessary upgrade to the sewer system along Stamford Road.

Environment Agency – Supportive of the proposed layout within the site. This has appropriately adopted the sequential approach (as detailed in with Planning policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk) through locating, more vulnerable built development outside of the floodplain. Within the identified floodplain, existing (water compatible) uses are retained.

Other comments

Do you have any additional comments that you would like to make on the draft Development Brief?

- Residents of properties along Stanford Road need to be kept informed and consulted on the impact of the development.
- The previous consultation meeting was well conducted and the development brief is good.

Principle of development

- Too much housing proposed on site and in the town.
- Too many houses being built. Impact on the town's character.
- Monies should be directed to fund more/improved infrastructure and amenities.

Infrastructure and Services

- What provision is the developer giving to the town to support the extra population, for example a community centre?
- Prior to the development starting there should be an improvement in the infrastructure of the town's major services. Consideration should also be given to better parking facilities within the town. Provision should also be made for more leisure services as at the moment they are abysmal.
- Schools and services – impact on these?

Housing mix

- No housing for the elderly has been identified.
- Location of affordable housing scattered amongst the other housing is not appropriate.
- More affordable housing is required.

Access and connectivity

- New roundabout – concerns on busy roads with poor sightlines in places.
- There should be no parking allowed on Stanford Road for construction vehicles.
- More thinking required on Health and Safety issues
- Would like to see a roundabout provided on Clifton Road at junction with Purcell Way.
- Preference for site off Hitchen Road to be developed instead of this site.

Environment Agency – A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required to be submitted with any future planning application. This should address the proposed surface water drainage from the built development areas. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be incorporated to mimic the existing green-field drainage regime of the site. No greater rate discharge than currently exists, in terms of volume or velocity, would be permitted.

Meeting: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 06 March 2012

Subject: Planning and Development Briefs for Bridge Meadow and Land South of High Street, Leighton Buzzard

Report of: Cllr Ken Matthews , Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Strategic Planning and Economic Development

Summary: The report asks the Committee to note and comment on the responses to the public consultation on draft Planning and Development Briefs for Land South of High Street and Bridge Meadow in Leighton Buzzard carried out November 2011 – January 2012.

The briefs seek to guide future development proposals providing a framework to attract public and private investment to support the regeneration and expansion of the Town Centre to meet the needs of the growing population in Leighton Buzzard and the surrounding area it serves.

The report will be considered by Executive on 27 March for endorsement as Technical Guidance for Development Management purposes.

Advising Officer: Gary Alderson, Director of Sustainable Communities

Contact Officer: Jon Cliff, Head of Economic Growth and Physical Regeneration

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Leighton North, Leighton South and Linslade

Function of: Executive

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS	
Council Priorities:	
1.	The vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy is “To ensure Central Bedfordshire is Globally Connected, Delivering Sustainable Growth to ensure a Green Prosperous and Ambitious Place for the Benefit of All”. The strategy will be delivered through two underpinning key themes:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. creating the conditions for economic success and community prosperity; and 2. raising standards and tackling inequality

These themes will enable the Council to deliver 26,000 new homes and 27,000 new jobs by 2026 supporting the Council's key priority of managing growth effectively.

The Economic Development Plan recognises the importance of investing in the regeneration of our Town Centres. They are at the heart of our communities and are central to creating the right conditions for economic growth. The emerging Central Bedfordshire Council medium term targets will monitor the progress being made against the Town Centre master plans and briefs.

The implementation of the two Planning and Development Briefs is a fundamental part of the Council's key priority to 'manage growth effectively'. Leighton Buzzard is growing and the endorsed Core Strategy for Luton and South Bedfordshire plans for further growth. Regeneration of these two sites will provide enhanced services within and close to the town centre. Once endorsed, the two Planning and Development Briefs will form Technical Guidance for Development Management purposes and will form part of the Council's Development Strategy.

Financial:

2. The preparation of the two Planning and Development Briefs has been funded from the Government's Growth Area Fund (GAF3). Many of the proposals in the two development briefs will depend on private sector investment and do not commit any further public expenditure. Where the Council proposes to inject its own resources into future development proposals normal revenue and capital budgetary approval processes will need to be followed.

Legal:

3. It is a statutory requirement to produce a Development Plan. The planning and development briefs cannot be adopted as formal policy at this stage but can be endorsed as Technical Guidance for Development Management purposes. However, it remains our intention to adopt these documents as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) once Central Bedfordshire Council has adopted its emerging Development Strategy in 2014.

Risk Management:

4. The endorsement of the two Planning and Development Briefs will give more certainty to the development management process by providing a framework for the evaluation of planning proposals and development as they come forward. This reduces the risk of new development and related improvements failing to meet local needs or requirements. They will therefore provide greater clarity and guidance for those planning new developments, investment and improvements in the town centre. The identified risks will be managed throughout the development process.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. Not Applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. Public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and to foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. An equalities impact assessment has been carried out on the proposals outlined in these two Planning and Development Briefs. The implementation of these two documents will have a largely positive effect due to enhancements in the town centre and the provision of an improved range of centrally based services including health and education which are accessible to all.

The consultation findings demonstrate a good level of support amongst the majority of respondents.

Part of one of the sites is currently occupied by a family of Travelling Show People. This land is not in Council ownership. The land is being promoted for alternative uses by the owner and a planning application for an access road has been submitted. The Council has consulted with both the site owners and the occupiers to try to find a solution to this issue. The Council is very aware of the potential difficulties faced by the residents of this site. There is specific wording in the final document which highlights the need to provide appropriate alternative accommodation for those affected by the development. This is an ongoing issue and will be picked up by the Delivery Plan which will be commissioned to inform delivery of these two sites. Separately, there will be a Development Plan Document (DPD) on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs which could pick this specific need up if required

Existing social care provision within the site will be re-provided and Social Care colleagues have been involved in this work from an early stage.

Public Health

7. To be clarified at the meeting.

Community Safety:

8. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a duty on councils to do all they reasonably can to reduce crime and disorder locally and improve people's quality of life as a result. The duty requires the Council to consider and do all that is reasonable to support the reduction of crime and disorder in our area.

Implementation of these planning and development briefs, and regeneration of these two sites, would have a positive impact on community safety. The sites' regeneration would bring back into use under used parts of the town and create footfall throughout the day and evening. This would give opportunities for improved natural surveillance and potentially contribute towards the reduced fear of crime.

In developing the sites our duty under section 17 will be complied with and we will work with community safety colleagues both internal and external, including Bedfordshire Police, to ensure that consideration is given to all opportunities to reduce crime and disorder and reduce the fear of crime.

Sustainability:

9. The two Planning and Development Briefs promote the principles of sustainable development. They seek to improve facilities within Leighton Buzzard Town Centre which is an accessible location, and will improve access to services by walking, cycling and public transport. Equally, their implementation will improve employment opportunities within the town and will give more people the opportunity to work locally. They will in due course form part of the Council's new Development Strategy which will have sustainable development as its overarching aim and will be subject to a sustainability appraisal.

Procurement:

10. Any selection of development partners to take on the delivery of the regeneration schemes will need to follow EU procurement rules.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

1. **recommend to Executive the endorsement of the Planning and Development Briefs for Bridge Meadow and Land South of High Street Leighton Buzzard; and**
2. **recommend to Executive that the schedule of suggested changes to the wording of the two documents attached as Appendix C be included in the final planning and development briefs for Bridge Meadow and Land South of High Street.**

Background

11. Leighton Buzzard is the largest settlement in Central Bedfordshire with a population of around 37,000. Committed housing development in the south of the town is still being built out, and the endorsed Core Strategy for the area makes provision for substantial housing and employment growth to 2026. As a result, the population of the town is likely to rise significantly.
12. Whilst Leighton Buzzard town centre as a whole is performing reasonably well in terms of low vacancy rates in retail units, there are a number of areas including retail, healthcare and further education where opportunities for improvement have been identified. The two sites, Bridge Meadow and Land South of High Street, have long been seen as presenting opportunities for comprehensive regeneration owing to their position and proximity to the town centre, current uses and the piecemeal nature of their previous development. Plans of the two sites in their current form are included as Appendix A.

Work Undertaken

13. The Council's began work on developing planning and development briefs for these two sites in early 2010 on receipt of Growth Area Funding (GAF). Specialist consultants GVA working with Think Place and WSP Ltd, were commissioned to work with the Council to develop the planning and development briefs.
14. The briefs propose a vision for each site underpinned by a number of objectives. These have been developed into a land use plan which identifies appropriate uses on particular areas of the two sites. This is attached as Appendix B and the Vision and Objectives are summarised below:

Land South of High Street - Vision

15. The site will be redeveloped to provide a new retail led mixed use quarter which acts as a sustainable extension to the town centre's Primary Shopping Area and creates a destination for residents and visitors.

Development Objectives

16.
 - (1) Create a retail destination that will attract high profile retailers and visitors and retain local expenditure in the town
 - (2) Attract complementary uses and operators to those found on the High Street to help foster a vibrant and more competitive town centre
 - (3) Deliver the highest standards of urban design that complements the town centre's existing architectural and heritage assets and strengthens the town centre's high quality sense of place
 - (4) Enhance the existing identity of the town and reinforce its distinctiveness and sense of place
 - (5) Enhance permeability onto the site to allow for greater ease of movement around the site

The Bridge Meadow site - Vision

17. The site will be redeveloped to provide a new quarter which is accessible to the community and visitors, designed to open up the town's natural assets of the river and canal and to deliver facilities to meet the future needs of the community, alongside housing and commercial development.

Development Objectives

18.
 - (1) Introduce a new mix of complementary uses which meet the aspirations and needs of the local community
 - (2) Enhance access to, and enjoyment of, the canal and river through sensitive development along the edges of the site
 - (3) Enhance the Leighton Road frontage in order to create a more attractive gateway into the town centre

- (4) Strengthen the linkages between the towns of Leighton Buzzard and Linslade
- (5) Create an identity for this part of the town and reinforce the sense of place

Public Consultation

Options Consultation (January – March 2011)

19. There was a stakeholder workshop followed by a ward member workshop at the beginning of the process in July 2010. Possible options for the two sites were developed and consulted on early in January - March 2011. This included a public exhibition in the town centre on a Saturday followed by a static display in the town's library. There was also a separate consultation exercise involving local schools. The responses from this consultation were collated and analysed further and this was used to inform development of the draft briefs.

Statutory Consultation (November 2011 – January 2012)

20. The statutory consultation on the draft briefs began on 19 November 2011 and ran until 06 January 2012. The consultation programme began with a public exhibition held on Saturday 19 November in the town centre, and was supplemented by a static exhibition at Leighton Buzzard Library which was manned for two afternoons and one evening. The information and a questionnaire were also available on the Council's website. Collection points for completed questionnaires were set up in the library, in the offices of Leighton Linslade Town Council, and in the Council's Customer Services Centre at Bossard House. In addition, the Head of Economic Development and Physical Regeneration and the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing met users and their relatives of the Council's Day Centre and Westlands Residential Care Home informing them of the consultation, explaining how proposals might affect them and seeking their views.

Consultation Findings and Proposed Changes

21. A copy of the Consultation Report has been provided to Committee members. The findings of the consultation will be presented to the Committee.
22. In total, 68 questionnaire responses were received during the consultation period. Of these, 21% of respondents were below the age of 44, 38% between the ages of 45 and 64, and 40% of respondents were above the age of 65. The vast majority (85%) of those who completed project questionnaire were residents of Leighton Buzzard or Linslade. Overall, there was a good level of support for the proposals with between 56% and 77% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposed uses on different parts of the site, and only between 8% and 17% who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposed uses. In addition to the questionnaire responses received there were 17 written representations in either letter or email form submitted to the Council within the consultation period. As noted above, the findings of the consultation are collated in the Consultation Report which has been provided to members, and there will be a presentation to the committee summarising this.

23. Having collated and analysed the findings and comments, it is felt that there is no need for significant amendments to be made to the briefs as drafted for consultation. Some minor word changes, updates, corrections and points of clarification are proposed, along with additional wording covering connectivity to superfast broadband, following approval of the Local Broadband Plan. These changes are highlighted in the Schedule of Proposed Changes attached as Appendix C.

Next Steps

24. The proposals contained within these two Planning and Development Briefs have been subject to considerable community consultation and engagement with key partners and they have secured broad support from the community. Regeneration of these two sites will provide significant benefits and new facilities for Leighton Buzzard.
25. The Planning and Development Briefs will provide a framework for the comprehensive regeneration of both sites. A delivery plan, which will determine how best to move both sites forward to delivery will be undertaken jointly by Economic Growth and Property Assets, and will form the basis of a separate report to Executive in Autumn 2012. The delivery plan will be based on land assembly, commercial discussions with landowners, public bodies such as health, education and the fire service, and the development of a decanting strategy where this is necessary. In turn this will be informed by a full review of public buildings usage and community access to public services that operate across Leighton Buzzard being undertaken by the Assets team.

Conclusion

26. The Committee is therefore asked to recommended to Executive that the Planning and Development Briefs for Bridge Meadow and Land South of High Street, incorporating the proposed changes in Appendix C, are endorsed as Technical Guidance for Development Management purposes to ensure the proposals contained within them carry weight and significance in planning terms to guide future investment and regeneration of the two sites.

Appendices:

- Appendix A – “Red Line” Plan of Bridge Meadow and Land South of High Street, Leighton Buzzard
- Appendix B – Land Use Plans from Draft Planning and Development Briefs for Bridge Meadow and Land South of High Street, Leighton Buzzard
- Appendix C – Schedule of Proposed Changes

Background papers and their location: (open to public inspection)

Leighton Buzzard Development Briefs: Land South of High Street (Draft for Consultation November 2011)

Leighton Buzzard Development Briefs: Bridge Meadow (Draft for Consultation November 2011)

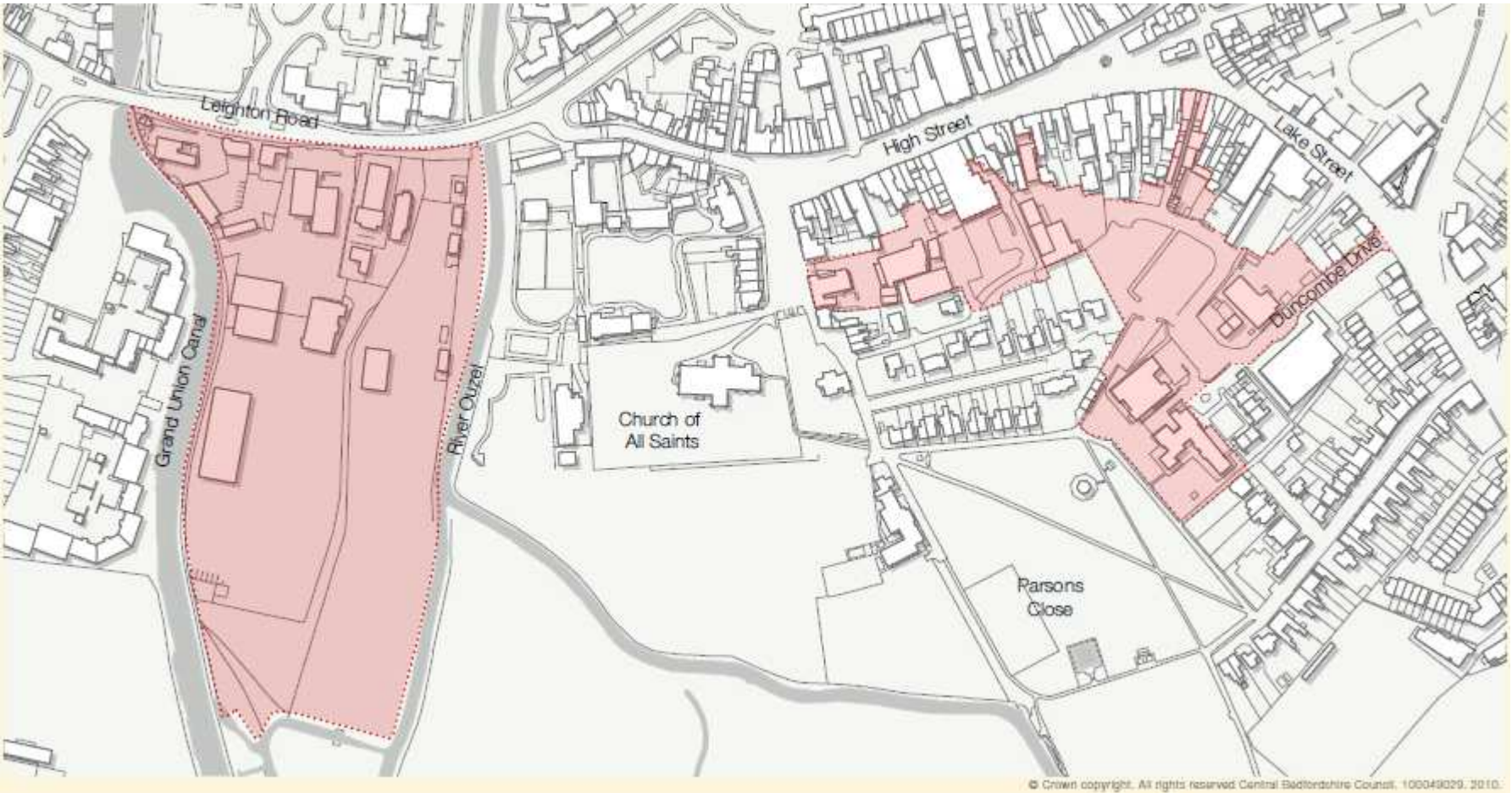
Leighton Buzzard Development Briefs – Consultation Statement 2 – Draft Development Briefs – February 2012

Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford. SG17 5TQ

Appendix A

“Red Line” plan of Bridge Meadow and Land South of High Street sites





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Leighton Buzzard Development Briefs: Land South of the High Street
for Central Bedfordshire Council

5. Land Uses

Indicative Land Use Framework Plan



FIG. 5.1

Indicative Land Use Framework Plan



FIG. 5.1

Appendix C

Leighton Buzzard Planning and Development Briefs – Schedule of Proposed Changes

Land South of High Street

Paragraph	Proposed Change	Reason
Foreword	Foreword to be removed and replaced with "This document was adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council as Technical Guidance for Development Management Purposes on 27 March 2012."	Foreword was written to introduce consultation draft.
1.1	Replacement of reference to "Central Bedfordshire Council is preparing plans to deliver significant development in the period 2011-2026" with "Central Bedfordshire Council has endorsed the Luton and South Bedfordshire Core Strategy which plans to deliver significant development in the period 2011-2026".	Updated as Core Strategy now endorsed
1.3	Insert wording "This brief has been prepared in parallel to the development brief for the Bridge Meadow site lying west of the town centre."	To reflect the other brief which has been prepared alongside this one.
1.6	Remove paragraph	Update – the paragraph refers to future intentions once consultation has been completed.
1.7-1.10	Paragraphs to be amended to: "This development brief has been prepared following public and stakeholder consultation on the initial development proposals and options in February 2011. There was further subsequent public consultation on the draft brief in November 2011.	Updated following statutory consultation process November 2011 – January 2012

	<p>These consultation exercises were undertaken in parallel to similar consultations on proposals for the Bridge Meadow site.</p> <p>On both occasions, members of the public were able to visit the centre and review display boards setting out the initial proposals for the sites. Members of the public were encouraged to fill in questionnaires which aimed to capture the local community's views and preferences regarding the options and proposals being consulted on.</p> <p>The feedback received through consultation has influenced the proposals set out in this document, alongside further technical work. Full details of the responses can be found in the separate Consultation Statements."</p>	
2.3	Aerial photo image to be replaced with one showing "red lines" of sites	Clarity
3.5	<p>New paragraph to be inserted:</p> <p>"On 27th May 2010, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced the Government's intention to rapidly abolish Regional Spatial Strategies. The Localism Act 2011 grants the Government the legislative powers to remove the East of England RSS. However, it has yet to do so and so the RSS will remain part of the statutory development plan affecting the sites until it is abolished (although material consideration will be given to the Government's intentions, particularly where conflicts arise with local policy)."</p>	Updated to reflect current position regarding regional plans.

5.2	Footnote to include the sentence "A revision to this retail study is currently being produced".	Update
5.2	<p>Fourth bullet point to be amended to:</p> <p>"Ancillary A2 (professional and financial services), B1 offices, cultural, community, further education and leisure uses will be permitted within this area provided they do not prejudice the development of a continuous, seamless extension of the Primary Shopping Area. As part of a comprehensive mixed use development of the site as a whole, residential uses (C2 and C3) may be appropriate, primarily at first floor level, or in a distinct area adjacent to existing residential development, outside the extended Primary Shopping Area. Piecemeal residential development will not be permitted".</p>	To ensure that appropriate ancillary uses can be developed on site alongside extension to the Primary Shopping Area as part of a mixed use development.
Chapter 6	<p>Additional wording under a new heading of "Digital Infrastructure":</p> <p>The Council believes that new developments should be served by a high quality digital infrastructure, ensuring local residents and business are able to access the latest online services. The Council wishes to see the necessary on-site infrastructure put in place at the time of construction, to ensure connectivity to superfast broadband services. This means that the development will seek to put in place an appropriate network to deliver services. Detailed proposals will need to consider the necessary conduits/ducting to be incorporated into the development and consideration for relevant telecommunications infrastructure, including exchanges and or cabinets, to ensure accessing/ maintenance requirements and minimal environmental/ visual impact in line with the adopted Central Bedfordshire Local Broadband Plan</p>	To ensure that future developments are enabled to provide high speed broadband in line with the Central Bedfordshire Local Broadband Plan.

6.2	An additional bullet point to read “Additional co-ordinated signage to improve legibility”	To ensure that future development is properly integrated with the existing town centre.
9.6	Second sentence to be amended to “Accordingly the Council anticipates that the development will come forward over the next 5 to 10 years or more”	Clarification

Bridge Meadow

Paragraph	Proposed Change	Reason
Foreword	Foreword to be removed and replaced with "This document was adopted by Central Bedfordshire Council as Technical Guidance for Development Management Purposes on 27 March 2012."	Foreword was written to introduce consultation draft.
1.1	Replacement of reference to "Central Bedfordshire Council is preparing plans to deliver significant development in the period 2011-2026" with "Central Bedfordshire Council has endorsed the Luton and South Bedfordshire Core Strategy which plans to deliver significant development in the period 2011-2026".	Updated as Core Strategy now endorsed
1.3	Insert wording "This brief has been prepared in parallel to the development brief for the Land South of High Street site."	To reflect the other brief which has been prepared alongside this one.
1.6	Remove paragraph	Update – the paragraph refers to future intentions once consultation has been completed.
1.7-1.10	<p>Paragraphs to be amended to:</p> <p>"This development brief has been prepared following public and stakeholder consultation on the initial development proposals and options in February 2011. There was further subsequent public consultation on the draft brief in November 2011.</p>	Updated following statutory consultation process November 2011 – January 2012

	<p>These consultation exercises were undertaken in parallel to similar consultations on proposals for the Bridge Meadow site.</p> <p>On both occasions, members of the public were able to visit the centre and review display boards setting out the initial proposals for the sites. Members of the public were encouraged to fill in questionnaires which aimed to capture the local community's views and preferences regarding the options and proposals being consulted on.</p> <p>The feedback received through consultation has influenced the proposals set out in this document, alongside further technical work. Full details of the responses can be found in the separate Consultation Statements."</p>	
2.3	Aerial photo image to be replaced with one showing "red lines" of sites	Clarity
2.7	Reference to "Leighton Linlade Conservation Area" to be replaced with "Linlade Conservation Area"	Correction
2.8	Final sentence to be amended to "These stores compete with Morrisons and Tesco superstores which are located in out of centre locations."	Correction
2.19	Paragraph to be amended to: "The site is broadly flat. Part of the site lies within the functional flood plain of the River Ouzel (Flood Zone Grade 3b – refer to Constraints Plan in Section 3 for indicative extent of floodplain). The site could potentially suffer from contamination due to its historic storage and distribution industrial uses, although no studies have yet been carried out confirming this."	Clarification

3.5	<p>New paragraph to be inserted:</p> <p>"On 27th May 2010, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced the Government's intention to rapidly abolish Regional Spatial Strategies. The Localism Act 2011 grants the Government the legislative powers to remove the East of England RSS. However, it has yet to do so and so the RSS will remain part of the statutory development plan affecting the sites until it is abolished (although material consideration will be given to the Government's intentions, particularly where conflicts arise with local policy)."</p>	Updated to reflect current position regarding regional plans.
5.1, 5.6 and 5.7	References to "Education" to be replaced with "Further Education"	Clarification
Fig 5.1, 6.1 and 7.1	Indicative location of foot / cycle bridge – additional indicative locations to be suggested, to the south of the indicative location shown	Clarification to show additional indicative location
Fig 6.1	Shape of indicative canal feature to be amended to reflect presence of existing footbridge	Clarification
6.2	First bullet point under "Character, Appearance and historic Assets": Second sentence, starting "However, it is accepted that..." to be removed	Clarification
6.2	Additional bullet point to read "The siting, configuration and orientation of buildings should optimise views of the water, generate natural surveillance of water space, and encourage and improve access to, along and from the water"	To ensure that the benefits of the canal side location are maximised
Chapter 6	Additional wording under a new heading of "Digital Infrastructure":	To ensure that future developments are

	The Council believes that new developments should be served by a high quality digital infrastructure, ensuring local residents and business are able to access the latest online services. The Council wishes to see the necessary on-site infrastructure put in place at the time of construction, to ensure connectivity to superfast broadband services. This means that the development will seek to put in place an appropriate network to deliver services. Detailed proposals will need to consider the necessary conduits/ducting to be incorporated into the development and consideration for relevant telecommunications infrastructure, including exchanges and or cabinets, to ensure accessing/ maintenance requirements and minimal environmental/ visual impact in line with the adopted Central Bedfordshire Local Broadband Plan	enabled to provide high speed broadband in line with the Central Bedfordshire Local Broadband Plan.
7.1	Sixth bullet point to be amended to “Appropriate lighting should be carefully considered to provide a safe and pleasant environment at all times of day, and should be kept at a low level close to the waterway where possible”	Clarification
7.1	Additional bullet point to be added: “Any new development should incorporate flood mitigation measures as appropriate”	Clarification
7.1	Additional bullet point to read “Public realm improvements should be extended up to the water’s edge where practicable, and should not form a barrier to the canal”	To ensure public realm improvements ensure good linkage to the canal
Fig 7.1	Reference to “Heritage Quarter” to be replaced with “Canal Quarter”	Correction
8.3	Additional bullet point to be added “To ensure legibility, the route towards the town centre should be clearly signposted”	Clarification

8.3	Additional bullet point to be added “Physical constraints permitting, any new access to the towpath should be accessible to those with wheelchairs”	Clarification
9.6	Final sentence to be amended to “Accordingly the Council anticipates that the development will come forward over the next 10 to 15 years”	Correction
9.8	Sentence to be added “Existing occupiers, including the Travelling Showpeople, will need to be relocated prior to development”	Clarification

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Meeting: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 06 March 2012

Subject: Central Bedfordshire Council Library Service Strategy

Report of: Cllr Spurr, Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Services

Summary: The report provides an update on the Library Service Review outcomes, including the public consultation findings and presents the Library Service Strategy for endorsement.

Advising Officer: Gary Alderson, Director of Sustainable Communities

Contact Officer: Kate McFarlane, Head of Community Regeneration and Adult Skills

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Executive

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The corporate implications of this report are detailed in full in the attached Executive report.

RECOMMENDATION:-

The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the recommendations to the Executive contained in the body of the report and comment and necessary.

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Meeting: Executive

Date: 27 March 2012

Subject: Central Bedfordshire Council Library Service Strategy

Report of: Cllr Spurr, Executive Member Sustainable Communities - Services

Summary: The report provides an update on the Library Service Review outcomes, including the public consultation findings and presents the Library Service Strategy for endorsement.

Advising Officer: Gary Alderson, Director of Sustainable Communities

Contact Officer: Kate McFarlane, Head of Community Regeneration and Adult Skills

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Executive

Key Decision No

Reason for urgency/ Not Applicable
exemption from call-in
(if appropriate)

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. The vision of the Sustainable Communities Strategy is “To ensure Central Bedfordshire is Globally Connected, Delivering Sustainable Growth to ensure a Green, Prosperous and Ambitious Place for the Benefit of All”.
2. The Strategy will be delivered through two underpinning key themes of creating the conditions for economic success and community prosperity and raising standards and tackling inequality in order to deliver 26,000 new homes and 27,000 new jobs by 2026. The libraries service supports this agenda and the emerging political priorities for the medium term by:
 - Offering value for money through the reduction in back office costs
 - Providing a high quality, universal service
 - Enhancing Central Bedfordshire as a place, with libraries being at the heart of communities

Financial:

3. The library service net expenditure budget for 2012/13 is £2.84M.
4. By the end of March 2012 the library service will have delivered £310,000 of efficiency savings. A further efficiency saving target of £245,000 has been set for the period 2012/13 – 2013/14. These savings will be delivered by firstly investing in radio-frequency identification (RFID) self service technology in all libraries, which will enable customers to serve themselves and improve stock flow around the service. This will deliver staff savings of £70,000 and further savings of just over £150,000 will be delivered through a service wide staffing review and staffing re-alignment. The remaining savings will come from a reduction in running costs such as printing and stationery costs.
5. In addition to revenue budgets, £850,000 of capital is proposed to be invested over the next two years to modernise the service. £450,000 is earmarked for introducing RFID with a further £400,000 to modernise buildings to improve facilities and equipment and to pilot one or two library access points in communities not currently served by a local library.
6. To support the service transformation a fixed term project manager post will be appointed for the next two years.
7. Implementing the Library Service Strategy will primarily be through the service budgets. Users have expressed preferences for the type and level of service for the next 15 years through consultation. These preferences will need to be considered in each update of the respective Medium Term Financial Plans over the ensuing period.
8. The reduction in funding will result in a library service budget of £2.8M in 2013/14, subject to any further required efficiency savings. The largest areas of spend are £300,000 on stock, £425,000 on the online virtual library and library management system with staffing accounting for approximately £1.6M subject to the staffing review. The investment in stock is comparable with Bedford Borough and Luton with whom the stock resource is shared.
9. Total spend on libraries in Central Bedfordshire at £12,837 per thousand population compares very well to the 2011 actual average spend by all English library authorities £16,176¹.

Legal:

10. Central Bedfordshire Council has a legal duty to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” service under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act. Legal challenges may be enacted if the council fails in its duty to provide such a service. The Library Service Strategy will ensure that the Council continues to comply with its statutory duty.

Risk Management:

11. Proposed service re-modelling of this kind provides key risks to the Council. The risks outlined below will be mitigated through close management of the implementation of the strategy:

¹ CIPFA figures 2011

- (a) Reputation and customer satisfaction: Any changes to services if not communicated effectively to stakeholders and customers can result in a reduction in customer satisfaction and loss of support for the service
- (b) Shared Services: The ability to maximise efficiency savings in the shared back office requires agreement and co-operation with Bedford Borough Council and Luton Cultural Trust
- (c) Risk of doing nothing: Would lead to a salami slicing of services which could result in reduction in opening hours and increasing pressure to close libraries
- (d) Risk of the Council failing to discharge its statutory duty under the terms of the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act
- (e) Risk of failure to deliver the priorities and vision identified in the Library Service Strategy
- (f) Risk of failure to deliver the required efficiency savings

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

- 12. In order to deliver the Library Strategy and efficiency savings targets there are significant staffing implications, notably the need to reconfigure the staffing structure across the Service and to reduce the number of overall posts. In these circumstances the Council is required to undertake consultation with our recognised Trade Unions and affected employees and will be taken forward in accordance with Central Bedfordshire Council's Managing Change policy.
- 13. In order to provide a high level of HR support through this period of change additional HR capacity and support will be required.

Equalities/Human Rights:

- 14. Public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and to foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 15. A comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment has been completed that has taken into account recent judgements following a number of judicial reviews where Local Authorities have made decisions to close public libraries. Detail on the community engagement and public consultation outcomes are outlined in the report. In undertaking the Library Services Review the findings from the Local Economic Assessment equalities considerations and target groups have been considered alongside mosaic mapping of residents who use and do not use library services.

16. Those groups less likely to be engaging with library services are people living in social accommodation designed for older people, less mobile people, people living in brand new residential developments and mixed communities with a large number of single people in the centre of small towns. Children aged 0-14yrs are much more likely to be users than average, along with Mosaic groups of industrial workers, higher income families concerned with education and careers and early and middle aged parents likely to be involved in their children's education. 65% of library users are female.
17. By focusing on internal efficiencies, avoiding closures and prioritising themes such as access, skills, tailoring services and engagement the priorities contained within the Library Strategy approach will help to increase equality of opportunity for vulnerable groups across Central Bedfordshire.

Public Health:

18. Libraries are safe environments located in the heart of communities and are well placed to support and promote health and well being of local residents through both the resources and range of activities available within libraries.

Community Safety:

19. Libraries are seen as safe environments for all ages and a hub for community activities and information. Libraries offer the opportunity for people to learn, improve their skills and increase their life and employment opportunities. These are all factors identified as having a significant impact on deterring young people from becoming involved in crime and anti social behaviour, and in helping offenders make choices that take them away from criminal activity.
20. Libraries also offer the opportunity for the more vulnerable in our communities to seek help and assistance through a recognised and safe establishment. That help may come through the information available, through contact with library staff or simply having a safe place to be. The potential to share library buildings with other local services also provides the opportunity to give people greater access to support, some of which may support an increase in peoples sense of being safe.
21. The Council has a statutory duty to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area, and developing its Library Services Strategy, particularly in relation to its priority around young people by working with partners such as Youth Offending Services, Integrated Youth Support Services and Community Safety Teams, will help to fulfil this duty.

Procurement:

22. Procurement of RFID self service technology will be a priority in 2012/13. Additional procurement activity may be required for minor capital works to existing buildings and in the purchase of new equipment.

Sustainability:

23. The Library Service Strategy provides a clear over-arching framework for a sustainable future service. The strategy confirms a continued and enhanced local, easy to access service for residents through a network of libraries and Library Access Points ensuring residents do not have to make considerably longer journeys. With libraries increasingly becoming community hubs for other services and activities there is the potential to further reduce overall car usage.
24. The strategy seeks to further develop the online, 24/7 virtual library as a way of expanding the service whilst supporting the UK's legally binding target to reduce CO2 emissions by 80% by 2050. The opportunity to re-develop libraries with town centre re-developments provides an opportunity to move into new or re-modelled more energy efficient buildings.

Summary of Overview and Scrutiny Comments:

25. The outcomes from the Library Service Review, public consultation results and draft Library Service Strategy have been considered at the 6 March 2012 Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Executive is asked to:

- 1. Approve the Library Service Strategy and library road maps as the direction for the service for the next 15 years.**

<i>Reason for Recommendation(s):</i>	<i>So that Central Bedfordshire Council can effectively discharge its statutory duty to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” library service under the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act and in doing so offer value for money, support the delivery of the Sustainable Communities Strategy and our ambitions for Central Bedfordshire.</i>
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Executive Summary

26. The Library Service Strategy affirms the Council's commitment to keep our libraries open whilst delivering over £555,000 of efficiency savings. The Library Service in Central Bedfordshire is a high performing service which currently supports 12 libraries, a Library Access Point at Arlesey, the Library Link service to housebound customers and the online virtual library.
27. The Strategy outlines how the Council will go about involving local people in making decisions about their library, how the service will be more accessible to increase usage of the library network and help children, young people and adults to improve skills and learn. It also recognises that to do this we will need to modernise our service, find new ways to provide better services and deliver efficiencies by investing in technology.

28. Extensive market research has been undertaken through the Big Library Debate and public consultation through the Libraries for the Future Consultation with over 4,400 responses received from members of the public. This has successfully raised the profile of Central Bedfordshire libraries.
29. The Library Strategy contains five over-arching priorities, is underpinned with specific actions and supported by individual library road maps outlining future opportunities and areas of development for each library and service area. The Council recognises that whilst there will be a core service not all libraries will be the same in the future and will evolve to better meet the needs of local communities.
30. The strategy will be reviewed in 2015/16 and has set ambitious targets for the library service to increase usage by 20% and maintain customer satisfaction at 93% by 2015/16.

Library Service Strategy

31. The Library Service Strategy attached at Appendix A has been informed by a comprehensive library service review and full public consultation. The strategy outlines the direction of travel for the Library Service for the next 15 years and is built on the vision to deliver a “vibrant, high quality, relevant and sustainable library service for the people of Central Bedfordshire for the 21st Century”.
32. The vision is under-pinned by five priorities, each of which is supported by a number of specific actions outlined below:
 - (a) Involving local people in making decisions about their library:
 - (i) support and encourage people to get involved in the delivery of library services
 - (ii) Ensure people have opportunities to tell us what they think about the service
 - (b) Be accessible when, where, and how people want:
 - (i) keep our libraries open and find new places and ways to offer services
 - (ii) provide better services for people who find it hard to get to a library or to use a library
 - (iii) Improve the online ‘virtual library’ which can be accessed at any time
 - (iv) be better at telling people what the library offers
 - (c) Help children, young people and adults to improve skills:
 - (i) to read and to enjoy reading
 - (ii) to develop skills that will help them get a job

- (iii) to use the latest information technology
- (d) Modernise the service and find new ways to provide better services and save money:
 - (i) ensure the service is run efficiently and provides value for money
 - (ii) use new technology like self service and e-books
 - (iii) share library buildings to provide other services that people want locally
 - (iv) look for opportunities to create modern libraries when town centres are being re-developed
- (e) Deliver a tailored service to local people:
 - (i) provide individual plans for the development of each library and service

33. **Service Actions**

The specific actions arising from the strategy are that:

- (a) Central Bedfordshire Council will not be closing any libraries, we value our libraries and want to maximise the use of our library assets
- (b) We will invest £850,000 of capital in libraries over the next two years to support the implementation of RFID self service technology, modernising buildings, equipment and piloting library access points in rural communities
- (c) We will maintain a paid workforce to deliver the core service but look to increase the use of volunteers to increase the availability of activities within libraries and outreach into communities
- (d) We will better promote what the service delivers and look to maximise e-communications as a key tool to achieve this
- (e) We will look at opportunities to re-locate libraries as part of large town centre re-developments. We will also explore options as they arise for other services to be delivered from libraries and library services to be co-located in other locations
- (f) We recognise that not all libraries are the same across Central Bedfordshire and seek to locally tailor library services to the needs of local communities
- (g) We will further develop the virtual, online library and continue to increase the interactive functions to enable a greater personalisation of activities
- (h) We will maintain a high quality service for housebound users but will look to find less costly ways of delivering the service

34. The strategy will be reviewed in 2015/16 and has set ambitious targets for the library service to increase usage by 20% by 2015/16 and maintain customer satisfaction at 93%.
35. Supporting the strategy is a road map for each library which summarises the feedback of local residents, considers equality implications, where we can improve our offer and future opportunities to deliver the strategy. These can be found at Appendix B.

Library Service Review

36. Like many services across the country the library service in Central Bedfordshire faces the significant challenge of delivering efficiencies whilst ensuring services better meet the needs of existing and future customers. These twin challenges prompted the need for the service wide review which commenced in summer 2011. The aims of the review were to ensure:
 - (a) we deliver our statutory duties whilst providing a high quality service in the most effective manner, in order to meet local needs
 - (b) make the best use of assets and increase their impact for the benefit of all
 - (c) that the service is flexible, adaptable and fit for the future
 - (d) that the service is accessible to all, supports the most vulnerable and individuals as required throughout their lives
37. The review has successfully delivered the above aims through five broad inter-related strands of work outlined below. Further detail on each area is available at Appendix C.
 - (a) Market research through 'The Big Library Debate' conducted over the summer of 2011 enabled the Council to better understand what residents and stakeholders liked about the service, thought could be improved and what we ought to start or stop doing in the future. Over 2,000 contributed to the Big Library Debate
 - (b) Information gathering and needs analysis in order to understand which residents are using the service, who is not accessing libraries, how the levels of satisfaction, usage and value for money compare with other library authorities
 - (c) Review of best practice and options for future service delivery recognising that library authorities across the county are undertaking similar exercises and we can learn from those experiences in order to shape what is appropriate for the Central Bedfordshire library service
 - (d) 'Libraries for the Future' public consultation which ran from October 2011 – January 2012 and tested thinking on over-arching ambitions and directions for the service whilst giving people an opportunity to tell us what they wanted their local library to be like. 2,200 people responded to the formal consultation

- (e) Review of systems, processes and staffing to identify how efficiencies can be best delivered through improved business systems and capital investment in technology and staffing best deployed to deliver the library strategy priorities

Appendices:

Appendix A - Library Service Strategy

Appendix B – Library and Service Road Maps

Appendix C – Summary of Work Stream Activity

Background Papers:

All papers relating to the Library Services Review can be found online at <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/default.aspx>

These include:

- Consultation Documentation
- Big Library Debate Executive Summary Report
- Libraries for the Future Executive Summary Report
- Library Services Review Summary Report
- Equality Impact Assessment

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Appendix **A**

**Central
Bedfordshire
Libraries**

**Central
Bedfordshire**

Library Service Strategy 2012

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

Foreword

Libraries in Central Bedfordshire are recognised as an invaluable community service providing access to learning, information and culture for all. It is because of this that the Council has decided that no library should close and that the service should seek to improve access and consider methods of extending reach into local communities.

It is clear that our libraries are valued by residents and this can be seen in the increasing usage of both our buildings and online library services.

It has been recognised, however, that libraries will need to become more efficient to contribute to local government savings targets and modernise in order to meet the future needs of residents. The 'modernisation' agenda is one which particularly resonated with respondents in the 'Libraries for the Future' consultation exercise, to which 2200 people contributed.

We have listened to residents views and have embedded them into this strategy. These include ensuring that libraries:

- Maintain book lending which is valued
- Continue to help children, young people and adults to improve skills and learn
- Have suitably trained staff to deliver services
- Extend their reach even further in Central Bedfordshire to make them more accessible

What has emerged is an ambitious and challenging vision for Central Bedfordshire libraries but one that has the backing of both the Council and, we believe, the public.

It only remains for me to express my gratitude to everyone who has given their time and ideas contributing to this library strategy – I look forward to working with the library service on your behalf in future.

Councillor Brian Spurr
Executive Member Sustainable Communities Services

1. Introduction

This strategy sets out the vision and ambitions for Central Bedfordshire Library Service for the next 15 years, building on the service's current strong foundations. The strategy will see the Council continuing to provide a comprehensive library service to all residents, whilst also ensuring that it is more relevant, efficient and sustainable.

Our vision is to deliver a “vibrant, high quality, relevant and sustainable library service for the people of Central Bedfordshire for the 21st century” by:

- Involving local people in making decisions about their library
- Being accessible when, where, and how people want
- Helping children, young people, and adults to improve skills
- Modernising the service, finding new ways to provide better services and save money
- Delivering a library service that is tailored to local people

The challenge for the service will be to deliver the strategy in a period of financial stringency. Central Bedfordshire Council will have to reduce its budget by £40 million in the next four years and some of these savings must come from the library service. The library service will deliver over £550,000 of efficiency savings by March 2014 without closing any of our libraries.

2. Our Statutory Role

Local authorities are obliged by law to provide a “comprehensive and efficient” library service under the terms of the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act. The Act requires local authorities to provide a free lending and information service and appropriate access to meet the general and special requirements of adults and children who live, work or study in the area. There are no national standards for library provision.

As a result, library services across the country are not all the same. Services are shaped by factors such as local policy, customer need and, in some cases, historical developments. The Secretary of State has the power to intervene if he believes that a local authority is not providing a “comprehensive and efficient” service under the terms of the Act but such intervention is rare.

3. Where we are now

Central Bedfordshire has 12 libraries, supports a Library Access Point, a housebound and Library Link service and an online Virtual Library. The libraries are situated in an authority which is predominantly rural, relatively affluent, has pockets of deprivation and has an ageing population. 26,000 new dwellings are planned for the authority between 2001 and 2021.

Central Bedfordshire Libraries offer a wide range of activities in support of the Council's political priorities for the medium term, including delivery of a key universal service, offering good value for money and enhancing Central Bedfordshire as a place to live and work.

The public perception of the library service is very good, customer satisfaction levels are at 93% for adults and 90% for children and the number of visits to libraries increased by 13% between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

Central Bedfordshire Libraries, Bedford Borough Libraries and Luton Cultural Trust Libraries share 'back office' services across the three authorities known as Hub Services.

4. The Challenges we face

It is clear that the service faces a number of challenges in the future, these include:

- The need to market the service more effectively
- The need to modernise the service and buildings and update equipment
- Concerns about the levels of fees and charges
- Requests to increase opening hours
- Spending constraints in a time of austerity for local government
- Learning from emerging national best practice in the libraries field
- Managing developing technologies such as e-books and their impact on services
- A need to manage tensions between those who want the service to change and those who do not and the different expectations of the different user and age groups
- Challenges arising from the rural nature of the area, particularly as a result of the cessation of the mobile library service
- The needs of an ageing population, particularly in respect of the capacity and cost of delivering services to people that are housebound and unable to physically visit a library
- Areas where deprivation and unemployment are significant, particularly in respect of Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Biggleswade, Leighton Buzzard, Sandy, and Flitwick and how the service can better engage these groups
- Areas in the authority that have limited coverage and access to services including Aspley and Woburn, Caddington, Cranfield and Marston, Eaton Bray, Heath and Reach, Northill, Potton and Sandy wards
- Under use of libraries by disadvantaged groups such as people living in accommodation designed for older people and those living in brand new developments

5. What we will do

We commit to deliver this strategy through five priorities:

Priority 1: Involving local people in making decisions about their library:

- Support and encourage people to get involved in the delivery of library services
- Ensure people have opportunities to tell us what they think about the service

Priority 2: Be accessible when, where, and how people want:

- Keep our libraries open and find new places and ways to offer services
- Provide better services for people who find it hard to get to a library or to use a library
- Improve the online 'virtual library' which can be accessed at any time
- Be better at telling people what the library offers

Priority 3: Help children, young people, and adults to improve skills and learn:

- To read and to enjoy reading
- To develop skills that will help them get a job
- To use the latest information technology

Priority 4: Modernise the service, and find new ways to provide better services and save money:

- Ensure the service is run efficiently and provides value for money
- Use new technology like self-service and e-books
- Share library buildings to provide other services that people want locally
- Look for opportunities to create modern libraries when town centres are being redeveloped

Priority 5: Deliver a tailored library service to local people:

- Provide individual plans for the development of each library service in Central Bedfordshire

6. How we arrived at these priorities

Throughout 2011 Central Bedfordshire Libraries undertook a service wide review which consisted of five components:

- Market research 'The Big Library Debate' conducted over the summer of 2011 undertaken with library users and non-users, stakeholders and internal and external partners
- Information gathering and needs analysis
- A review of best practice and an options analysis for service delivery
- 'Libraries for the Future' public consultation, October 2011 – January 2012
- Review of systems, processes and staffing to identify how efficiencies can be delivered

The aim of the review was to ensure:

- We deliver our statutory duties whilst providing a high quality service in the most cost effective manner, in order to meet local needs
- We make the best use of assets and increase their impact for the benefit of local communities
- That the service is flexible, adaptable and fit for the future
- That the service is accessible to all, supports the most vulnerable and individuals as required throughout their lives

We will continue to engage residents to ensure we deliver what people want.

7. How does our strategy compare to what is happening nationally?

In 2010, the Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals¹ published guidance for local councils which said that a good public library service would deliver::

- "A positive future for children and young people
- A fulfilling life for older people
- Strong, safe and sustainable communities
- Promotion of local identity and community pride
- Learning, skills and workforce development

¹ (Source: What makes a good library service? CILIP, 2010)

- Health improvements and wellbeing
- Equality, community cohesion and social justice
- Economic regeneration”

The DCMS² suggested that libraries should provide a core offer including:

- Library membership from birth; and opportunity to be a member of all libraries in England
- Opportunity for the public to help shape the service; and services that reach out to local people
- Free access to a range and quality of book stock and online resources and information; 24-hour access through online catalogues and services; and access to the national book collection
- Connecting a community of readers through reading groups, activities and recommendations
- Free internet access for all and help to get online
- Commitment to customer service and expert, helpful staff
- A safe local space that is accessible and convenient; and flexible opening hours to suit local need
- Links to other public services and opportunities

8. What will success look like?

We have set an ambitious target to maintain customer satisfaction levels at **93%** and increase library service usage by **20%** by March 2016.

² (Source: The modernisation review of public libraries – a policy statement London, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2011).

9. How we will deliver the priorities?

The remainder of the strategy outlines the key actions we believe we need to take to help us transform the library service.

Priority 1: Involve local people in making decisions about their library			
Actions/Requirements	Outcomes and Timescales	How will it be measured*	Who will we work with
Support and encourage people to get involved in the delivery of library services			
Develop a volunteer strategy and increase the use of volunteers to extend the reach of the service through a range of activities	Increased number of volunteers	S Increase in number of volunteer hours in library service.	Volunteer Centres Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity and others
Explore options to develop Library Access Points with local communities, particularly in areas where there are 'cold spots' in library provision.	Library Access Points in current 'cold spots' in the authority	S Visitor numbers and issues.	Town and Parish Councils Schools Community Centres C.B.C. teams.
Ensure people have opportunities to tell us what they think about the service			
Engage with the whole community to seek views on the development of services (users, non-users, under represented groups) through a Library Engagement Strategy.	Library offer shaped by local needs and communities Active groups promoting their local library.	S Increase in library visitor numbers and issues. Maintain customer satisfaction.	C.B.C. Communications.
Establish library groups, for example in support of library plans for new buildings.		S Residents survey Visitor numbers and issues.	

*S – short term (2012 – 2015), M - medium term (2015- 2018), L – Long term (2018 onwards)

Priority 2: Be accessible when, where, and how people want				
Actions/Requirements	Outcomes and Timescales		How will it be measured	Who will we work with
Keep our libraries open and find new places and ways to offer services				
Look for opportunities to create modern libraries when town centres are being redeveloped (town centre planning) e.g. Dunstable	Plan and develop replacement libraries	M	Opening of alternative libraries.	CBC Economic Development and Physical Regeneration
Capital investment to revitalize and modernize library buildings	Attractive, modernised buildings	S	Increased usage. Customer surveys.	C.B.C. Assets Management.
Work with other agencies and C.B.C departments to explore opportunities for co-location and shared premises	Efficient use of C.B.C. & economies of scale. Increased visibility of C.B.C. in communities	M	Efficiency savings on buildings / overheads etc.	C.B.C. and external partners C.B.C. Assets Management.
Provide better services for people who find it hard to get to or use a library				
Review Housebound / Library Link Service across the authority to provide efficient 'joined up' service.	Maintain service standards to housebound users but deliver service at a lower cost	S	Customer satisfaction surveys. Reduced service delivery cost.	Potentially Volunteer Centres, Bedfordshire Rural Community Charity.
Enhance the online Virtual Library				
Improve Virtual Library service and plan with implementation of Arena software.	More interactive functions / personalisation.	S	Increase in usage of the Virtual Library	Shared Hub Service.
Be better at telling people what the library offers				
Develop a core offer and service wide standards.	Increase in take up of library services.	S	Increase in usage. Maintain customer satisfaction	C.B.C. Communications and Human Resources.
Develop marketing and communication strategy to include e-mail communication/ database of users / newsletters / social media.	Increase in take up of library services. Staff ownership of performance targets.	S	Increase in visitor numbers, issues & People's Network uptake. Reduction in postage costs.	C.B.C. Communications.
Set local performance targets in consultation with those who deliver them.	Increase in take up of library services.	S	Increase in usage	Library Managers, Operations and Service Teams.

*S – short term (2012 – 2015), M - medium term (2015- 2018), L – Long term (2018 onwards)

Priority 3: Help children, young people, and adults to improve skills and learn			
Actions/Requirements	Outcomes and Timescales	How will it be measured	Who will we work with
To read and enjoy reading			
Revise Reading Strategy to reflect priority work with hard to reach groups, adult learners and people from the more deprived wards.	Contribute to educational attainment and literacy levels through case studies.	S Increase in MOSAIC representation profiles of people from more deprived backgrounds.	Library Service Teams Adult Learning Providers FE Colleges.
Establish new partnerships to support language and literacy development for all ages.	Partnership agreements.	S Increase in number of learning sessions delivered by partners.	Learning Providers.
Maintain Central Bedfordshire's high performance in Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) for Children by providing resources to promote challenge.	Children maintain reading / literacy levels across summer period.	S Numbers of children taking up / completing challenge.	Schools.
Expand magazine collections in libraries and other materials which engage people with lower literacy levels by re-prioritising resources funding.		S Take up of 6 Book Challenge / number of visits by literacy groups to libraries.	Library Managers Service Development Teams.
Encourage more book borrowing by improving promotion and display via staff training plan.		S Increased issues.	
To develop skills that will help them get a job			
Service Development Plan focused on delivery of skills and learning priorities.	Contribute to Increased skills and literacy levels.	S Number of skills and learning events / numbers participating. Use of Generic Learning Outcomes to provide qualitative data.	Learning and Skills Organisations Adult Learning Providers Learning Partnership.
Work with other agencies / services to develop learning and skills delivery partnerships, develop service level agreements.		S Number of Service Level Agreements in place.	Learning and Skills Providers and networks Learning Partnership.
Positive activities and interventions to ensure the engagement of children, young people and adult learners by development plan priorities re-aligned.	Contribute to Increased skills and literacy levels.	S Number of learning events / numbers participating. Use of Generic Learning Outcomes to provide qualitative data.	Children's Centres Schools.
Provide a range of opportunities for work experience and volunteering in libraries.	Contribute to increase in skills base and young people's employability.	S Number of volunteer hours in libraries. Establishment of apprentice posts in service.	Volunteer Centres.

*S – short term (2012 – 2015), M - medium term (2015- 2018), L – Long term (2018 onwards)

Priority 4: Modernise the service, and find new ways to provide better services and save money				
Actions/Requirements	Outcomes and Timescales		How will it be measured	Who will we work with
Ensure the service is run efficiently and provides value for money				
Undertake a review of business processes.	Customer focused service.	S	Efficiency savings. Maintain customer satisfaction.	C.B.C. IT Library Managers, Operations and Service Teams.
Review staffing structure, roles and levels to deliver strategy via a staffing review and Learning and Development Plan.	New staffing structure in place.	S	Success against priorities in library strategy.	C.B.C. Human Resources.
Improve stock selection and delivery arrangements. Review of supplier selection and direct stock delivery options.	Streamlined stock processes.	S	Efficiency savings. Efficiency savings on buildings, overheads etc	Hub Services C.B.C partners
Use new technology like self-service and e-books				
Install RFID self-service technology in libraries through capital investment of £450,000.	Savings in staffing. Improvements in customer experience.	S	Efficiency savings on staffing achieved. Maintain customer satisfaction.	Hub Service C.B.C. Procurement C.B.C. IT C.B.C. Assets Management.
Develop an e-book lending service following emergence of appropriate library model via Virtual Library development plan.	24 hour library service. Improved access to service.	S	Number of issues.	Hub Services.
Continue to develop a cost efficient, structurally robust and secure IT network. Inclusion in CBC IT project planning.	Efficiencies on cost of library network. Improved access speeds for users.	S	Efficiency savings on network.	C.B.C. IT Hub Service.
Continued investment in modern PCs, Wi-Fi and IT equipment for public use. Inclusion in CBC IT project planning.	Improved IT access for C.B.C. residents.	M	Increased uptake of People's Network PCs.	C.B.C. IT Hub Service.

*S – short term (2012 – 2015), M - medium term (2015- 2018), L – Long term (2018 onwards)

Priority 5: Deliver a tailored library service to local people			
Actions/Requirements	Outcomes and Timescales	How will it be measured	Who will we work with
Meeting local priorities and needs			
Development of individual library 'road maps' based on the findings of the consultation and community profiles to inform the direction for each library in the authority.	Services delivered from library buildings fit needs of local communities.	S Library visits / issues. Maintain customer satisfaction.	Library Managers C.B.C. Customer Insight Team.
Increase take up of library services particularly in the groups identified through community profiles and under-represented groups via an engagement strategy.	Library service meets needs of vulnerable / disadvantaged.	S Increase in MOSAIC groups that are currently under-represented.	C.B.C. Customer Insight Team.
Review opening hours to ensure they meet the needs of the community within existing budgets.	Library opening hours reflect community needs.	S Increase in library visits.	Library Managers Library users/non-users.
Explore options to 'zone' activities in libraries in order to meet the needs of different user groups at different times by reviewing the layout of buildings.	Buildings meet diverse needs of community.	S Increase in library visits.	Library Managers C.B.C. Capital Assets.

*S – short term (2012 – 2015), M - medium term (2015- 2018), L – Long term (2018 onwards)

Appendix B

Central
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Amphill Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Amphill Library is in a Victorian building, originally the Board Room of the Amphill Poor House. It was converted into a library in 1994. The library is in need of internal and external decoration. The library has older shelving at a height no longer recommended by library suppliers. There is little space currently for activities, particularly children's activities.



People and Place

Amphill Library is a very well used community library with a high number of active users and a high visitor count. It is the best performing library of the community libraries. It also has the joint second largest use of the People's Network in the authority.

Amphill attracts comfortably well off older people and industrial workers and early to middle aged parents who are heavily involved with their children's education. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average.

Amphill does not have any significant social deprivation issues. There is a higher proportion of people aged **65yrs+** than the Central Bedfordshire average and user analysis showed that there may be opportunities to market the service more to this age group as they are currently under represented.

The population is set to grow from **11,810** in 2009 to **12,280** in 2014 and **600** new dwellings are planned.

‘Libraries for the Future’ consultation – what people said

59% of respondents wanted the library to be a ‘Family Library’ followed by **17%** for an Information and Learning Library. The consultation also reiterated an interest in DVDs for loan.

‘Big Library Debate’ – what people said

Most participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for more lending materials (**18%**) and improvements to opening hours (**13%**), there was also support for DVDs to borrow (**40%**).

Short term improvements

Amphill is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users and community participation. This could involve the use of volunteers in outreach, and smaller scale activities.

The building would benefit from a refresh of decoration and layout and this could be achieved through installing RFID self service facilities and minor capital works. The community could be actively involved in this process. There is the potential to create a ‘read and relax’ area to improve the ambiance of the building.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community.

A pilot DVD collection should be trialled.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours (particularly after refurbishment) for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of Facilities Management and the local community.

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Barton Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Barton Library is a single storey building opened in 1973. The building received some remedial repair in December 2012 and was refurbished internally in 2005. It is in an excellent site at the centre of village and close to shops. Barton Library is in a 'cold spot' for Central Bedfordshire Services so could provide a venue for C.B.C. outreach activities.



People and Place

Barton Library is functioning well within the community with the second highest number of active users of the community libraries and has a good visitor count.

The library largely attracts comfortable retired older people and some middle aged parents with school age children. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. There is a very active Children's Centre in the village.

There are no significant social deprivation issues in Barton.

There is generally a higher age profile in Barton than the Central Bedfordshire average but the library is underrepresented by older retired couples living in areas for retired people.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

47% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **20%** for an Information and Learning Library. The consultation also revealed an interest in DVDs for loan.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Most participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support

for the introduction of toilets (**28%**) and improvements to opening hours (**15%**), there was also support for the introduction of e-mail newsletters (**17%**). **27%** wanted more choice of lending materials.

Short term improvements

Barton is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users and community participation. This could involve the use of volunteers in outreach, smaller scale activities etc. Older people are under-represented in overall library usage. Greater co-ordination is required with children's activities and other children's providers on the village.

The installation of a public toilet could be examined with the option of using capital funding in the future.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community.

A pilot DVD collection should be trialled.

The installation of RFID service technology will provide an opportunity to review space layout.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. C.B.C. may also wish to examine Barton as a potential outreach location for information about Council Services. This could be examined with cross council departments, partners and the local community.

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Biggleswade Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Biggleswade Library is situated in a building built in 1968 about a quarter a mile from the town centre. It is in need of external refurbishment. Internally the ground floor appears crowded and requires a new layout. The situation of the library outside the immediate town centre is a challenge when considering how to increase usage, although a free car park opposite the building is of benefit to visitors. The library may feature in town re-development plans in the future.



People and Place

Biggleswade has the highest number of issues of the current area libraries and average use of the Peoples Network Internet PCs. Biggleswade has fewer visitors than Flitwick Library or Houghton Regis Library.

Biggleswade Library serves villages to the east and west of Central Bedfordshire with higher proportions of users coming from Northhill and Langford. It has a relatively large catchment area which may be due to the fact that it is the largest shopping centre in the east of the authority and also has additional facilities such as a JobCentre Plus. Northhill ward has a 'comfortable' older demographic with no significant deprivation or unemployment issues. Stotfold and Langford ward has no significant deprivation or unemployment issues.

The library largely serves 'comfortable' older people and families with school age children. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. Biggleswade has some areas of social need including a higher proportion of people aged **65+yrs** living in income deprived households, more children receiving free school meals, more people with no access to a car, more young people aged **18-24** unemployed and, lower levels of skills and qualifications than the Central Bedfordshire average. The library needs to extend its reach to some of these groups and ensure that they are reflected in the library demographics.

The population is set to grow from **16,420** in 2009 to **17,910** in 2014.

‘Libraries for the Future’ consultation – what people said

45% of respondents wanted the library to be a ‘Family Library’ followed by **20%** for a ‘Read and Relax’ Library. The library was deemed to be least successful at providing access to advice and support services like CAB, council services or advice about jobs.

‘Big Library Debate’ – what people said

Most participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for improvements to opening hours (**21%**), more choice of lending material (**16%**), provision of toilets (**36%**) and **11%** for self service.

Short term improvements

Biggleswade is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users, extend the user base, increase the number of activities and develop greater community participation. Older people with low incomes are under-represented in overall library usage as are people with other social requirements and this needs to be addressed. Greater community engagement could involve the use of volunteers in outreach, activities, IT sessions etc.

The installation of RFID, self service technology provides the opportunity to examine internal refurbishment and re-modelling and there is an empty garage area attached to the building which could be developed to house a heritage collection for Central Bedfordshire.

A feasibility study of the building is required in order to consider the long term capital investment required which is dependent on town planning. This will impact on the possible future use of the garage space and options for housing a Central Bedfordshire Heritage Centre.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community, especially as the Thursday closure is unpopular. As a larger library Sunday opening could be explored as a ‘family day’.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of Facilities Management and the local community.

Long term opportunities

Town centre planning may result in possible new locations for the library in the future; this will require careful consideration in respect of capital investment in the building in the short to medium term.

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Dunstable Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Dunstable Library is situated in a two storey building opened in 1966. Externally the library looks very tired. The library is part of larger Council owned building, the adjoining offices are now vacant and require significant external maintenance. Dunstable Library currently forms part of a town centre re-development scheme, which is incorporated within the Dunstable Town Centre Masterplan and adopted in March 2011 by the Council.

The biggest challenge is the continuing need to maintain a building, which is looking increasingly in decay. Due to the town centre re-development it is financially prudent to carry out only essential repair work although this does not provide an enticing customer experience. The library is also in need of internal decoration and maintenance.



People and Place

Dunstable Library has the second highest number of active users within the authority and the highest visitor count. It has the joint second largest use of the People's Network Internet PCs in the authority. The library engages well with teenagers and has a good reputation for its work in this area (Dunstable has a higher proportion of teenagers than the Central Bedfordshire average).

The library is largely used by 'comfortable' families and older people and larger families living in deprived areas. Children aged **5-14** are more likely to be library users than average. The library is not reaching older families on moderate incomes and older people on low incomes. Dunstable Library has a wide reach across the authority and extends as far as Ampthill and Millbrook in the north and Studham in the south. This may be because of the presence of Central Bedfordshire College and an Asda supermarket nearby. Caddington, Kensworth and Tottenhoe are areas of high usage.

Dunstable has some social issues including unemployment rates, benefit claimants, numbers of unskilled workers, children living in income deprived houses, residents with no access to a car, all of which are higher than the Central Bedfordshire average. Dunstable also has a number of areas that are amongst the most deprived in Central Bedfordshire. Levels of qualifications are lower than the Central Bedfordshire average for both adults and children.

Dunstable has a similar ethnic breakdown as the rest of Central Bedfordshire however in 2010/11 there were **1,504** applications to the UK Border Agency (UKBA) from postcodes in Central Bedfordshire and a cluster of these applicants were in the Dunstable area.

The population is set to grow from **35,120** in 2009 to **36,670** in 2014.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

42% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **23%** for a 'Read and Relax' Library. Respondents thought the library was best at providing a place to learn and study and least successful at providing advice and support services. Many respondents were in favour of café facilities and were in favour of zoning of activities.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for more lending materials at **18%** and improvements in opening hours, **11%**. **44%** of respondents wanted public toilets and **17%** advice and information services.

Short term improvements

Dunstable is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users, visitor footfall, issues, advice and help surgeries, learning opportunities and, community participation. The planning of a new library offers opportunities for engagement with all sectors in the community – users, non-users, partners and stakeholders.

The building would benefit from a modest refresh of decoration and layout and this can be achieved through the installation of RFID, self service terminals which requires a re-modelling of space and minor refurbishment works.

There is the potential to create a 'read and relax' area to improve the ambiance of the building with refreshments. Options to look at zoning of activities and/or time slots for activities should also be examined.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community. The Thursday morning closure is unpopular with users. Sunday opening could also be considered due to the presence of the nearby Asda Store which is open on Sundays.

The library is considered to be successful at providing a place to learn and study and this should be extended to provide support for residents, particularly in view of the social requirements within the town. Joint working with the Central Bedfordshire College and other learning providers should be explored.

Work with teenagers and young people should continue and be extended.

Long term opportunities

The Dunstable Town Centre Masterplan offers an opportunity to provide a new library within the proposed redeveloped town centre. This provides opportunities to examine joint library facilities with Central Bedfordshire College and to share these facilities with the Council and other local organisations.

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Flitwick Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Flitwick Library is situated in a single storey building opened in 1982. Some internal and external decoration is required with the carpet and shelving especially in need of replacement. Flitwick Town Council have a small office to the front of the building. There is a large community room for hire, which is close to an existing Community Hall.



People and Place

Flitwick Library has the highest number of active users of the area libraries and the second highest visitor count for the size of library.

The library largely serves 'comfortable' older people and families with school age children. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. The library draws from a wide area in the mid part of the authority and includes areas such as Cranfield, Aspley Guise, Houghton Conquest, Barton and Chalgrave. There is a hotspot of users from Westoning, Flitton and Greenfield. This may be related to the Tesco store in close proximity. None of these wards have significant deprivation or unemployment issues.

Flitwick itself does have some deprivation issues and these are not reflected in the current usage of the library. In particular, the library is not currently attracting older people and families living in social housing.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

51% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **19%** for an Information and Learning Library. The library was deemed to be least successful at providing access to advice and support services.

‘Big Library Debate’ – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for improvements to opening hours (**18%**) and more choice of lending materials (**17%**). **27%** of participants were interested to receive e-mail alerts and **18%** for more information and advice sessions.

Short term improvements

Flitwick is a well-used library but there is potential to increase users, visitor footfall, issues, advice and help surgeries, learning opportunities and, community participation. The planning of a new library offers opportunities for engagement with all sectors in the community: users, non-users, partners and stakeholders.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community. Wednesday closing is unpopular with library users. Sunday opening or late night opening could be examined due to the presence of a Tesco Store in the vicinity and the train station.

The building would benefit from a modest refurbishment, decoration and layout review which can be achieved through re-modelling works required to support the implementation of RFID self service technology and minor capital investments.

There is the potential to create a ‘read and relax’ area to improve the ambiance of the building with refreshments. Options to look at zoning of activities and/or time slots for activities should also be examined. Shelving should be replaced as this could be moved to any new library building.

The meeting room generates income for the library service but duplicates the nearby Community Hall. A feasibility study of the use of this room needs to be undertaken to decide on best future usage.

Explore ways of targeting the Virtual Library facilities to local commuters using the railway station as a way of accessing library services.

Long term opportunities

Flitwick Library is subject to town centre re-development plans which involve the potential re-location of the library to a new site. This provides opportunities to examine joint library facilities with learning providers and partner organisations as Flitwick has been highlighted as a geography in Central Bedfordshire that is a cold spot for services.

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Houghton Regis Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Houghton Regis Library is part of a new complex opened in 2009 with a health centre. The library has a medium sized meeting room for which there is high demand. Internally and externally the library is in excellent condition.



People and Place

This library has the highest visitor count for an area library and is greater than Biggleswade or Flitwick libraries. Of the area libraries Houghton Regis Library lend least books and have the lowest number of active users. Houghton Regis Library has a large and varied number of activities taking place on the premises and good relations with the Town Council.

The library serves large families living in deprived areas, low income families and individuals and families in cramped new homes. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. The library is not reaching people in social accommodation designed for older people.

Houghton Regis has a number of social issues amongst which are higher than Central Bedfordshire averages of unemployed people, benefit claimants, unskilled workers, children in income deprived households, older people live in income deprived households, residents with no access to a car. Levels of qualifications are lower than the Central Bedfordshire average.

Four of Houghton's ten lower super output areas are in the most deprived **40%** in England. Two of these are in the least deprived **10%** in England.

Houghton Regis has a more diverse population of people from ethnic minorities as the whole of Central Bedfordshire (**9%** not 'White' British). There is a higher proportion of young children (**under 11**) and fewer older people than the Central Bedfordshire average.

The population is set to grow from **16,670** in 2009 to **17,290** in 2014.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

55% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **13%** for an Information and Learning Library. The library was deemed least successful at providing access to advice and support services like CAB, council services or advice about jobs.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for improvements to more choice in lending materials (**10%**). There was interest in DVD loan collections.

Short term improvements

Houghton Regis Library is a very well-used library but there is still potential to increase users, visitor footfall, issues, advice and help surgeries, learning opportunities and, community participation. There is a potential to improve usage by older people through outreach.

Investment in RFID self service technology.

The library provides a wide range of activities and events which are valued by the community. There is an opportunity for extending this work with the support of volunteers in areas such as IT sessions, children's activities etc.

The meeting room is in demand and a review of charges to internal CBC partners should be considered.

Houghton Regis has good opening hours compared to other Area Libraries but there is a potential to examine Saturday afternoons / Sunday afternoon and late evenings (in conjunction with the Health Centre). Changes in opening hours should be consulted on by the community.

Medium/long term opportunities

The Library is part of a joint building with the health centre and the possibility of closer working between the two could be considered in respect of health information and support, activities for the elderly etc.

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Leighton Buzzard Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Leighton Buzzard Library is situated in a three storey building opened in 1979. There is a theatre and bar area on the second floor. Adult Skills and Community Learning have classroom space on the first floor. The building requires some internal refurbishment, particularly in the lobby area and stairwell. The biggest challenge this building faces are the high running costs.



People and Place

Leighton Buzzard Library has the highest number of active users in the authority and the highest number of issues. It has good usage of the People's Network Internet PCs.

The library mainly attracts 'comfortable' and high income families with children and prosperous older people. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. More deprived groups are under-represented in this demographic (one Leighton ward is the fifth most deprived in Central Bedfordshire). While the town does not have significant deprivation issues it is known that a higher proportion of children receive free school meals than the Central Bedfordshire average. The library is not currently attracting transient single people, older people on social housing estates and, less mobile older people.

The library catchment is quite wide and extends from Husbourne Crawley in the north-east to Studham in the south-east. The ward area of high usage is Heath and Reach and Stanbridge. This ward does not have significant unemployment or deprivation issues although the ward does have an older age profile than Central Bedfordshire as a whole.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

48% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **19%** for an Information and Learning Library. The library was deemed least successful at providing advice and support services like CAB, council services or advice about jobs.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. **20%** of respondents wanted improvements in opening hours. **38%** of respondents wanted self service technology and **33%** supported income generation initiatives.

Short term improvements

Leighton Buzzard is a well-used library but there is potential to increase extend the user base, increase the number of activities and provide advice and learning opportunities, particularly to socially excluded groups and older people with low incomes. Greater community engagement could involve the use of volunteers in outreach, activities, IT sessions etc.

The building would benefit from a decoration and review of space usage and layout and this can be achieved through the implementation of RFID self service technology and additional capital funding. The community should be encouraged to be involved in this process. There is the potential to create a 'read and relax' area to improve the ambiance of the building with refreshments.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community as the Friday morning closing is unpopular with users.

Greater integration and working between the theatre and library could be investigated in order to drive down the building costs.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours (particularly after refurbishment) for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of cross Council departments, partners and the local community.

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Potton Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

The Library is situated in the main Market Square surrounded by shops and small businesses. It is in the Clock Building and was converted to a library in 1956. Some internal and external maintenance is required. The second floor is leased by the Town Council. The biggest challenge for this building is the amount of available floor space in the building and the lack of disabled access to the second floor.



People and Place

Potton Library has a relatively low number of active users.

The library mainly serves 'comfortable' families with children and older people. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. There is no significant social deprivation in Potton. The building is used by the Children's Centre when the library is closed.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

63% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **13%** for a 'Read and Relax' Library. DVDs would enhance service provision.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Most participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. **21%** of participants wanted an increase in opening hours. **33%** of participants were supportive of income generation ideas and for advice and information.

Short term improvements

Potton is a valued community library but there is potential to increase active users and community participation. This could involve the use of volunteers and partnerships with the surrounding businesses.

Extension of opening hours could be examined in consultation with the community.

A pilot DVD collection should be trialled.

The installation of RFID service technology will provide an opportunity to review space and layout.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours (particularly after any refurbishment) for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with cross Council departments, partners and the local community.

The use of the second floor should be reviewed in view of the lack of space in the current library.

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Sandy Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Sandy Library was opened in 1965 and extended and refurbished in 2008-09. There are some issues with external maintenance. The library has a medium sized meeting room which is very well used.



People and Place

Sandy has the highest occupancy rate of the People's Network PCs in the authority but has the the lowest visitor count of the area libraries.

Sandy Library is mainly used by 'comfortable' families with school age children, families from deprived areas and some prosperous older people. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. The library is not currently reaching parents in later or middle age and older people in social housing.

The reach of the library includes surrounding villages with high usage coming from Moggerhanger, Blunham, Tempsford and Northill. These areas do not have significant deprivation or unemployment issues.

Sandy has some deprivation issues with unemployment rates and rates of older people living in income deprived households being higher than the Central Bedfordshire average.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

50% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **16%** for a 'Read and Relax' Library. The library was deemed to least successful at providing access to advice and support services like CAB, council services or advice about jobs. There was interest in better provision of DVDs.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for improvements to opening hours (**15%**). There was strong support (**75%**) for the re-introduction of the mobile library service.

Short term improvements

Sandy is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users, visitor numbers, extend the user base and develop greater community participation. Older people with low incomes are under-represented in overall library usage as are older parents. Greater community engagement could involve the use of volunteers in outreach and activities such as IT sessions etc.

RFID self service technology provides the opportunity to examine internal refurbishment and re-modelling. There is the potential to create a 'read and relax' area to improve the ambiance of the building with refreshments. A retail approach to the entrance and window area needs consideration to make the library look more welcoming. Options to look at zoning of activities and/or time slots for activities should also be examined.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community.

The meeting room is in demand and a review of charges to internal CBC partners should be considered.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of cross council departments, partners and the local community.

Medium/long term opportunities

The Virtual Library facilities could be targeted to commuters as a way of accessing library services given the close proximity of the railway station.

Potential to expand C.B.C. customer service pod services and CBC outreach in Sandy.

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Stotfold Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Stotfold Library is in a leased single storey building shared with the Town Council offices. Externally the building looks rather tired – there are no building maintenance issues. The biggest challenge for this library is the limited space available in the library and the potential increase in population.



People and Place

Stotfold has a relatively low number of active users for a smaller community library but a significantly higher visitor count than either Toddington or Pottton libraries.

Stotfold typically caters for 'comfortable' families with children and older people. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average.

Stotfold has no significant deprivation issues.

The population of Stotfold and Langford is predicted to increase from **12,000** in 2009 to **14,030** in 2014.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

64% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **16%** for 'Read and Relax' Library. The library was deemed least successful at providing access to advice and support services. A DVD collection would be appreciated as a stock addition.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. **50%** of respondents wanted e-mail alerts and newsletters.

Short term improvements

Stoffold is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users and community participation. This could involve the use of volunteers in outreach, smaller scale activities, IT sessions etc. Promotion of the service to older people should be improved.

The building would benefit from a refresh of layout and this can be achieved through the installation of RFID self service technology. Small capital works could be considered to improve external appearance.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours (particularly after refurbishment) for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of cross Council Departments, the Town Council and the local community.

Medium/long term opportunities

A building feasibility study is required to explore the options for the existing building to deal with planned growth.

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Shefford Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Shefford Library is in a leased building opened in 1990. Significant cracks to the floor have recently been identified and are currently being monitored. The building looks very dated internally and requires some interior and exterior refurbishment. The site does not have high visibility but benefits from being on the main route between the car park and the nearby supermarket.

This libraries greatest challenge is the cost of the rental for the number of active users.



People and Place

Shefford has the third number of issues of the five area libraries. People's Network Internet PC use is average.

The library largely serves 'comfortable' older people and families with children. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. The library does not elderly and young single people on low incomes. Shefford has some moderate deprivation issues.

The library reach includes neighbouring villages of Haynes, Clophill, Southill, Henlow, Meppershall and Stondon. Deprivation and unemployment are not issues in these areas.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

70% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **15%** for an Information and Learning Library. The library was deemed least successful at providing access to advice and support services.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. There was support for more lending materials (21%) and improvements to opening hours (8%).

Short term improvements

Shefford is a well-used library but there is potential to increase active users, footfall, learning activities and community participation. This could involve the use of volunteers in outreach and smaller scale activities such as IT sessions. Promotion of the service to older people and groups with some social needs should be improved.

A building feasibility study is required to explore the options on the existing building and the lease arrangements need to be reviewed.

The building would benefit from a refresh of decoration, layout and use of space and this can be achieved through implementation of RFID self service technology and minor capital works. The community could be involved in this process. There is the potential to create a 'read and relax' area to improve the ambiance of the building with refreshments.

Opening hours should be examined in consultation with the community.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours (particularly after any refurbishment) for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of cross Council departments, partners and the local community.

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Toddington Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The library today

Toddington Library is a two storey building on the village green. Some internal and external redecoration is required. A small office is situated at the back of the library but this does not have any toilet facilities thus limiting its use.



People and Place

Toddington has a relatively low number of active users and the biggest challenge for this library is to drive up the number of users and develop a community engagement strategy to increase visitor numbers.

The library largely serves 'comfortable' families and older people. There is a slight over representation from families from poorer social backgrounds. Children aged **0-14** are more likely to be library users than average. The female age profile shows fewer users aged **20-35** and **50-59** compared to the overall population of Central Bedfordshire.

Toddington does not have any significant deprivation issues.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

68% of respondents wanted the library to be a 'Family Library' followed by **11%** for a 'Read and Relax' Library. DVDs would enhance service provision. The library was deemed least successful at providing advice and support services like CAB, council services or advice about jobs.

'Big Library Debate' – what people said

Many participants wanted the library to remain as it was although there was some fear of library closures which may have prompted this response. **18%** wanted improvements in opening hours, **35%** wanted to see more advice and information sessions and **25%** the use of volunteers in the service.

Short term improvements

Toddington is a valued community library but there is potential to increase active users and community participation. This could involve the use of volunteers.

Extension of opening hours could be examined in consultation with the community.

A pilot DVD collection should be trialled.

The installation of RFID self service technology will provide an opportunity to review space and layout.

The building has the potential to be used out of hours (particularly after any refurbishment) for small groups, surgeries and advice sessions. This should be examined with the help of cross council departments, partners and the local community.

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Library Cold Spots and Library Access Points (LAPs) Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

Cold Spots

Library usage is lowest in the areas of Cranfield, Marston Moretaine, Lidlington, Aspley Guise and Woburn matching areas in the authority which have barriers in access to a broader range of Council services.

There are currently libraries in all communities with a population of over **5,000** people in Central Bedfordshire. Toddington is the exception with a population of **4,370**.

Areas of Central Bedfordshire with a population of over **3,000** without a library are: Caddington (**3,750**), Cranfield (**5,210**), Henlow (**4,400**), Langford (**3,180**), Marston Moretaine (**4,580**) and Maulden (**3,150**).

The Libraries for the Future consultation invited local communities to come forward if they wished to explore Library Access Points in their villages / towns.

People and Place

Central Bedfordshire is a predominantly rural with over **50%** of the population living in rural areas. The population will increase by **42,900** by 2031 as will the age of the population. By 2021 **19%** will be classed as older people as compared to **15%** in 2010.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

The consultation asked if there was an interest in supporting Library Access Points. **84%** of respondents said they would support this initiative. There was no difference in the levels of support by age groups.

Opportunities to develop the service

As a result of the consultation two parishes came forward and there is an opportunity to pilot Library Access Points in these areas.

The Library Service has access to some S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) finance which may be used to seed some Library Access Points (LAPs).

Taking the service forward

In order to take this initiative forward the service has identified the following priorities:

- A requirement to produce a mini LAP strategy to include aims, objectives, review processes, Service Level Agreements (SLA) etc.
- Feasibility studies for the two parishes that offered themselves as pilots for LAPs
- Investigation into the options that will exist from S106 and CIL funding

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Library Link and Housebound Services Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

The service today

The Library Link service is based in Flitwick Library. Housebound Services are run from all libraries.

Library Link has a mobile 'walk on' vehicle and a transit van. The service utilises a mix of volunteers and library staff. The mobile is due for replacement in Autumn 2014; the cost of a replacement vehicle will be in the region of £100,000.

Usage

The Library Link and Housebound Service is available free to all elderly and disabled people who cannot get to the library or have no one to get books for them. This encompasses frailty, disability, mobility, visual impairment and other limiting health conditions. The service is also available to carers who may be classed as 'housebound' due to the nature of their caring duties.

People and Place

Central Bedfordshire is a predominantly rural authority with over **50%** of the population living in rural areas. The population will increase by **42,900** by 2031 and, the population will age, by 2021 **19%** will be classed as older people as compared to **15%** in 2010.

Opportunities to develop the service

Many library services currently work in partnership with the voluntary and third sector to deliver services to people in their own homes. This should be explored further with potential partners; the service already has a successful history of working with volunteers.

Other partnership opportunities may exist with Village Care schemes, Community Transport schemes, C.B.C. transport strategy and fleet policy and links with Social Care Services and Health.

The 'Libraries for the Future' Consultation recognised that the service is expensive to run and requires a further detailed review. The biggest challenge is to maintain the quality of a service, with increasing customer numbers whilst reducing costs.

Taking the service forward

It is recognised that the service requires a fundamental review in order to meet the challenges of cost and growth in demand. A review of the service will be undertaken in 2013-14.

Central
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Virtual Library Road Map

Find out more at:

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

Virtual Library

The Virtual Library is online library run by both Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Libraries, with elements that shared by the Luton Cultural Services Trust delivering libraries in Luton.

The Virtual Library is accessible at: www.centalbedfordshire.gov.uk/libraries, seven days a week, 24 hours a day. The Virtual Library aims to replicate in the online environment all the services and facilities that a library user would find in a physical library building.

Usage

In 2010-11 the site received **8,970,623** page hits a **12.25%** increase on the previous year. **35%** of item renewals and **27%** of item reservations are now done online by Central Bedfordshire library members. The most popular areas of usage on the site are local information and the library catalogue. More detailed information about the use of the Virtual Library by customers is required in order to evaluate the service.

People and Place

Central Bedfordshire is a predominantly rural authority with over **50%** of the population living in rural areas, the population will increase by **42,900** by 2031 and, the population will age by 2021 when **19%** will be classed as older people compared to **15%** in 2010.

'Libraries for the Future' consultation – what people said

The provision of downloadable e-books was seen as an important key area for development. The current issues with e-publishing and the withdrawal of some of the main national publishing houses from library products may make this a more difficult problem for the service to resolve.

'The Big Library Debate' – what people said

Market research carried out in the summer of 2012 revealed that while there was good usage of the Virtual Library but there was still limited knowledge of the service and the online offering.

Opportunities to develop the service

New Axiell 'Arena' software will be introduced in 2011/12 that will enable the Library Service to further develop the Virtual Library functions to include blogs, wikis etc. The aim is to increase interaction with users, create online communities of interest and refresh the look and feel of the site.

Central Bedfordshire Council Channel Shift programme will present opportunities to create targeted e-mail news communications to library users.

Taking the service forward

The following areas have been identified as priorities for the Virtual Library:

- A proactive marketing campaign to increase awareness, particularly in rural areas and service 'cold spots'. This could include the use of volunteers to promote the Virtual Library and e-mail communication opportunities provided by the Channel Shift programme
- A greater understanding of the use of the Virtual Library by Central Bedfordshire customers and the need for more statistical information
- The development of a modernised 'front end' with the institution of the Arena software to provide an improved customer environment online

Central Bedfordshire will need to work closely with its partners in Bedford Borough Libraries and Luton Cultural Trust in order to take these priorities forward.

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Appendix C

Summary of the Library Services Review

Background

1. The aims of the service wide review which commenced in Summer 2011 were to ensure:
 - (a) delivery of our statutory duties whilst providing a high quality service in the most effective manner, in order to meet local needs
 - (b) making the best use of assets and increasing their impact for the benefit of all
 - (c) the service is flexible, adaptable and fit for the future
 - (d) the service is accessible to all, supports the most vulnerable and individuals as required throughout their lives
2. The review was taken forward through five key work streams which are summarised below. Further information is available on each element online at <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/default.aspx>

Market Research – ‘The Big Library Debate’

3. The Big Library Debate (BLD) conducted in summer 2011 enabled the Council to undertake comprehensive market research with residents and stakeholders through workshops, focus groups, town centre events and questionnaires in order to gain a better understanding of what people valued, what they thought the service could do better and what we ought to start doing. 11% of respondents were from non service users. In order to ensure the views of non service users were represented The Research Unit (TRU) were employed to facilitate focus groups of service users and non users in order to gain a greater understanding of why people don't use libraries and what we need to do to engage with them.
4. In total over 2,000 people participated in the BLD, with the key findings being:
 - (a) it is clear that libraries are valued by both regular users and non-users but there has been a strong fear of closure
 - (b) what is most important is the lending of books, CDs, DVDs and spoken word material and friendly, helpful and informative staff
 - (c) recognition of challenges around opening hours, fines, range of stock/choice, uncomfortable study spaces, dated buildings and slow IT
 - (d) the service must promote and market itself better

- (e) recognition that there is real opportunity for libraries to become community hubs and maximise the use of space in libraries
- (f) positive views on libraries working with partners and integrating services such as council services and employment and careers advice
- (g) differing age groups tend to place a different emphasis on which services are most important
- (h) some conflict between those who don't want the service to change and those who believe it has to
- (i) residents tend to favour Council stewardship of libraries, but are not averse to greater private or voluntary and community sector involvement, including a greater use of volunteers
- (j) concern about the loss of the mobile library service and what opportunities there may be for greater outreach work in rural areas

Information Gathering and Needs Analysis – Understanding our Existing and Future Customers

5. In order to underpin the market research a comprehensive needs analysis was undertaken in order to understand which residents are and aren't using the service, levels of satisfaction and how the service compares to other library authorities in areas such as usage and value for money. From this it is clear that:
- (a) Issues and footfall has increased by (14% and 13% respectively between 2009/10 and 2010/11) and over the same period there has been increases in item requests, enquiries, use of PCs and children engaged in the summer reading challenge (over 5,900 young people). There has been a 133% increase in housebound users and we expect this figure to have increased again in 2011/12 with the withdrawal of the mobile library service. Number of registered users has declined by 1% between 2009/10 and 2010/11
 - (b) 93% of adults and 90% of children are satisfied with the service they receive, this compares very well with other Library Services with Bedford Borough at 88.6%, Luton 85% and Milton Keynes 91.2% for adults¹. Maintaining this level of satisfaction is a MTP measure. Achieving this during a period of modernisation will be a challenge
 - (c) Children aged 0-14yrs are much more likely to be users than average, along with Mosaic groups of industrial workers, higher income families concerned with education and careers and early and middle aged parents likely to be involved in their children's education

¹ Source: CIPFA 2010-11 Public Library Statistics Actuals.

- (d) Those groups less likely to be engaging with library services are people living in social accommodation designed for older people, less mobile people, people living in brand new residential developments and mixed communities with a large number of single people in the centre of small towns. Males aged 15-59 yrs are less likely to be users than average and 65% of library users are female
- (e) The service needs to take into account to a greater extent geographical areas of deprivation and pockets of unemployment as the service is not as successful in engaging these groups in certain localities such as Biggleswade and Flitwick
- (f) The rural nature of the population, particularly in respect of the cessation of the mobile library service means that there are a number of specific areas of low library usage namely Cranfield, Marston Moretaine, Lidlington, Aspley Guise and Woburn
- (g) Central Bedfordshire libraries issue 5,914 items per 1,000 population. This compares with issues per 1,000 population for English library services as a whole (4,885), English Unitary Authorities (5,084) and English Counties (5,296)²

Reviewing Best Practice and Options for Future Service Delivery

6. In 2010 the Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals published guidance for local councils which said that a good public library service would deliver against key policy objectives and provide:
- “a positive future for children and young people
 - a fulfilling life for older people
 - strong, safe and sustainable communities
 - promotion of local identity and community pride
 - learning, skills and workforce development
 - health improvements and well-being
 - equality, community cohesion and social justice
 - economic regeneration”

² Source: CIPFA 2010-11 Public Library Statistics Actuals

7. A Further report “Sharper Investment for Changing Times” by the then Museums, Libraries & Archives Council (MLA) published in 2010 made a number of recommendations:
 - review services against community need
 - look at ways of co-locating and integrating services
 - look at new approaches to technology to free staff from routine tasks
 - use volunteers to supplement core services
 - work more effectively and efficiently to respond to local needs across local authority boundaries
 - look at new ways of developing and delivering services
 - set up structures to allow people to become more involved in the planning and delivery services and engage more effectively with communities
 - reach out to new audiences and non users by targeted marketing, strong community outreach, working in partnership
 - develop a workforce that can deliver change

8. Red Quadrant were employed to support the review of best practice, delivery models and potential governance arrangements to work with the Council. Work was undertaken to look at a range of delivery models as briefly summarised below :

9.
 - (a) Commercial Provider: Outsourcing library service provision to a private company, through open procurement. Could involve transferring staff, buildings, stock and IT equipment. Decisions would be required around who owns buildings, who owns stock, what would be the impact on the shared hub arrangements. There are only a small number of commercial providers delivering library services and as such they are largely untested and the successes unknown at the current time

 - (b) Trust Model: Could involve establishing a new trust, buying into an existing trust across geographical boundaries or bundling with other Council services in forming a new trust. The library service on its own is considered too small to form a trust but the service could continue to look at alternative delivery models with other Council services as opportunities arise in the future

 - (c) Devolution of Service: Devolve the running of the smaller libraries to town and parish councils. Could involve transferring staff and buildings to town and parish councils. Stock, ICT and infrastructure would remain the responsibility of the Council in order to move the stock round Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough and Luton as shared resources. Libraries are also part of a national network with material being able to be lent anywhere in the UK

- (d) Libraries delivered by other organisations: For example Further Education or Higher Education providers delivering services to students and the general public
 - (e) Libraries as a hub for Council Services: Could involve the co-location of Council services, with staff delivering from library premises e.g. as customer service points
 - (f) Virtualisation of Libraries: Over time look to close existing libraries, significantly enhance offer online virtual library offer and any physical services delivered through community based settings in shared spaces, developing a real community network
10. The conclusion from the analysis of options is that the Council should continue to run the library service but seek to deliver maximum efficiency savings through investing in technology, reviewing staffing structures and backroom processes to enable a greater focus on front line activities. The service should actively look at opportunities for more collaborative working and as other Council services look at delivery options the library service should position itself to be considered as part of a delivery model for a host of services.

Public Consultation – ‘Libraries for the Future’

11. Public consultation commenced in October 2011 and ran for 12 weeks through to January 2012. The consultation document explicitly stated that the Council was not looking to close libraries but recognised that in the future not all libraries would be the same. It also provided the opportunity for residents, partners and stakeholders to comment on the emerging service wide ambitions

The ambitions being tested were around:

- Involving local people in making decisions about their library
 - Being accessible when, where, and how people want
 - Helping children, young people, and adults to improve skills and learn
 - Recognising that to do this we will need to modernise our service, find new ways to provide better services and save money
12. Six models of future libraries were proposed to enable people to visualise what their local library could look like in the future, these were around:
- A community space
 - Computers and technology learning
 - Information and learning
 - Family library
 - Advice and access to other services
 - A place to read and relax

13. 2,200 people responded via completed questionnaires and 50 people took part in more detailed focus group discussions and a stakeholder workshop with the key findings being:
- (a) Clear endorsement of the service wide direction of travel contained within the ambition statements, but there remains a fear of library closures
 - (b) Concerns that saving money will compromise the library service and that the service cannot be run by volunteers
 - (c) Tensions remain between those who believe the service must change and those who want to keep it as it is
 - (d) Challenges around opening hours, choice of stock, uncomfortable study spaces, dated buildings and need to zone spaces were re-iterated. Along with support for refreshment facilities
 - (e) The “Family” type of library was the preferred model for every library, but by varying degrees. It was a particular focus for smaller libraries, with larger libraries also emphasising the importance of the “Read and Relax” library and “Information and Learning” library
 - (f) There are real differences by age with those over 30yrs favouring the “Family” library and those under 30 yrs favouring the “Read and Relax, Information and Learning and Technology” library types. Differences also exist by economic activity type and emphasise the importance of local libraries targeting local need
 - (g) 84% respondents said they would support Library Access Points in communities not currently served by libraries

Review of Systems, Staffing, Processes and Modernisation programme

14. An external review of the shared hub service funded by the MLA Council identified that whilst continuing the shared service arrangements with Bedford Borough Council and Luton Cultural Trust provides a cost effective solution for Central Bedfordshire Council there are a number of areas where significant efficiencies can be made. Efficiency savings will be driven through changes to processes, operating practices, reduction in hub staffing, introduce self service RFID technology, consider supplier stock selection and direct stock delivery to libraries and migrating the existing libraries network infrastructure for Central Bedfordshire libraries from Bedford Borough to Central Bedfordshire Council
15. A review of the existing staffing structure has concluded that in order to deliver the new Library Service Strategy and required efficiency savings it is necessary to reconfigure library staffing. Whilst the commitment remains to have a service delivered by paid staff running the core service the introduction of new technology will lead to a reduction in overall post numbers. In order to mitigate this for the last 9 months the service has been carrying vacancies in order to minimise the impact on staff

16. A review of the Library Link Service to housebound users has identified that whilst the service is hugely valued by customers with the demand for services already increasing and with the increasing ageing population, it is necessary to find less costly ways of delivering the service. A further detailed review of this service area will be undertaken in 2013. Any changes must result in their being little or no impact on customers
17. The Library Service must continue to review all business processes and procedures in order to deliver efficiency savings. Staff will be empowered and supported via ongoing training and development as part of our commitment to continuous improvement to identify areas of waste along with potential solutions

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Meeting: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 06 March 2012

Subject: Local Transport Plan Scheme Prioritisation Framework

Report of: Cllr Ken Matthews, Executive Member for Sustainable Communities

Summary: The report proposes the adoption of a scheme prioritisation framework to determine the funding priorities for the authority through the Local Transport Plan.

Advising Officer: Gary Alderson, Director of Sustainable Communities

Contact Officer: Ben King, Principal Transport Planner

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. The Local Transport Plan (referred to as the LTP) is an important tool in helping to deliver the priorities contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Transport is a means to an end and the LTP will help assist in providing the capacity for economic growth, cater for an increase in demand to travel, help improve the health and well being of the population, increase access to education and other local services, and address general quality of life issues.

Financial:

2. The authority receives an annual capital settlement from Central Government through the LTP, split between funding to be spent on integrated transport measures and maintenance of the network.

In addition, the LTP forms a framework through which to secure additional investment in transport through developer contributions, bidding for other pots of funding and a basis upon which to lobby for investment from transport operators.

The prioritisation framework will help to determine the allocation of this funding.

Legal:

3. No direct implications.

Risk Management:

4. The following risks have been identified:

- Failure to discharge statutory requirements.
- Reputational damage through not addressing community /local needs.

These risks will be monitored and mitigating action taken.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. No direct implications.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out in conjunction with the production of the Local Transport Plan, and both the LATPs and the Scheme Prioritisation Framework sit within the LTP suite of documents.

The EIA concluded that the LTP's focus on providing realistic travel options and alternatives to car based travel to increase accessibility especially to employment and training opportunities, education, healthcare provision and leisure facilities, would have positive impacts across all groups, particularly disabled people and those in deprived areas without access to a car.

In addition the LTP also addresses the worst impacts of traffic, namely pedestrian accidents, air and noise pollution and busy roads cutting through communities which disproportionately affect deprived areas and people facing social exclusion.

As part of the development of each LATP, detailed consideration is given to these issues at a local level and further public consultation will be undertaken to ensure that all relevant issues are identified. In addition, the Scheme Prioritisation Framework reflects these requirements and helps to ensure that priority is given to proposals which will have the most beneficial impact.

Public Health:

7. Not applicable.

Community Safety:

8. The scoring criteria within the Scheme Prioritisation Framework includes reference to reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured, giving greater weighting to schemes which will assist in this regard. However, dedicated road safety schemes will not be prioritised through this framework as they are funded and prioritised through a separate process.

Sustainability:

9. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was produced for the LTP, whilst a number of the schemes included within the LTP programme will promote less reliance on use of the car and increase use of sustainable transport modes, which in turn reduce congestion, air pollution, and CO2 emissions.

Procurement:

10. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:-

- 1. Recommend to the Executive that the Scheme Prioritisation Framework be approved as a tool for determining the shape of the Local Transport Plan programme.**

Local Transport Plan

11. The Central Bedfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) was adopted by the authority on 1 April 2011. It covers the 15 year period up until March 2026 and contains a series of objectives and related targets and indicators against which to determine the success of the authority in improving transport infrastructure and service provision.
12. The LTP details strategic areas of intervention which form a framework for investment, to not just achieve the objectives of the Plan but also ensure that transport contributes towards the wider priorities of the authority.
13. The authority is awarded an annual settlement from the Government through which to deliver the Local Transport Plan. This is split between Integrated Transport Block funding and funding for maintenance schemes, as detailed in the table below:

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Integrated Transport	£1.26m	£1.34m	£1.34m
Maintenance	£3.86m	£3.92m	£4.00m

Local Area Transport Plans

14. A series of Local Area Transport Plans (LATPs) sit underneath the LTP. These apply the principles established within the LTP at the local level taking into account local issues and travel patterns. The LATPs and the timetable for them to be produced are included in the table below:

2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Arlesey & Stotfold,	Amptill and Flitwick,	Chiltern,
Biggleswade & Sandy,	Marston Vale,	Potton, and
Dunstable & Houghton Regis, and	Shefford, Silsoe & Shillington, and	Haynes & Old Warden.
Leighton Linlade.	Toddington, Harlington and Barton-le-Clay.	

15. Funding available to the authority through the Integrated Transport Block has been allocated between these areas in the LTP, with an emphasis on the main growth areas of the authority which form first tranche of LATPs to be delivered.
16. Extensive consultation has been undertaken on the LATPs (to supplement that undertaken on the development of the Local Transport Plan itself) with local residents, stakeholders, town and parish councils, as well as Central Bedfordshire Council Members all targeted. Details of this process are included in Appendix A.

Need for Prioritisation

17. The production of each Local Area Transport Plan has highlighted a number of issues which need to be addressed in each locality and a number of schemes through which the authority may do so. However due to the financial constraints on the authority it is not possible to deliver all of these schemes through the LTP budget. As a consequence of this it is necessary to prioritise certain schemes for delivery.
18. Therefore in order to prioritise schemes in the fairest and most transparent manner, a Scheme Prioritisation Framework has been developed against which every scheme put forward by officers, members or the general public will be assessed. It will form a sound evidence base upon which to make informed decisions on future investment. A copy of the Framework is provided in Appendix B.
19. Each scheme put forward will be incorporated into a "long list" of schemes for each LATP area. Scores will then be awarded against a set of criteria within the Framework to determine the relative ranking of the schemes.
20. Those which appear at the top of the rankings would be funded through the LTP itself, whilst those further down the list would be funded by other sources of funding as and when it becomes available from S106 contributions, a Community Infrastructure Levy or any other pots the authority may utilise.
21. A number of schemes will be exempt from the Prioritisation Framework. The schemes must be capital schemes relating to the provision of actual infrastructure, as opposed to revenue schemes which involve ongoing costs and relate to maintenance and the operation of services for example. Specific road safety improvements are also omitted as these are funded separately.

The Scoring Framework

22. The scoring framework is based upon best practice and Government Guidance on scheme prioritisation, with scores awarded in the three main areas of policy compliance, deliverability and value for money.
23.
 - **Policy compliance:** Focuses on each schemes' ability to help deliver the objectives of the Local Transport Plan, and if they are referred to in other adopted Plans such the Town and Parish Council Plans or Town Centre Masterplans for example.

The inclusion of these scoring criteria ensure that those schemes which best adhere to the direction of the authority in transport terms are prioritised, whilst there is integration between Plan making at difference levels of governance.
24.
 - **Deliverability:** Incorporates the areas of affordability, risk and support for particular schemes to reflect the ability of the authority to implement the scheme both financial and in engineering terms, in the context of the public and political desire for specific interventions.

The criteria enable the authority to rule out those measures which are unfeasible to deliver whilst showing a direct correlation between feedback on consultation and the prioritisation of schemes.
25.
 - **Value for Money:** Contains criteria concerning the integration of schemes, the coverage of schemes and the revenue implications of providing each scheme.

Such criteria reward those initiatives which will maximise the benefits of their implementation through integration with other initiatives, encouraging travel by various different modes of travel and which do not place a cost burden on the authority in terms of future maintenance requirements.

Conclusion and Next Steps

26. The authority will not be bound by the results generated from the application of Framework. Instead they are intended to be used as a guide to inform decision making and improve the authority's transparency and accountability of investment in local transport schemes.
27. In cases it is suggested that the authority should deviate away from the results of the Framework however, sound justification would be required to ensure that each scheme is judged on an equitable basis.
28. Following the endorsement of the Scheme Prioritisation Framework, it will be applied to the development of the programme for the second tranche of Local Area Transport Plans and on subsequent LATPs.
29. The "Long List" of schemes will be refreshed on an annual basis to enable new schemes to be considered and a ready made list of prioritises to be available to the authority as and when additional funding becomes available.

30. The LATPs will be assessed by the Executive in March for approval and the comments of the Committee on the Scheme Prioritisation Framework made available to Executive Members for consideration.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Local Area Transport Plans Consultation Process

Appendix B – Scheme Prioritisation Framework

Background papers:

Local Transport Plan

Appendix A

Local Area Transport Plans Consultation Process

Overview of Process

As part of the development of the Local Area Transport Plans, a comprehensive programme of engagement with a range of local stakeholders and the public was undertaken by Central Bedfordshire Council.

The outcomes of these activities have provided evidence to inform the development of the Plans. This appendix outlines the methods of engagement used and how these have been addressed in the development of the LATPs.

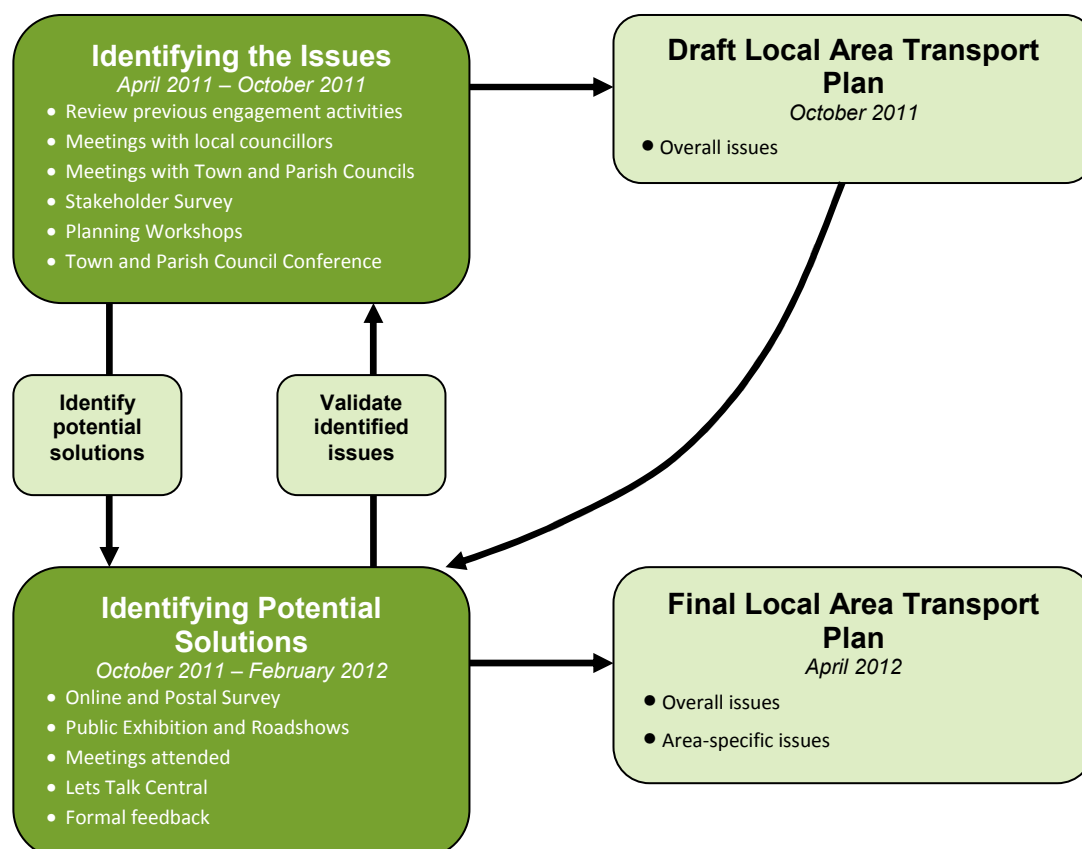
Engagement on the LATPs was split into two key phases:

- Identifying the Issues, and
- Identifying Potential Solutions.

As the figure below shows, “Identifying the Issues” influenced the development of the Draft Local Area Transport Plans, and “Identifying Potential Solutions” influenced the development of the Final Local Area Transport Plans.

In practice, issues and solutions were identified at both stages by many stakeholders and members of the public, all of which have informed the development of the documents.

Process of engagement in the Local Area Transport Plans



Identifying the Issues

The methods used through which to identify the main issues of importance to local stakeholders are detailed below:

- **Review of Previous Engagement Activities:** A review was undertaken of responses to previous engagement activities to identify the local transport issues that had been raised historically in each LATP area. This included reviewing responses to the consultation on the Local Transport Plan, and reviewing Town and Parish Plans where they had been developed.
- **Meeting with Local Councillors:** A meeting with local Central Bedfordshire Councillors to brief them on the LATPs and identify their key issues relating to all transport modes and journey purposes.
- **Meeting Town and Parish Councils:** A meeting was held with Town and Parish Councils to brief them on the Plans, and provide an opportunity to discuss issues relating to all transport modes and journey purposes. Individual meetings were held with specific Town and Parish Councils upon request.
- **Stakeholder Survey:** The authority sent out a survey form to key local stakeholders including bus and rail operators, requesting their input on identifying local issues in the area.
- **Planning Workshops:** The Central Bedfordshire Transport Strategy Team attended two planning workshops held for the local community at Priory House, Chicksands. This gave the team the opportunity to discuss issues related to planning and transport with local stakeholders.
- **Town and Parish Council Conference:** An LATP stand was manned at the Town and Parish Council Conference at Priory House, Chicksands on. This gave the team the chance to discuss transport issues with representatives of Town and Parish Councils from across Central Bedfordshire.
- **Other correspondence:** The Transport Strategy Team also received correspondence from local stakeholders and local people on transport issues in their area.
- **Identifying Potential Solutions Stage:** Comments were also received on local transport issues as part of the identifying potential solutions stage. These comments were used to validate issues identified in the Draft Local Area Transport Plan, as well as identifying new issues to be included.

Identifying Potential Solutions

The methods used through which to identify the potential solutions to the issues identified in the LATPs are detailed below:

- **Online and Postal Survey:** An online and postal survey was undertaken to give additional opportunities to identify local transport issues, and also to identify what solutions would enable these issues to be resolved. These included general improvements, as well as more specific schemes the respondents would like to see delivered.

The online survey was available during the formal consultation period on the Draft LATP between 24 October 2011 and 3 February 2012. Postal surveys were made available at local libraries and Town and Parish Council offices.

- **Public Exhibitions and Roadshows:** A series of public exhibitions and roadshows were held throughout the Plan areas, so that members of the public could come and talk to members of the Transport Strategy Team about the LATP, and identify the improvements that they would like to see. Exhibitions and roadshows that took place in this area were:
- **Meetings Attended:** Members of the Transport Strategy Team also attended meetings with a number of stakeholders to discuss potential solutions that they would like to see in the LATP.
- **Let's Talk Central:** Central Bedfordshire Council's discussion website, Let's Talk Together, was available for people to leave their comments on transport improvements that they would like to see in their area. This was available during the formal consultation period on the Draft LATP between 24 October 2011 and 3 February 2012.
- **Formal Feedback:** Members of the public and stakeholders also had the opportunity to email, write, and telephone their comments on the Draft LATP, and what transport improvements they would like to see, as part of the consultation into the Draft LATP. This was available during the formal consultation period on the Draft LATP between 24 October 2011 and 3 February 2012.
- **Identifying the Issues Stage:** Some comments were also received on local transport issues as part of the identifying the issues stage. These comments were used to inform the development of the Final Local Area Transport Plans, including the programme.

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Appendix B

Local Transport Plan Scheme Prioritisation Framework

Scheme Name: **INSERT SCHEME NAME**

POLICY COMPLIANCE (40% of total marks)

This section highlights the extent to which schemes adhere to the key policy areas of the authority in terms of transport investment, notably the objectives of the Local Transport Plan, which are closely related to the wider priorities of Central Bedfordshire Council as set out in the Sustainable Communities Strategy 2010 - 2031, and linkages with other adopted plans.

Policy Area	Score of Scheme	Scoring Range	Notes	Justification of Score
Local Transport Plan Objectives	Increase the ease of access to employment by sustainable modes	0	Scoring Range 1 (positive impact), 0 (neutral)	Does the scheme cater for commuting trips and provide an alternative to the car?
	Reduce the impact of commuting trips on local communities	0		Does the scheme help to reduce congestion, vehicles travelling on inappropriate routes, or reduce the total volume of traffic in urban areas?
	Increase the number of children travelling to school by sustainable modes of transport	0		Is the scheme in the vicinity of a school or part of the safer routes to school network?
	Improve access to healthcare provision by the core health service	0		Does the scheme help improve access to doctors surgeries, health centres or hospitals further afield?
	Ensure access to food stores and other local services particularly in local and district centres	0		Does the scheme help improve access to retail provision? Extra credit should be given for where this includes sustainable modes of travel.
	Enable access to a range of leisure, cultural and tourism facilities for residents and visitors alike by a range of modes of transport	0		Does the scheme provide a leisure activity in its own right or improve access to provision elsewhere?
	Enable the efficient and reliable transportation of freight	0		Does the scheme help freight pass through the authority and reduce delays?
	Encourage the movement of freight by sustainable modes	0		Does the scheme help to transfer freight from the road to rail or other forms of distribution?
	Minimise the negative impact of freight trips on local communities	0		Does the scheme reduce the conflict between freight and other road users and local residents? What number of HGVs are actually causing problems? Need to quantify level of issue.
	Reduce the risk of people being killed or seriously injured	0		The potential for a scheme to actually increase road safety concerns should also be considered in this respect. Scoring should be based upon data where available.
Sub Total	0	Maximum = 10		

Adopted Plans	Is the scheme included in any adopted plans, including Town and Parish Plans?	0	Scoring Range 1 (yes), 0 (no)	Includes masterplans, Development Plans, neighbourhood plans.
Sub Total		0	Maximum = 1	
Policy Compliance Total		0	Maximum = 11	

DELIVERABILITY (28% of total marks)

This section assesses the ability of individual schemes to actually be delivered. Some schemes may have so many issues associated with them that they are not realistic initiatives to be taken forward and the criteria below therefore try and draw out which potential areas of investment can be taken forward without undue constraints.

Policy Area	Score of Scheme	Scoring Range	Notes	Justification of Score
Affordability	Can the scheme be delivered within the LTP budget?	0	Scoring Range 1 (Yes), 0 (No)	See LTP for allocation
	Can other sources of funding be levered in as contributions?	0	Scoring Range 1 (Yes), 0 (No)	Is there S106, Government grants or other potential funding which can be used to part subsidise the scheme?
Sub Total		0	Maximum = 2 (If score <1 then include penalty of -20)	

Risk	What is the level of risk associated with delivery?	0	Scoring Range 1 (Low risk), 0 (Some risks which can be managed), -1 (High risk)	Are there potential problems which may arise during design, construction or with local opposition which may arise for example?
Sub Total		0	Maximum = 1	

Support	Is there public support for the scheme?	0	Scoring Range 1 (mainly support), 0 (no opinion / mixed opinion), -1 (mainly oppose)	Determined by the level of feedback received from the consultation process
	Does the scheme have Member backing?	0		Determined by the level of feedback received from the consultation process
	Do stakeholders support the scheme?	0		Determined by the level of feedback received from the consultation process
	Are there partners on board who support the scheme financially?	0		Relates to organisation who will actually help to deliver a scheme
Sub Total		0	Maximum = 4	

Deliverability Total 0 Maximum = 7

Appendix **B**

Local Transport Plan Scheme Prioritisation Framework

Scheme Name: **INSERT SCHEME NAME**

Appendix B

Local Transport Plan Scheme Prioritisation Framework

Scheme Name: **INSERT SCHEME NAME**

VALUE FOR MONEY (28% of total marks)

This section highlights the extent to which the schemes proposed will provide value for money, a key consideration in ensuring that the budget available to the authority maximises the impact of transport investment in the local area.

Policy Area	Score of Scheme	Scoring Range	Notes	Justification of Score
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Integration	Does the scheme contribute towards improving the integration of different modes of transport?	0	Scoring Range 1 (yes), 0 (no)	Entails the development of transport hubs and improvements to nodes in the various transport networks.	
	Will the scheme help to maximise the benefit of other schemes in the local area?	0		Does the scheme build upon previous improvements in an area or can it be delivered in conjunction with other work / maintenance already programmed?	
Sub Total		0	Maximum = 2		

Coverage	What size of area would benefit from the scheme?	0	Scoring Range 4 (authority wide benefit), 3 (town wide benefit), 2 (part of town, village wide benefit), 1 (individual street benefit), 0 (few beneficiaries)	Does the scheme have a knock on effect over a small or wide area? What number of people are likely to benefit?	
Sub Total		0	Maximum = 4		

Revenue	Would the scheme generate new funds or result in increased revenue costs for the authority ?	0	Scoring Range 1 (generate some new funding), -1 (generate ongoing costs to the authority)	Would the provision of new car parking generate funds for the authority or would the construction of a new bus shelter increase maintenance costs for example?	
Sub Total		0	Maximum = 1		

Value for Money Total 0 Maximum = 24

Total (out of 25) 0

Policy Compliance = 0

Deliverability = 0

Value for Money = 0

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Meeting: Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date: 06 March 2012
Subject: Draft Work Programme 2011–2012 & Executive Forward Plan
Report of: Richard Carr, Chief Executive
Summary: The report provides Members with details of the current Committee work programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.

Contact Officer: Jonathon Partridge, Scrutiny Policy Adviser (0300 300 4634)
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The work programme of the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee should contribute to all 5 Council priorities, and will specifically support those 2 directly related to the work of the Sustainable Communities directorate, being managing growth effectively and creating safer communities.

Financial:

n/a

Legal:

n/a

Risk Management:

n/a

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

n/a

Equalities/Human Rights:

n/a

Community Development/Safety:

n/a

Sustainability:

n/a

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **That the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee:**
 - (a) **considers and approves the attached work programme, subject to any further amendments it may wish to make;**
 - (b) **considers the Executive Forward Plan; and**
 - (c) **considers whether it wishes to add any further items to the work programme.**

Work Programme

1. The work programme is kept regularly under review by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and is amended as appropriate, which also includes adding further items during the course of the year if Members so wish and capacity exists. The current work programme is attached at **Appendix A**.
2. Also attached at **Appendix B** is the latest version of the Executive's Forward Plan so that Overview & Scrutiny Members are fully aware of the key issues Executive Members will be taking decisions upon in the coming months. Those items relating specifically to this Committee's terms of reference are shaded in grey.

Conclusion

3. The Committee is requested to consider the attached work programme and make any further amendments it considers necessary.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2011 – 12.

Appendix B: The latest Executive Forward Plan.

Appendix A

Draft Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2011 – 2012

Ref.	Indicative Overview & Scrutiny Meeting Date	Report Title	Report Description	Comment
1.	10 April 2012	Gypsy & Traveller DPD Officer: Richard Fox, Head of Development Planning & Strategic Housing	To consider the approach to setting a gypsy and traveller DPD for the whole of Central Bedfordshire and the site selection criteria.	Executive: TBC
2.	10 April 2012	Development Brief: Brewers Hill Road Sites, Dunstable Regeneration Officer: Andy Lewis, Major Projects Officer	This document is technical guidance for the purpose development management. This report is to consider the outcome of consultation and to support recommendations to the Executive.	The date for this item depends upon the dates for formal public consultation and will be clarified closer to the meeting. Executive: 15 May 2012
3.	10 April 2012	Planning Obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Officer: Mark Saccoccio, LDF North Team Leader	To receive a report that outlines the legislative changes and associated process Central Beds Council is involved in; the plan to consult stakeholders and communities and to agree when the input of elected members would be most beneficial.	This item is provisional only Executive: Not applicable
4.	10 April 2012	Minerals & Waste Core Strategy Officer: Lester Hannington, Principal Minerals & Waste Planning Officer	To consider the draft Minerals & Waste Core Strategy and the results of consultation with Members prior to consideration by Executive.	Executive: 15 May 2012

NOT PROTECTED

Note: an item on the Committee's work programme will be received at each meeting.

Last Update: 17 February 2012

Ref.	Indicative Overview & Scrutiny Meeting Date	Report Title	Report Description	Comment
5.	10 April 2012	Medium Term Objectives	To consider the Council's draft Medium Term Objectives relating to Sustainable Communities	Executive: TBC
6.	10 April 2012	Q3 Budget Monitoring Report Officer: Brighton Fong, Senior Finance Manager	To receive the Q3 capital and revenue budget positions for the Sustainable Communities directorate.	Executive: 27 March 2012
7.	10 April 2012	Q3 Performance Report Officer: Iain Melville, Performance Improvement Manager	To highlight key quarter 3 performance for the Sustainable Communities directorate	Executive: 27 March 2012

NOT PROTECTED

Note: an item on the Committee's work programme will be received at each meeting.

Last Update: 17 February 2012

**Central Bedfordshire Council
Forward Plan of Key Decisions
1 March 2012 to 28 February 2013**

- 1) During the period from **1 March 2012 to 28 February 2013**, Central Bedfordshire Council plans to make key decisions on the issues set out below. “Key decisions” relate to those decisions of the Executive which are likely:
- to result in the incurring of expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant (namely £200,000 or above per annum) having regard to the budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
 - to be significant in terms of their effects on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the area of Central Bedfordshire.
- 2) The Forward Plan is a general guide to the key decisions to be determined by the Executive and will be updated on a monthly basis. Key decisions will be taken by the Executive as a whole. The Members of the Executive are:

Cllr James Jamieson	Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Executive
Cllr Maurice Jones	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources
Cllr Mark Versallion	Executive Member for Children’s Services
Cllr Mrs Carole Hegley	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing
Cllr Ken Matthews	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities – Strategic Planning and Economic Development
Cllr Brian Spurr	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services
Cllr Mrs Tricia Turner MBE	Executive Member for Economic Partnerships
Cllr Richard Stay	Executive Member for External Affairs

- 3) Those items identified for decision more than one month in advance may change in forthcoming Plans. Each new Plan supersedes the previous Plan. Any person who wishes to make representations to the Executive about the matter in respect of which the decision is to be made should do so to the officer whose telephone number and e-mail address are shown in the Forward Plan. Any correspondence should be sent to the contact officer at the relevant address as shown below. General questions about the Plan such as specific dates, should be addressed to the Committee Services Manager, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford SG17 5TQ.
- 4) The agendas for meetings of the Executive will be published as follows:

Meeting Date	Publication of Agenda
15 March 2011	03 March 2011
05 April 2011	24 March 2011
31 May 2011	19 May 2011
12 July 2011	30 June 2011
23 August 2011	11 August 2011
4 October 2011	22 September 2011
15 November 2011	3 November 2011
6 December 2011	24 November 2011
10 January 2012	22 December 2011
14 February 2012	2 February 2012
27 March 2012	15 March 2012
15 May 2012	3 May 2012

Central Bedfordshire Council

Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 March 2012 to 28 February 2013

Key Decisions

Date of Publication: 14 February 2012

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
1.	Review of Central Bedfordshire Council Library Service -	Approval is sought to: A: agree the Central Bedfordshire vision for the Libraries Service; and B: agree a sustainable model of future Library Service provision.	27 March 2012	Throughout May - July 2011 a series of focus groups and workshops with service users and partners and stakeholders. From October 2011 – January 2012 a formal consultation on the vision and potential service delivery models.	Emerging vision, core service offer and aspiration Libraries Service Review Report Outcomes from consultation process Equality Impact Assessment	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Kate McFarlane, Head of Community Regeneration & Adult Skills Email: kate.mcfarlane@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5858
2.	Community Safety Partnership Priorities and the Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2012-2013 -	To adopt the Community Safety Partnership Priorities and the Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2012-2013.	27 March 2012	Strategic Assessment & Partnership Plan will be considered at the Community Safety Partnership Executive meeting in November/December, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Local Strategic Partnership.	Strategic Assessment Priorities & Community Safety Partnership Plan 2012-2013	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Jeanette Keyte, Community Safety Manager Email: jeanette.keyte@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5232

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
3.	Leighton Buzzard Town Centre Planning and Development Briefs -	To endorse the planning document for two sites as Interim Technical Guidance for Development Management Purposes.	27 March 2012	Statutory consultation procedure to be carried out in Autumn 2011.	Leighton Buzzard Town Centre sites Planning and Development Briefs	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Jon Cliff, Head of Economic Development and Physical Regeneration Email: jon.cliff@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4373
4.	Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring -	To consider quarter 3 budget monitoring report.	27 March 2012		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
5.	Alternative Future Provision of the Pupil Referral Unit -	To consider an alternative provision free school - Pupil Referral Unit	27 March 2012		Report	Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Pete Dudley, Assistant Director Children's Service Email: pete.dudley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4203
6.	Accommodation for the Secondary Age Pupil Referral Unit -	To decide on the accommodation to support the free school Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) bid.	27 March 2012		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer Peter Burt, MRICS, Head of Property Assets Email: peter.burt@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5281

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
7.	All Age Skills Strategy and the Skills Role of the Local Authority -	Approval is sought to agree the All Age Skills Strategy for Central Bedfordshire and to agree on the future role of the local authority in the skills agenda.	27 March 2012	<p>The draft All Age Skills Strategy was created following a series of workshops, focus groups and interviews with partners, stakeholders and individuals, during June and July 2011. From early August to late October 2011, a formal 13 week consultation on the draft strategy was held. A follow up stakeholder workshop was held in mid October.</p> <p>Across November and December 2011, a series of one to one meetings, structured interviews and workshops will be held internally to establish the existing skills role of the local authority and to seek views on the potential future role. In January 2012 external stakeholders will be consulted with, again through workshops and interviews to examine Central Bedfordshire wide skills governance arrangements.</p>	<p>All Age Skill Strategy All Age Skills Strategy Consultation Report Report on the future role of the local authority in the skills agenda, with options analysis and implementation plan for the preferred option Equality Impact Assessment</p>	<p>Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Kate McFarlane, Head of Community Regeneration & Adult Skills Email: kate.mcfarlane@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5858</p>

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
8.	The Future of Special Schooling in the South of Central Bedfordshire -	To consider the responses to the statutory notices to merge Hillcrest Community Special School and Glenwood Community Special School to create a single area special school for pupils with complex educational needs (Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) with additional needs) ages 3-19, and make a recommendation as a consequence of this process having been completed.	27 March 2012		Report	Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Pete Dudley, Assistant Director Children's Service Email: pete.dudley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4203

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
9.	Award of the Housing Responsive Maintenance and Void Repairs Contract -	To award the housing responsive maintenance and void repairs contract.	27 March 2012		Report	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Basil Quinn, Housing Asset Manager Performance Email: basil.quinn@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5118
10.	Implementation of the School Organisation Plan: New School Places Programme 2011/12 - 2016/17 -	The Council's statutory duty regarding sufficiency of school places and implementation of the identified need in the previously published school organisation plan. The report will set out each proposed new place project and outline the source of funding.	27 March 2012	Consultation with Governors and parents in areas where new schemes apply.	Report	Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Pete Dudley, Assistant Director Children's Service Email: pete.dudley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4203

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
11.	Local Area Transport Plan -	To endorse the second round of the Local Area Transport Plans (LATPs) (which form part of the Local Transport Plan adopted in April 2011), together with endorsement of the Scheme Prioritisation Framework used to prioritise schemes within the LATPs for delivery in the programme for future years spend.	27 March 2012	Public consultation between October 2011 – February 2012.	Report	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Ben King, Principal Transport Planner - Transport Strategy Team Email: ben.king@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4824

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
12.	Development Brief for Site Allocations Policy HA10 - Land at Stanford Road, Shefford -	To endorse the development brief as technical guidance for Development Management purposes.	27 March 2012	<p>The preparation of the development brief has been subject to two rounds of public consultation. The purpose of the first consultation was that residents and other stakeholders could engage in the process to help shape the brief at an early stage. A public exhibition was held in the town and over 100 people attended the event.</p> <p>The draft development brief is subject to a 4-week public consultation exercise (13 January – 10 February 2012).</p> <p>A copy of the details of the consultation undertaken and analysis of the comments received has been compiled into a consultation report and will be updated once the current consultation is complete.</p>	<p>Report Development Brief together with any proposed changes Copy of the Consultation Report</p>	<p>Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Carry Murphy, Principal Planning Officer Email: carry.murphy@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4374</p>

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
13.	Stotfold Heritage -	A twelve week public consultation is proposed to gather the community response to this private investment proposal and invite alternative usage to be expressed.	27 March 2012		Report Investors prospectus	Cllr Ken C Matthews Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Liz Wade, Assistant Director Economic Growth and Regeneration Email: liz.wade@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6288
14.	Draft Medium Term Plan and Plan Priorities -	To agree the draft Medium Term Plan and Plan priorities for consultation.	27 March 2012		Draft Medium Term Plan and Priorities	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources, Chairman of the Executive and Leader of the Council Comments by 01/03/12 to Contact Officer: Alan Fleming, Project Director Email: alan.fleming@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6968
15.	Local Lettings Policy to Rural Exception Sites in Central Bedfordshire -	To agree the Local Lettings Policy to allocate affordable housing to Rural Exception Sites in Central Bedfordshire.	15 May 2012		Report	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 14/04/12 to Contact Officer: Hamid Khan, Head of Housing Needs Email: hamid.khan@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5369

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
16.	Medium Term Plan and Priorities -	To recommend to Council the Medium Term Plan and Priorities.	15 May 2012	To be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Central Bedfordshire Together in April 2012.	Medium Term Plan and Priorities	Chairman of the Executive and Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 18/04/12 to Contact Officer: Alan Fleming, Project Director Email: alan.fleming@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6968
17.	Brewers Hill Road Sites, Dunstable Regeneration -	To adopt/endorse the plans for the Brewers Hill Road sites as a Supplementary Planning Document or endorsement as Interim Technical Guidance for Development Management Purposes.	15 May 2012	Statutory consultation procedure to be carried out in January/February 2012 using exhibitions, meetings, presentations and questionnaires.	Brewers Hill Road sites, Dunstable Planning and Development Brief	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources, Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 14/04/12 to Contact Officer: Peter Burt, MRICS, Head of Property Assets or Andy Lewis, Major Projects Officer Email: peter.burt@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5281 or andy.lewis@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5526

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
18.	Minerals and Waste Core Strategy -	To agree the recommended changes to the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy before submission to the Secretary of State.	15 May 2012	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All Parish and Town Councils were notified by letter or email. 2. Individuals who had expressed an interest from previous consultations were notified by email or by letter. 3. Adjacent Parish, Town, District and County Councils were notified by email or by letter. 	Report of the results of consultation on soundness of the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (Plan for Submission) Appendix summarising representations received, and recommended changes to the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy.	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 14/04/12 to Contact Officer: Lester Hannington, Principal Minerals and Waste Planning Officer Email: lester.hannington@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6219
19.	The Approach to Central Bedfordshire Council Parking -	To consider how Central Bedfordshire Council manage parking across the district, recognising the needs of shoppers businesses, residents and new developments.	3 July 2012	The Strategy has been through a full public consultation before coming back to the Executive for approval.	Report	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Comments by 02/06/12 to Contact Officer: Basil Jackson, Assistant Director Highways & Transport Email: basil.jackson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6171

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
20.	Capital Investment for the Channel Shift Programme -	To approve the Capital Investment for the 'Construct and Implementation' phase of the Channel Shift Programme	3 July 2012		Full Business Case for the Channel Shift Programme	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 02/06/12 to Contact Officer: Trisha Chapman, Programme Manager Email: trisha.chapman@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4657
21.	Stotfold Heritage -	To facilitate the create of a new community and heritage attraction in Stotfold.	3 July 2012	A twelve week public consultation is proposed to gather the community response to this private investment proposal and invite alternative usage to be expressed.	Report Investors prospectus	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 02/06/12 to Contact Officer: Liz Wade, Assistant Director Economic Growth and Regeneration Email: liz.wade@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6288
22.	Future of Crescent Court Sheltered Housing Scheme, Toddington -	To consider the results of the feasibility studies and consider a recommended way forward in relation to the development and the funding arrangements.	2 October 2012		Report	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 02/09/2012 to Contact Officer: Sue Marsh, Housing Services Manager Email: sue.marsh@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5662

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
23.	Development Strategy -	The Development Strategy will set out the broad approach to new development across Central Bedfordshire to 2031, including new housing and employment targets and new large-scale development sites. The Executive will be requested to consider and agree the Central Bedfordshire Development Strategy for the purposes of Publication and subsequent Submission to the Secretary of State.)	6 November 2012	Consultation expected in May/June 2012, Member consideration through the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel.	Draft Development Strategy (Pre-Submission version) Sustainability Appraisal Report of consultation and other technical/evidence reports	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 05/10/12 to Contact Officer: Richard Fox, Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy Email: richard.fox@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4105

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
NON KEY DECISIONS						
24.	Quarter 3 Performance Report -	To receive quarter 3 performance report.	27 March 2012		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 26/02/12 to Contact Officer: Elaine Malarky, Head of Programmes & Performance Management Email: elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5517
25.	Quarter 4 Performance Report -	To receive quarter 4 performance report.	3 July 2012		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 02/06/12 to Contact Officer: Elaine Malarky, Head of Programmes & Performance Management Email: elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5517

Postal address for Contact Officers: Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford SG17 5TQ

**Central Bedfordshire Council
Forward Plan of Decisions on Key Issues**

For the Municipal Year 2011/12 the Forward Plan will be published on the fifteenth day of each month or, where the fifteenth day is not a working day, the working day immediately proceeding the fifteenth day, or in February 2012 when the plan will be published on the fourteenth day:

Date of Publication	Period of Plan
15.04.11	1 May 2011 – 30 April 2012
13.05.11	1 June 2011 – 31 May 2012
15.06.11	1 July 2011 – 30 June 2012
15.07.11	1 August 2011 – 31 July 2012
15.08.11	1 September 2011 – 31 August 2012
15.09.11	1 October 2011 – 30 September 2012
14.10.11	1 November 2011 – 31 October 2012
15.11.11	1 December 2011 – 30 November 2012
15.12.11	1 January 2012 – 31 December 2012
13.01.12	1 February 2012 – 31 January 2013
14.02.12	1 March 2012 – 28 February 2013
15.03.12	1 April 2012 – 31 March 2013

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