

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



**TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE  
CUSTOMER AND CENTRAL SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

11 November 2010

Dear Councillor

**CUSTOMER AND CENTRAL SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –  
MONDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2010**

Further to the Agenda and papers for the above meeting, previously circulated, please find attached additional information for Item 10 below. The information takes the form of an extract from the **Executive Decisions Digest** (issued 4 November 2010), setting out the Executive's decision on the Corporate Budget Strategy item on 2 November 2010, together with amended **Appendices B(ii) and B(iii)** arising from the same item.

**10. Corporate Budget Strategy - Savings Proposals**

To assess all savings proposals for financial robustness and to consider the viability and suitability of the specific proposals for the Customer and Shared Services Directorate and the Office of the Chief Executive.

Please note that a hard copy of this supplement will be available at the Committee meeting.

Should you have any queries regarding the above please me.

Yours sincerely

Leslie Manning  
Committee Services Officer

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**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**THE EXECUTIVE**  
 Tuesday, 2 November 2010

**EXTRACT FROM DECISIONS DIGEST**

**THE CALL-IN DEADLINE FOR ANY ITEMS CONTAINED IN THIS DIGEST IS 5.00 P.M. ON THURSDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2010 SUBJECT TO ANY CALL-IN REQUESTS BEING RECEIVED, ALL THE DECISIONS WILL BE ACTIONED ON OR AFTER FRIDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2010.**

**DATE  
 ISSUED/PUBLISHED  
 4 NOVEMBER 2010**

AGENDA ITEM NO./SUBJECT	DECISION	PORTFOLIO HOLDER	ACTIONING OFFICER
<p><b>CORPORATE BUDGET STRATEGY</b>                      (Contact Officer: Matt Bowmer, Assistant Director, Financial Services/Chief Finance Officer email: matt.bowmer@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147)</p>	<p>That the Executive:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. acknowledge the considerable challenges facing the Council in view of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review announcement and the expected reduction in funding for local authorities;</li> <li>2. endorse the strategic response, proposed outcomes and direction of travel, as set out in paragraphs 21 to 40 of the submitted report;</li> <li>3. agree to move the following proposals, OCE1, HT1, CSS2 and CSS9, from Appendix A (efficiencies for consultation) to Appendix B (service reconfigurations and reductions for consultations);</li> <li>4. note the efficiency proposals outlined in Appendix A of the submitted report, subject to the deletion of proposal CSS13, authorise officers to commence any consultations needed in connection with these</li> </ol>	<p>Portfolio for Finance, Governance and People</p>	<p>Director of Customer and Shared Services</p>

AGENDA ITEM NO.	DECISION	PORTFOLIO HOLDER	ACTIONING OFFICER
	<p>proposals, including consultation with employee representatives under the Trade Union &amp; Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, and delegate to the Portfolio Holder for People, Finance and Governance authority to implement appropriate individual savings proposals for the 2010/11 financial year in consultation with the Portfolio Holders and Directors for the relevant service areas and the Chief Finance Officer;</p> <p>5. invite Overview &amp; Scrutiny and other stakeholders to comment on the Service Reconfiguration and Reduction saving proposals detailed in Appendix B of the submitted report;</p> <p>6. note the announcement by the Government in its Comprehensive Spending Review of a 28% reduction in Local Authority grants and requests officers to bring forward further saving options;</p> <p>7. approve the communications and engagement process detailed in the submitted report;</p> <p>8. agree the timetable for setting the 2011/12 Budget, as set out in paragraph 50 of the submitted report.</p>		
Date Issued:	4 November 2010	To:	All Members of the Council and Management Team
<b>NOTE: Recommendations of the Executive to the Council (shown in bold and italics) are NOT subject to call-in.</b>			

*Appendix amended as per the decision of the Executive on 2 November 2010 where it was agreed "to move the following proposals, OCE1, HT1, CSS2 and CSS9, from Appendix A (efficiencies for consultation) to Appendix B (service reconfigurations and reductions for consultations)*

**APPENDIX B(ii)**

**SAVING PROPOSALS**

**SERVICE RECONFIGURATION AND REDUCTIONS**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Customer & Shared Services**

**C&SS2 Ampt Hill Customer Services Closure– Efficiency**

**Background**

Customer Service Centres were opened in Biggleswade and Ampt Hill in March 2006 as part of the Mid Bedfordshire Council's move to Priory House, maintaining a presence in the 2 major towns in the area. Customer Service Centres were opened in Leighton Buzzard in April 2007 and Houghton Regis in September 2009. The Council offices in Priory House and Dunstable also have a Customer Service Centre.

Footfall at Houghton Regis has been low, averaging 224 customers per calendar month and is being replaced with a Customer Access Point during the financial year 2010/11.

Ampt Hill Customer Service Centre also does not have a high footfall, averaging approximately 478 customers per calendar month.

Ampt Hill Customer Service Centre is staffed by 3FTE Customer Service Advisors and the Team Manager has responsibility for the Customer Service Centres at Ampt Hill, Biggleswade and Priory House.

**Rationale for Service Change**

Closure of Ampt Hill Customer Service Centre would enable cost savings in respect of staff costs and release the majority of the building for other use by Central Bedfordshire Council.

Ampt Hill is equi-distant between Priory House and Dunstable offices allowing customers access to face to face service within 10 miles.

This closure would not prevent the longer term ambitions of Total Place to create a Community hub in the Flitwick area.

**Financial Savings**

A reduction of 2 FTE CSA. 1 FTE CSA would be retained to manage expected increased footfall at Priory House.

Year 1 savings £50K

*Appendix amended as per the decision of the Executive on 2 November 2010 where it was agreed "to move the following proposals, OCE1, HT1, CSS2 and CSS9, from Appendix A (efficiencies for consultation) to Appendix B (service reconfigurations and reductions for consultations)*

### **Service Implications and Impact**

This should be considered in conjunction with the Total Place agenda of co location with DWP in the longer term.

### **C&SS9 Legal and Democratic Services: Review of Legal & Democratic Services - Efficiency**

#### **Background**

Following the departure of two senior members of staff the structure of Democratic Services has been reviewed. The posts of AD Governance and Head of Democratic Services have been removed and their roles and responsibilities have been re-allocated to other senior managers.

Changes are also proposed to team structures so that the Committee Services will have a "flattened" structure and Electoral Services and Local Land Charges will be merged.

#### **Rationale for Service Change**

The proposals will allow for greater flexibility to take account of significant peaks and troughs in workload at certain times. Staff will also be expected to undertake work in different disciplines as the demand dictates.

#### **Financial Savings**

An estimated saving of £150,000 can be achieved by this proposal.

#### **Service Implications and Impact**

There will be a reduction of 4.2 fte posts requiring the application of the Council's Management of Change Policy.

*Appendix amended as per the decision of the Executive on 2 November 2010 where it was agreed "to move the following proposals, OCE1, HT1, CSS2 and CSS9, from Appendix A (efficiencies for consultation) to Appendix B (service reconfigurations and reductions for consultations)*

**APPENDIX B(iii)**

**SAVING PROPOSALS**

**SERVICE RECONFIGURATION AND REDUCTIONS**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Office of the Chief Executive**

**OCE1b Reduction of staffing - Efficiency**

**Background**

This proposal relates to a reduction in staffing across the Office of the Chief Executive. Specifically:

- 2 posts from the Overview and Scrutiny Team

**Rationale**

The proposal relating to a reduction in the Overview and Scrutiny Support Team is based on a shift towards the Directorates providing support to their respective Overview & Scrutiny Committees with forward planning and Democratic Services bring responsible for arranging and administering all meetings. In addition, the Chief Executive and AD Strategy and Performance will continue to provide strategic input.

**Financial Savings**

The estimated savings for 2011/12 are £0.100m.

**Service Implications and Impact**

The internal impact of the reduction to the Overview and Scrutiny Team will be on Directors or nominated directorate leads, who will need to have a close involvement with O&S forward planning, and Democratic Services who will be fully managing agendas and production of minutes etc for all aspects OSCs. The impact to Members will be a reduction in officer capacity to undertake research and to support the development of items for OSCs.

**OCE7 Directorate Reprovision / Non Priority Services: Non-renewal of 'Credit Union' funding**

**Background**

This proposal relates to the non-renewal of Credit Union funding when the current contract expires at the end of 2010/11. The Credit Union is a body that Mid Beds previously funded in the sum of £100,000 over 3 years, to help support local people with, for example, small scale, low interest loans.

The scheme initially targeted 500 members – at the end of 2009/10 there were only 94.

*Appendix amended as per the decision of the Executive on 2 November 2010 where it was agreed "to move the following proposals, OCE1, HT1, CSS2 and CSS9, from Appendix A (efficiencies for consultation) to Appendix B (service reconfigurations and reductions for consultations)*

### **Rationale**

As 2010/11 is in the last year of the 'legacy' finding commitment, there is an opportunity to simply not renew it in 2011/12.

### **Financial Savings**

The estimated savings for 2011/12 are £0.031m savings.

### **Service Implications and Impact**

With low demand the implications of this budget reduction will be minimal.

### **OCE8 Directorate Reprovision / Non Priority Services: 10% cut to core Voluntary and Community Sector grants**

#### **Background**

10% cut to core VCS Grants over 2 years (5% each year). This proposal is in the context of the core funding provided to 7 organisations - totalling £400,000 per annum.

#### **Rationale**

The current arrangements are a carry over from the legacy authorities. There is an opportunity to review the levels of grant, identify any efficiencies and ensure outcomes fully contribute to our priorities.

#### **Financial Savings**

The estimated savings for 2011/12 are £0.020m. A further £0.020m will be saved for 2012/13.

#### **Service Implications and Impact**

There will be less resource for key voluntary sector organisations across Central Bedfordshire provided by the Council.

The impact on residents will be a potential reduction in service from Citizens' Advice Bureaus, Bedford Race Equality Council, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity, Community & Voluntary Service Mid and North Bedfordshire, and Voluntary & Community Action Central Bedfordshire.