

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



please ask for Jonathon Partridge

direct line 0300 300 4634

date 21 January 2013

NOTICE OF MEETING

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date & Time

Tuesday, 29 January 2013 10.00 a.m.

Venue at

Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford

Richard Carr
Chief Executive

To: The Chairman and Members of the SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

Cllrs Mrs R J Drinkwater (Chairman), N J Sheppard (Vice-Chairman), D Bowater, P A Duckett, Mrs R B Gammons, Mrs S A Goodchild, Mrs D B Gurney, P Hollick and M A Smith

[Named Substitutes:

P N Aldis, R D Berry, Mrs G Clarke, C C Gomm, Ms A M W Graham and R W Johnstone]

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 Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 December 2012 and to note actions taken since that meeting.

3. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members any declarations of interest and of 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	Executive Member update To receive for information a verbal update from the Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing.	*
10	LINK update To receive for information an update from Bedfordshire LINK on health matters affecting LINK activity.	* 15 - 18
11	Proposals to develop affordable Extra Care housing in Dunstable To consider proposals for the development of approximately 80 Extra Care housing apartments on the redundant Dukeminster site in Dunstable in order to provide recommendations to the Executive on 05 February 2013.	* 19 - 26
12	Local welfare provision To consider proposals for the introduction of a scheme to provide local welfare provision and to provide comments to be considered by the Executive.	* 27 - 40
13	Approach to establishing Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire To consider the approach to creating Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire and consider arrangements for co-option onto the Committee in order to provide recommendations to the Executive on 05 February 2013.	* 41 - 50
14	Tenant's Scrutiny Panel and Designated Persons and Tenant's Complaints Panel To consider proposals to set up and adopt a Tenant's Scrutiny Panel and Designated Persons and Tenants Complaints Panel for the Council's Landlord Service as part of the new revised regulatory requirements for social housing providers, under the Localism Act 2011. The Committee is asked to provide views for consideration by the Executive on 19 March 2013.	* 51 - 64
15	Draft Budget 2013/14, Medium Term Financial Plan 2013-17 and Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17 To consider and comment on the Social Care, Health and Housing directorate aspects of the Council's draft budget for 2013/14, Medium Term Financial Plan 2013-17 and	* 65 - 66

Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17.

Papers were circulated to all Members as part of the report to Executive on 08 January 2013. Members are requested to bring their copy of these papers (Items 08 and 09) with them to the meeting. These papers can be viewed online on the Council's website at:-

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/modgov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=577&MId=4054&Ver=4>

- 16 **Fees and Charges 2013/14** * 67 - 78
- To consider and comment on the Social Care, Health and Housing directorate aspects of the draft fees and charges for 2013/14 and comment as appropriate to the Executive.
- 17 **Draft budget report for the Housing Revenue Account (Landlord Service) Business Plan** * 79 - 80
- To consider the Council's draft budget report for the Housing Revenue Account (Landlord Service) Business Plan and provide comments to be considered by the Executive at their meeting on 05 February 2013.
- Papers were circulated to all Members as part of the report to Executive on 08 January 2013. Members are requested to bring their copy of these papers (Item 10) with them to the meeting. These papers can be viewed on the Council's website at:-**
- <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/modgov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=577&MId=4054&Ver=4>
- 18 **Work Programme 2012/13 and Executive Forward Plan** * 81 - 108
- To consider the currently drafted Committee work programme and the Executive Forward Plan.

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 17 December 2012.

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs R J Drinkwater (Chairman)
Cllr N J Sheppard (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs D Bowater
P A Duckett
Mrs R B Gammons
Mrs S A Goodchild

Cllrs Mrs C Hegley
P Hollick
M A Smith

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mrs D B Gurney

Substitutes: Cllrs R D Berry (In place of Mrs D B Gurney)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs P N Aldis
A M Turner
Deputy Executive
Member for Social Care,
Health & Housing

Officers in Attendance: Mr N Murley – Assistant Director Business & Performance
Mrs J Ogley – Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
Mr J Partridge – Scrutiny Policy Adviser
Mr B Queen – Interim Head of Operations - Housing Service
Mr S Rees – Assistant Director Adult Social Care
Ms E Saunders – Assistant Director Commissioning
Mr C Treacey – Personalisation Team Manager

Others in Attendance Mrs C Bonser Bedfordshire Local Involvement Network
Ms P Fletcher NHS Bedfordshire
Dr D Gray Director of Strategy and System Redesign (Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group)
Mr B Smith Chairman, Bedfordshire LINK

SCHH/12/64 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 October 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SCHH/12/65 **Members' Interests**

The following Councillors declared interests in the business to be transacted:-

- Cllr M Smith (Item 17) as the Chairman of the Amptill and District Good Neighbour Scheme.
- Cllr Mrs S Goodchild as a Member of the Houghton Regis Good Neighbour Scheme and as a member of her family was a service user.

SCHH/12/66 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman informed the Committee that the presentations on the Prevention Strategy (Item 14) and Village Care Schemes (Item 17) covered many of the same issues. As a result the Chairman had agreed to consider these items together (**Minute SCHH/12/76 refers**).

The Scrutiny Policy Adviser updated the Committee on the outcomes of a meeting with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) regarding communication. The Committee were informed that in order to encourage communication between CQC and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) the following would take place:-

- CQC would receive the Committee's work programme to consider if there were any items that may support inspections;
- Task Force reports would be sent to CQC to support any inspections;
- CQC will attend work programming sessions to determine if there are any meetings they might attend or to suggest items that may be of interest to Members;
- An annual compliance report would be presented by CQC to the Committee to identify any areas of concern.

A Member suggested that as other OSCs met in the Council Chamber the Social Care, Health and Housing OSC may also wish to do so.

RECOMMENDED that the Scrutiny Policy Adviser consider the possibility of the Committee meeting in the Council Chamber in future.

SCHH/12/67 **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.

SCHH/12/68 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

No questions, statements or deputations were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

SCHH/12/69 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.

SCHH/12/70 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.

SCHH/12/71 Executive Member update

Cllr Mrs C Hegley, the Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing updated the Committee on issues that were not included on the agenda, these included:-

- Recent visits to day centres in Central Bedfordshire.
- A recent meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board. Members were encouraged to attend future meetings.
- A recent presentation on European funding that encouraged authorities to bid for money to support the delivery of health services.
- Recent workshops on housing that had gathered the thoughts of older people on several issues including Extra Care schemes.
- A recent presentation on the Central Bedfordshire voids process.
- A film that had recently been published by Right Track in relation to “My Place”.
- The recent annual general meeting of Age UK.
- The positive nature of the recent staff awards.
- A recent meeting of the Landlord’s Forum.
- Current investigations by the directorate into an invoice error.
- A recent Local Government Association Improvement Board Meeting that had presented an innovative IT solution to minimise loneliness. It was hoped that Central Bedfordshire could be involved in a pilot scheme to test this solution.

In response to questions from a Member the Executive Member commented that there had been a big improvement in relation to voids and the number of days for which a property remained void had reduced from 32 days to 24 days. There was an aspiration to improve performance still further to 18 days.

SCHH/12/72 LINK Update

The Committee received an update from Mr B Smith, Chairman of the Bedfordshire LINK, on the key work and issues the LINK was presently engaged with. The LINK had recently been informed they would no longer be invited to attend meetings of the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) as a lay member had been appointed. The manner in which this change had been handled had not been positive. The Committee were also informed that the BCCG had recently produced an Economy Winter Plan, the LINK were surprised that this had not been considered by the OSC.

In response to the update the Committee discussed the following issues:-

- The use of agency staff in care homes and whether this was perceived to be a problem. In response the Chairman of Bedfordshire LINK commented there was evidence that care homes suffered from a lack of continuity meaning agency staff were crucial.
- The benefit of using life books to stimulate the minds of care home residents. In response the Chairman of Bedfordshire LINK suggested that a report on best practice, including the life books scheme, be drafted by the LINK to be made available for future visits.
- Concerns relating to the issues highlighted at the Swiss Cottage Care Home, Leighton Buzzard and the importance of resolving these. The Executive Member also commented on the need for stronger recommendations for required action. It was suggested that to wait 12 months for a further visits was unacceptable in light of the issues raised. The Committee were informed that CQC and the Council could use the outcomes of the visits to inform their inspections, as a result a further inspection of Swiss Cottage could be brought forward.
- The high levels of staff sickness, which may be a result of stress. It was suggested that contact be made with other agencies such as the fire or ambulance service to see how they address these problems.

NOTED the update

RESOLVED that the BCCG's Health and Social Care Economy Winter Plan 2012-13 be circulated to Members outside of the meeting.

SCHH/12/73 Implications of the health reforms

The Director of Strategy and System Redesign for Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group provided a presentation that outlined the implications of the NHS reforms for Central Bedfordshire. In response to the presentation the Committee discussed several issues, including:-

- Concerns that staff would be retained unnecessarily during the course of the NHS reforms. In response the Director of Strategy and System Redesign commented that staff had been made redundant during the reforms and the use of interim staff meant that people would not be retained unnecessarily. The NHS had provided a general redundancy fund to support the implementation of reforms.
- Whether a minor injury unit would be provided in Leighton Buzzard. In response the Director of Strategy and System Redesign commented that services were currently being reviewed. The review would consider whether a facility was necessary.
- The need to ensure the growth of the NHS Commissioning Board did not detract from the principle of developing a more localised NHS.
- The importance of the continued growth of patient groups.
- The importance of accessibility when discussing whether or not to refer patients to services at another location.
- The complexity of the new NHS organisational model and whether in practice it could be delivered.
- Whether there were adequate proposals in place to deliver a service if a qualified provider went out of business. In response the Director of

Strategy and System Redesign stated the BCCG was presently developing an alert system to identify early warnings of problems. The Committee requested to be kept informed of developments during the implementation of health reforms so as to be aware of any such problems.

- How the BCCG would learn from its mistakes. In response the Director of Strategy and System Redesign commented the BCCG would be open about its mistakes and would provide evidence of the way they have addressed problems.
- The importance of focusing on improving outcomes for patients.
- The need to provide more information to patients to increase awareness of the choice of services and quality of care throughout Central Bedfordshire.
- The complication that would arise from deciding to relocate GPs to another building and the extensive consultation that would be required.
- The national discussions that were ongoing within the NHS regarding their culture and whether it could provide a 7 day a week service.
- Whether there was any update on proposals for Biggleswade Hospital. In response the Director of Strategy and System Redesign stated that a report on the Community Bed Review was due to be completed by the end of January and would be presented to the OSC in March 2013, the outcomes of which would have implications for Biggleswade Hospital.
- Concerns relating to the fragmentation of commissioning and the implications of this approach .

RESOLVED that a further update on the implications of the health reforms be provided to the Committee in 6 months to include specific references to the fragmentation of commissioning.

SCHH/12/74 **Evaluation of the short stay pathway**

The Chairman informed the Committee that this report was not currently available for consideration as an evaluation of the pathway was still underway. A report was currently being developed and it had been agreed to defer this item until such time as the evaluation had been completed.

RESOLVED that the item be deferred and the evaluation of the short stay pathway be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

SCHH/12/75 **Local Lettings Policy - Outcome of rural exception sites consultation process**

The Interim Head of Operations presented a report that detailed the outcomes of a recent consultation on the Local Lettings Policy for Rural Exception Sites. In addition the Director for Social Care, Health and Housing drew attention to the equalities/human rights implications and suggested that Members consider these implications in detail before agreeing their recommendations. In light of the report the Committee discussed the following issues in detail:-

- The importance of access to properties with affordable rents and the Council taking a lead on what it considered to be a fair/affordable rent. In response the Interim Head of Operations commented that the

Sustainable Communities directorate was responsible for negotiating affordable rents and Central Bedfordshire was currently considered to be an area that provided value for money. A Supplementary Planning Document was to be produced in 2013 in relation to affordable housing.

- The extent of indirect discrimination that could arise due to a local connection being considered a greater priority than someone with a greater housing need when allocating homes in rural exception sites. It was suggested by a Member that the proposals did not amount to social engineering, which would be a more serious implication. The Interim Head of Operations commented there was evidence that some local residents had not been able to get into the properties that had been built for them locally due to the Council's allocations policy. The Committee considered that the number of instances people in greater housing need were disadvantaged by the policy was small and the Council could defend its position if necessary.
- The importance of addressing the need for transport and facilities in local communities to ensure that Central Bedfordshire was a great place to live.
- Whether the expectations of residents in Central Bedfordshire for accommodation were too high. The Committee felt the Council should provide more basic accommodation to make it more affordable, similar to the old 'starter homes'. It was also queried whether the cost of building on government owned land had any impact on the affordability of properties. Members agreed this was an issue the Task Force review of the strategic changes in housing could consider.

RECOMMENDED to Executive

1. **That the Committee has considered the equalities/human rights implications detailed in the report and did not feel that proposals would lead to indirect discrimination such that the policy should not be approved.**
2. **That the Local Lettings Policy for Rural Exception Sites in Central Bedfordshire be adopted.**

RECOMMENDED to the task force review of the strategic changes in housing that issues relating to the affordability of housing be considered within the context of their review.

Councillor Ray Berry left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Meeting adjourned at 12 noon and reconvened at 12.10pm

SCHH/12/76 Prevention Strategy

The Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Director for Commissioning relating to the Ageing Well Programme, prevention, timebanking and village care schemes. The presentation also provided a specific update on the Arlesey Village Agent Pilot. In light of the presentation and clarification provided by officers the Committee discussed in detail the organisation of timebanking schemes. Members discussed specific issues in relation to:-

- The benefit of involving GP practices at an early stage in the development of schemes.
- The importance of a coordinator for timebanking schemes.
- Safeguarding and insurance.
- The need to identify funding that might be available to set up or support timebanking schemes.
- The need for effective coordination and promotion of timebanking schemes to support their success.

In response the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing commented that local Parish Councils had asked the Council to take on a coordinating role for timebanking schemes. The remaining issues raised by the Committee would be considered as more schemes were developed.

In addition to the issues relating to timebanking the Committee also considered:-

- The benefit of extending the use of an information hub throughout Central Bedfordshire to include village care schemes.
- An evaluation report that was presently being developed by the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity in relation to the Arlesey Village Agent Pilot, which would be presented to Committee when available.

RESOLVED that the evaluation report on the Arlesey Village Agent Pilot be presented to the Committee once available.

SCHH/12/77 **Self-directed support**

The Committee received a presentation from the Personalisation Team Manager that informed the Committee of the benefits of self-directed support, explained user-led organisations and considered current challenges and opportunities in Central Bedfordshire. In response to the presentation the Committee discussed the following issues in detail:-

- The need to understand why some residents did not want self-directed support.
- The ways in which the Council felt it could develop the social care market further, which included formalising the approach micro-enterprise and social enterprise and developing stronger working relationships.
- The importance of making available information and advice to self-funders of social care services and promoting stronger purchasing power for self-funders. In response the Personalisation Team Manager commented that a focus was being placed on self-funders and the Council would expect purchasing power to improve as there became greater awareness of the choice that was available.
- The action that could be taken if a resident spent their personal budget prior to the end of the year. In response the Personalisation Team Manager commented that the Council monitored those persons where there was a risk of this occurring and there were safeguards in place. Generally it was more likely that a person would underspend their budget than overspend.

- The need to be aware of the risk of voluntary groups ceasing to operate where the Council encouraged the development of additional groups.
- The need to ensure accountability of personal assistants that were employed and paid for using personal budgets. In response the Personalisation Team Manager commented that training was provided both to personal assistants and those who employed personal assistants to promote accountability.
- The excellent performance in relation to self-directed support, which was far ahead of others in the region. The Director for Social Care, Health and Housing commented that although the national performance indicator might be reduced the Council would retain the 100% target in the Medium Term Plan.

RESOLVED that the Social Care, Health and Housing directorate be congratulated for their performance in relation to self-directed support.

Councillor Mrs S Goodchild left the meeting during consideration of this item.

SCHH/12/78 Annual Adult Social Care customer feedback report

The Committee received the annual report on complaints and compliments for 2011/12 in respect of Adult Social Care. Members discussed the ways in which the Council's literature encouraged residents to complain or compliment services, which was considered to be appropriate.

NOTED the report.

SCHH/12/79 Village Care Schemes

As agreed by the Committee this item was considered under Minute SCHH/12/76.

SCHH/12/80 Quarter 2 performance monitoring report

The Committee received the quarter 2 performance monitoring report for the Social Care, Health and Housing directorate. The Assistant Director for Business and Performance drew Member's attention to the content of the report, which now included the Medium Term Plan indicators and an indicator in relation to public health.

NOTED the report.

SCHH/12/81 Quarter 2 capital budget monitoring report

The Committee received the quarter 2 capital budget monitoring report for the Social Care, Health and Housing directorate. Members raised issues in relation to disabled facilities grants (DFG), the ways in which the Council promoted these grants and whether the Council got this money back. The Director for Social Care, Health and Housing commented that a review of DFGs was presently underway but monies awarded through DFG were not returned to the Council. The Director undertook to provide a written response on both of these aspects.

Members also queried delays in relation to the refurbishment of Timberlands, which were a result of delays in the procurement process.

RESOLVED that a written response be provided by the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing in relation to the issues raised by Members on disabled facilities grants.

NOTED the report.

SCHH/12/82 Quarter 2 revenue budget monitoring report

The Committee received the quarter 2 revenue budget monitoring report for the Social Care, Health and Housing directorate.

NOTED the report.

SCHH/12/83 Quarter 2 revenue and capital budget monitoring report for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The Committee received the quarter 2 revenue and capital budget monitoring report for the Housing Revenue Account. The Executive Member informed the Committee that in the future the report would be received by both the Social Care, Health and Housing and Corporate Resources OSCs as it was a corporate report.

NOTED the report.

SCHH/12/84 Work Programme 2012/13 and Executive Forward Plan

The Committee received their work programme and the Executive Forward Plan. The Committee noted the following amendments to the agenda:-

- Item on the Council's approach to Healthwatch to be added in January 2013.
- Item on Extra Care housing in Dunstable to be added in January 2013.
- Item on the Community Bed Review to be added in March 2013.
- Prevalence of problem drug use to be considered in March 2013.
- Ophthalmology services to be considered in March 2013.
- Adult/child eating disorders no longer to be considered.
- Commissioning for outcomes in domiciliary and residential care to be received as an off-agenda briefing.
- NHS 111 care number update to be received as an off-agenda briefing

Members also requested that an update on the current position of the Committee's Task Forces be circulated by email. In addition Councillor Bowater submitted his apologies for the next two meetings of the Social Care, Health and Housing OSC.

A Member also commented that due to the length of the agendas officers might consider all day meetings for the OSC in the future with a break for lunch. The Scrutiny Policy Adviser suggested that rather than all day meetings work could

be prioritised and those items 'for information' circulated outside the meeting in order to shorten the agenda.

RESOLVED that the work programme be approved subject to the amendments as detailed in the Minute above.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 1.40 p.m.)

Meeting: Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 21 January 2013

Subject: LINK Report

Report of: Bob Smith, Chairman of Bedfordshire LINK

Summary: As the LINK approaches its final months of work before the introduction of Local Healthwatch, this report is an update on progress made on the work themes highlighted in its workplan for 2012/13 as detailed in the LINK Annual Report 2011-12.

The LINK is also in the process of producing a final interim report for the period April 2012 – March 2013.

The 2011-12 Annual Report can be accessed on the LINK website at www.bedfordshirelink.co.uk

Contact Officer: Charlotte Bonser (Bedfordshire LINK Operations Manager)

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable.
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Financial:

2. Not applicable.

Legal:

3. Not applicable.

Risk Management:

4. Not applicable.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):
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5. Not Applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. Not applicable.

Public Health

7. Not applicable.

Community Safety:

8. Not applicable.

Sustainability:

9. Not applicable.

Procurement:

10. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the report as appropriate.

Background

11. The LINK highlighted in its last Annual Report the need to continue to look at and conduct some more work to gauge patient experience in certain areas of health and social care. It also identified the need to prepare for Healthwatch, and this has been a key task over the last year.

This report focuses on the LINK contribution to work on :

- the Pathfinder Central Bedfordshire Healthwatch,
- hospital discharge and nursing care,
- the completion of the work on visits to care/nursing homes
- mental health provision and pathways through the system following the transformation of mental health provision and changes to inpatient mental health bed facilities and the focus on care in the community and personalised budget.
- LINK membership Skills Audit; and
- encouraging the participation of children and young people in Healthwatch, with a particular aim to hear that their voices are heard.

Preparing for Healthwatch

12. The LINK continues to be involved in the development of Central Bedfordshire Healthwatch and participates in Healthwatch Pathfinder meetings with colleagues from the voluntary and community sector, NHS and the Council. The LINK was involved in the production of the joint submission to become a Pathfinder Healthwatch area; and is keen to see the establishment of an organisation that involves the third sector, patient participation groups and partners supporting Healthwatch or becoming an active Healthwatch partner or similar.

13. In LINK feedback on its legacy, it has stressed the importance of communication and raising awareness of Healthwatch as widely as possible. It has indicated how important the volunteer base is to the success of such an organisation and the need to continue to involve, engage and develop the active LINK membership currently existing as well as recruiting new participants. The LINK has shown how its current structure of gathering information through recording incidents and working through these issues within its working groups in health, social care and mental health and learning disabilities has been successful. It has also demonstrated the ability to develop its own training for members in enter and view visits to all health and social care bases, and hopes the new Healthwatch organisation will use these skills and develop them as required as Healthwatch evolves.

Hospital Discharge and Nursing Care

14. The LINK continues to record incidents relating to discharge and nursing care, particularly where patient care has been perceived to be inadequate or poor. This record includes all health and social care bases where there is inpatient care and patients are discharged. Therefore this log now includes feedback on the Short Stay Medical Unit in Houghton Regis.
15. Where there have issues of concern in the area of hospital discharge and nursing care, the LINK has reported these to both the OSC and Shadow Health and Well Being Board colleagues. This has resulted in the LINK being involved in the OSC Hospital Discharge Task Group, and having contact with the NHS Director of Nursing to report concerns in relation to nursing care.

Enter and View Visits to Care / Nursing Homes

16. The detailed reports of the visits and general findings of this work have been shared with the Committee in previous reports.

Mental Health provision and pathways for service users

17. Following three visits to mental health bases; namely Crombie House, Community MH provision, Leighton Buzzard, Cedar House & Fountains Court and Barford Avenue and Day Resource Centres in June, August and November 2011, LINK members found service users to be satisfied with the care they received and found people were enthusiastic about having activities in an organised setting. The LINK remains keen to monitor experiences and perceptions of service users to any changes in the way services are delivered and how it affects their recovery. It continues to report any issues of concern to the Trust, SEPT at its quarterly meetings with the Trust. It also regularly invites appropriate colleagues from SEPT/LA to update the LINK on Mental Health and Learning Disability Commissioning, joint commissioning at its Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Working Group meetings.
18. The LINK has also noted that the Trust (SEPT) is instigating a new infrastructure of meetings for service user/stakeholders across Bedfordshire, and the LINK is keen to ensure that the voices of service users from Central Bedfordshire are heard in any new structure and is following developments in this area closely. Because notice of meetings and paperwork are not received in good time, this is proving a challenging situation. However, the LINK and Healthwatch needs to monitor the situation to ensure service users have forums to share and channel their views, comments and concerns.

LINK Members Skills Audit

19. Currently as members join the LINK, an audit of their skills and experience is carried out through a brief questionnaire. A further questionnaire has been issued, as part of the legacy work, to the active membership to ensure skills and experience will not be lost whilst Healthwatch is being developed.

Encouraging the participation of children and young people in LINK/Healthwatch

20. Although there has always been lack of clarity about the involvement of children and young people in LINKs stemming from unclear Government directives, the LINK in Central Bedfordshire has tried to involve young people in its work. In 2011, it had some success in recruiting a young person from the Youth Parliament to sit on the LINK Board for a period of six months, but then he moved on to study and work.

21. The LINK continues to improve its understanding of working with children and young people by inviting speakers from the voluntary sector, including the Childrens, Young Peoples and Families Officer who works in the voluntary sector networking across all organisations working with children and young people.
22. The LINK has also recently recruited volunteers who have particular experience in working with children and young people.

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

None

Meeting: Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 21 January 2013

Subject: Proposals to Develop Affordable Extra Care Housing in Dunstable

Report of: Cllr Mrs Carole Hegley , Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing

Summary: The purpose of this report is to provide Overview and Scrutiny Committee with information about the development of approximately 80 Extra Care housing apartments on the redundant Dukeminster site in Dunstable.

Extra Care housing combines high quality, self contained, accommodation and communal facilities with the availability of care and support 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Apartments will be available at affordable rents and for purchase on shared ownership basis.

The Dukeminster site is likely to be the first in a programme of Extra Care housing development across Central Bedfordshire and is a considerable investment in both the accommodation for and care of older people in the area.

Advising Officer: Julie Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

Contact Officer: Madeleine Bell, Programme Manager

Public/Exempt: Public Report

Wards Affected: Dunstable Central Ward

Function of: The Executive

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. Through the provision of high quality, cost effective accommodation with 24 hour, seven day a week care on site, this proposal supports the following Council priorities
 - Promote health and well-being and protecting the vulnerable.
 - Value for money

Financial:

2. The financial implications are set out below in paragraphs 23 to 27.

Legal:

3. The Council has a statutory duty under the National Health Service and community care Act 1990 to assess the needs of people in its area who may need community care services. Where appropriate this may necessitate the provision of suitable accommodation to meet those needs. The proposals contained in this report will help the Council to comply with this duty.

Risk Management:

4. The following risks have been identified:
- Failure to deliver the Council's priorities, Medium Term Plan, the Housing Strategy 2011-15, and programmes including Residential Futures
 - Failure to make adequate provision for the accommodation needs of older people in Central Bedfordshire, both in the short term and also by addressing future need
 - Failure to promote town centre regeneration
 - Failure to manage the allocation/letting process to ensure that the scheme addresses the residents that are in need
 - Failure to discharge statutory responsibilities.

In addition, there are a number of financial risks, including:

- Slippage in timeframes
- Failure to secure Home and Communities Agency (HCA) funding
- Failure to realise shared ownership sales and rent income due to lack of demand/need for accommodation provided
- Failure to deliver the General Fund savings required in 2014/15
- Uncertainty over construction costs and actual rent income.

These identified risks will be managed throughout the project, and appropriate mitigating action taken.

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, harassment and victimisation and 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. National and local research indicates that there is a shortage of appropriate and affordable housing for older people. The approval of this proposal will play an important role in helping to improve outcomes for vulnerable older people.

Public Health

7. Extra Care housing has a positive impact on public health. Studies have shown that where access to extra care is available, over 80 year olds with care needs are half as likely to move into an institutional care home in the future. Extra Care housing residents are less likely to be admitted into a hospital for an overnight stay compared to someone of a matched demographic living in the community.

Community Safety:

8. The provision of well designed accommodation with 24 hours, seven day a week care will enhance the safety and security of older people. In addition, the communal facilities provided will be open to all members of the community and so should promote intergenerational understanding and support.

Sustainability:

9. The location of the Dukeminster site provides the opportunity to regenerate and enhance the centre of Dunstable and bring people back into living in the town.

Procurement:

10. A detailed procurement exercise will be undertaken to ensure value for money in the construction of the building and associated services.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Committee is asked to consider the report and recommend to the Executive the development of the Extra Care scheme at the Dukeminster site in Dunstable.

Introduction

11. The Office of National Statistics, 2011 census figures, estimated that 39,900 (15.7%) of the Central Bedfordshire population were aged 65+. This figure is predicted to increase to 54,200 (19.1% of CB population) by 2021 – an increase of 35.8%. The number of very old people, those 85 years or older, is estimated to increase from 4,700 to 7,100 an increase of 51.1% in the same period.
12. Changes in life expectancy, while very welcome, present considerable challenges in the efficient provision of accommodation and high quality care for older people. The right type of accommodation can promote independence and self-reliance and reduce social isolation. The importance of well designed accommodation and services has been recognised in the Central Bedfordshire Housing Strategy 2011- 2015, Key Strategic Priority 3 *Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Older and Vulnerable People* and in the Medium Term Plan target, *Provide 50 extra care flats by 2014*.
13. The development of Extra Care housing is part of the wider strategic response of the Council to increasing numbers of older people its population. A number of projects have been brought together in the Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Older People Programme (MANOP), including the review of Council owned Sheltered housing, the establishment of a dementia quality accreditation scheme, with increased fee levels, the establishment of a Framework Agreement for engaging with providers of care homes in the move away from block contract arrangements and the development of a robust evidence base to inform future decision making.

Extra Care Housing

14. Extra Care housing, sometimes called “very sheltered” housing or “assisted living”, is a relatively new concept in the provision of housing and care services. Extra Care seeks to provide good quality housing, in a supportive environment, coupled with the availability of round-the-clock care.
15. The focus of Extra Care is to promote and foster independence and self-reliance in a supportive environment. Extra Care schemes generally consist of a number of self-contained apartments or bungalows grouped together with communal facilities such as cafés, hobby rooms, beauty suites and multi-purpose meeting rooms. The use of the facilities by members of the public is encouraged to ensure that the scheme is integrated into the life of the community. Care and support services are provided on-site, usually 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The provision of care in a purpose built and well-designed setting can enhance well-being, support independence and combat debilitating loneliness and isolation.
16. As part of MANOP, the Council will need to consider the provision of at least 420 units of Extra Care housing over the next seven years. Early thinking is that some of these schemes will be developed and managed directly by the Council’s Housing Services, while others will be delivered by partner organisations with Council support. The proposed scheme at Dukeminster, Dunstable, is the first of these developments to come forward.

Dukeminster Dunstable

17. The site at the redundant Dukeminster industrial estate has outline planning permission for a predominantly residential development with some commercial elements. The proposed Extra Care scheme will occupy a prominent corner position on the site and will be highly visible when entering the town from Luton, a situation of particular importance given the route of the Guided Bus.
18. It is proposed that approximately 80 apartments will be provided. These will be divided equally between 40 one bedroom apartments suitable for two people and 40 two bedroom apartments designed to accommodate three people. The apartments will be fully self-contained, with their own front door and all facilities. The draft plans show them to be generously sized to ensure there is sufficient space for wheelchair access, personal possessions, storage and assistive technology. All one bed apartments are sufficiently large to convert to two bed should future needs require this.
19. It is likely that, 60 of the apartments will be available to rent at “formula rents”, consistent with Council and Housing Association (social) rents, while 20 will be for sale for owner occupation on a shared-ownership basis. Owner occupiers will be able to purchase either 50% or 75% of the value of the apartments. No rent will be due on the remaining share if 75% is purchased. Work is currently ongoing to ensure that rents and service charges will be reasonable and within the budget of retired people on low incomes.
20. In addition to the self-contained accommodation, a range of other facilities will be provided on site. The exact nature of these is to be determined in consultation with older peoples representative groups but is likely to include a café open to public use, a lounge, a health and beauty suite, a library, hobby rooms, guest rooms, a therapy suite, bathing spas for assisted bathing and multi-purpose meeting rooms. It is envisaged that the majority of these facilities will be open to the general public.

21. As part of the development it is proposed that 270m² of retail space will be provided to be leased to a commercial operator.
22. Dukeminster represents an exciting opportunity to improve the accommodation and care services offered to our older residents and to provide cost effective, value for money services. The scheme will be a major investment, not only in the services Central Bedfordshire Council offers to older people, but also in the physical regeneration of Dunstable town centre. The prominent position of the site, on the route of the Guided Bus, provides the opportunity to improve the built environment of Dunstable, and the facilities provided will benefit not only residents, but the community as a whole.

Financial Considerations

23. As well as providing better outcomes for residents needing care and support, Extra Care is also more cost effective than other forms of residential care, such as that provided in care homes. The expansion of Extra Care facilities in the area will allow for the efficient use of Council resources in the provision of care for elderly residents. It is envisaged that residents will have a range of care needs including mild to moderate dementia and the focus will be on allowing them to remain in their own apartment for as long as possible.
24. The Localism Act of 2011 brought about fundamental reform to council housing finance, which is detailed more fully in the draft Housing Revenue Account budget report, considered by Executive Committee on the 8th January 2013. The Self-financing regime introduced on 1 April 2012, has given the Council greater autonomy and influence over the financial management of their housing assets. The Landlord Service Business Plan shows rental income will exceed the anticipated costs of managing the stock over the 30 year period; indeed, freed from the constraints of the Subsidy system, the HRA is forecast to generate surpluses after interest repayments of approximately £5m each year for the next 4 financial years. This compares favourably to the Subsidy system, where approximately £10m a year was paid to Central Government, to be re-distributed to other local authorities.
25. The Council has therefore benefitted from the new Self Financing regime. The draft HRA Budget report explains that a Sheltered Housing Re-Provision Reserve (SHRR) will be set up as a source of funding for investment in new build Extra Care accommodation and improvements to the existing sheltered accommodation. If the HRA budget report is approved by Executive Committee, it is forecast that the SHRR Reserve, as at 31 March 2013, will amount to £8.653m. This Reserve is funded from the annual surplus' in rental income over management and maintenance costs that is being achieved. This Reserve will increase in value during 2014 and 2015.
26. It is proposed that the SHRP is used to fund the development of the extra care housing scheme at Dukeminster, as the primary source of funding. However, the financing of this proposed scheme will draw from various sources, which shall include -
 1. The Council will seek grant funding from the Homes and Communities Agency, as the Council has secured Investment Partner status.
 2. There will be the sales receipts from (approximately) 28 shared ownership sales.

3. Right to Buy sales receipts will be invested, which is envisaged by the Government as a means to deliver new build affordable housing. In August 2012, the Council signed up to an agreement with Government to retain receipts to deliver new build affordable housing and is forecast to retain approximately £0.500m for investment in replacement stock. Indeed, the ability to retain this money actually depends on the council re-providing new build stock on a one for one replacement basis.
4. Money received as s106 payments to the Council, for the purpose of delivering that new build affordable housing could be invested in the Dukeminster scheme.

The resources required are adequate to deliver the scheme and the proposed investment represents value for money. The exact funding mix can be determined at a later date, in terms of best use of the resources available.

27. As the first year of self-financing draws to a close, Central Bedfordshire Council is already benefiting from the ability to be more strategic in planning how best to manage the asset, to benefit tenants and residents, as well as to achieve wider council objectives. The delivery of extra care housing will also result in savings to the General Fund, as a reduction in the cost of residential care for older people. The proposed efficiency savings in 2014-16 amount to £480k, of which Dukeminster will secure a saving, per annum, of approximately £218k.

Development Programme

28. It is proposed that the Dukeminster site be the first in a series of developments across Central Bedfordshire. It is intended that some of the sites will be developed directly by the Council, while others will be developed by partner organisations such as housing associations.

Conclusion and Next Steps

29. The anticipated timetable for the development is given in Table 1 below,

Table 1. Proposals to Develop Affordable Extra Care Housing in Dunstable
Proposed Timetable

Activity	Date
Bid to DoH	16 th January 2013
Report to Executive	5 th February 2013
Detailed Planning Permission Applied For	April 2013
Planning Permission Obtained	August 2013
Construction Commences	Autumn 2013
Construction Complete	Winter 2014

30. It is anticipated that the Dukeminster site, Dunstable will be the first in a programme to extend Extra Care housing across Central Bedfordshire. It represents a major investment in improving accommodation and care to the older residents in the area. The scheme supports the strategic direction to reduce the use of institutional provision of care, and moves towards a personal approach. It also support the Key Strategic Priority 3 in the Housing Strategy, *Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Older and Vulnerable People* and meets the Medium Term Plan target, *Provide 50 extra care flats by 2014*.

Appendix: None

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Meeting: Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 21 January 2013
Subject: Local Welfare Provision
Report of: Cllr Mrs Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing
Summary: The report proposes the introduction of a scheme to provide Local Welfare Provision to provide support for residents to alleviate financial distress following a crisis or disaster or to obtain or maintain independent living. This would be replacing the Social Fund, administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), but which will be abolished after 31st March 2013.

Advising Officer: Julie Ogle, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
Contact Officer: Hamid Khan, Head of Housing Needs
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. The establishment of a local scheme of Welfare Provision to assist low income residents in times of crisis and help with the setting up of a home to enable independence directly contributes to the following priority
 - Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable

Financial:

2. In 2011/12, the DWP provided £377,200 in support for crisis loans and community care grants to residents of Central Bedfordshire. The annual allocation for 2013/14 and 2014/15 will be £355,903, a reduction of £21,297 (just under 6%). In addition, there is an allocation of £75,205 for administrative set up costs, reducing to £68,934 for the financial year 2014/15. There is therefore a clear funding shortfall and at present it is not possible to predict demand.

Legal:

3. There are no direct legal implications as a result of this report

Risk Management:

4. This is a new scheme for Central Bedfordshire and a number of new financial procedures and processes will have to be put in place. Corporate colleagues are assisting in mitigating all the risks associated with this scheme.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. Initially up to 2 full time equivalent (FTE) posts may be required, initially on a temporary basis, and there will be regular reviews as to workload. Some additional housing needs staff will also cover this service as part of their duty roster.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. Public authorities have a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination harassment and victimisation and 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. Research has identified that vulnerability is particularly linked to groups including older people, disabled people, people with low levels of literacy, people from poorer socio economic groups, people experiencing domestic violence, some people from ethnic minority communities including migrant workers and Gypsies and Travellers, and people from lesbian, gay, bisexual and Transgender communities.
7. A full Equality Assessment has been carried out and has identified some areas of concern. It is recommended that the Equality Assessment is regularly reviewed throughout the implementation of the scheme.
8. In respect of both Crisis Loans for living expenses and Community Care grants, under the existing DWP Social Fund, national data on recent scheme usage indicates that those most affected by proposals to tighten eligibility criteria and move towards a scheme which is based on the provision of goods, services and vouchers will be single people aged between 16 and 34. For Central Bedfordshire Council, it is proposed that the only change in eligibility criteria from the present DWP scheme will be the inclusion of a "local connection provision". This eligibility criterion will be reviewed and consulted upon in the future. Crisis Loans are to be replaced by "Emergency Provision" and Community Care grants, to be placed by "Grant Provision".
9. There are further concerns with regards to accessibility, telephone only access, ensuring all groups have equal access to review decisions and the general impact on the well being of the most vulnerable households, especially families under crises.
10. The Local Welfare Provision scheme in Central Bedfordshire must be seen in the context of a discretionary scheme and its intention is only to assist those households in short term crises. Many existing clients of the DWP Social Fund are potentially also in receipt of support from Central Bedfordshire Council services and partners, but due to the absence of data from DWP it is impossible to know how many. Examples of services already provided to vulnerable households include those listed below.
 - Children's Services – S17 or S20 assistance (Children's Acts 1989 & 2004)
 - Social Care Services
 - Statutory Homelessness Services
 - DWP assistance in the form of budgeting loans or transitional funding
 - Charity and voluntary sector support

The Troubled Families agenda is another layer of provision for those families most in need.

11. The proposed scheme, renamed Emergency Provision and Grant Provision, will operate through an efficient and effective application and assessment process with appropriate training provided to relevant personnel to ensure that customers in need of assistance are quickly and easily identified and targeted towards the most appropriate support for their particular situation. As indicated above, support may be available through a variety of Statutory Services and ensuring customers are directed to the relevant service will be a key requirement, especially in the case of those who do not fulfil the eligibility criteria for local welfare provision. The capability to provide access to ongoing support and signpost those who are not eligible for local authority assistance to organisations that can help applicants avoid crisis situations in future will also be an important aspect of the service. The Council recognises that the service it proposes must be more than one-off crisis support and that applicants are given the necessary advice and information to avoid a recurrence.
12. Data indicates that the profile of customers who have accessed Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants under the DWP Social Fund in Central Bedfordshire is similar to national patterns. In the case of Crisis Loans, they are primarily single people under the age of 35, who are in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance. Recipients of Community Care Grants are more likely to be female and lone parents.

Public Health

13. Ensuring provision for the basic necessities in life will enable vulnerable households to maintain a basic quality of life that will contribute to their general health and well being.

Community Safety:

14. The Council has a statutory duty to do all that it reasonably can to reduce crime and disorder under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Local Welfare Provision arrangements will provide short term financial support that can ensure that vulnerable people do not become victims of crime, perhaps because they are homeless, or by supporting those who may already have offended from further offending behaviour. The financial support available will also reduce the need for people to access illegal money lenders or perhaps consider committing crime themselves to obtain money.

Sustainability:

15. There are no direct implications as a result of this report.

Procurement:

16. Phase 1 of the scheme will look to build on established corporate contracts, but Phase 2 of the scheme may require a more formal tendering process in order to procure the services required

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Committee is asked to:-

1. **Consider the establishment of a Local Welfare Provision scheme with two aims;**

- a) **Alleviate financial distress following an emergency, crisis or disaster**
 - b) **Enable vulnerable residents to set up home or remain at home and so gain or maintain their independence.**
2. **To comment on the proposed Eligibility Criteria for the scheme as set out in APPENDIX A of this report**
3. **To comment and consider the proposal that the scheme be introduced in two phases ,**
 - a) **Phase One, will replicate the current DWP scheme with a minor change to eligibility and the range of support offered as outlined in this report**
 - b) **Phase Two, the scheme will be reviewed after six months operation once the level and type of demand is known.**
4. **To recommend to the Executive that the Local Welfare Provision Scheme be adopted by Central Bedfordshire as set out in the main body of this report and as outlined in APPENDICES A and B as attached**

Background

17. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 gives local authorities the power, but not the legal duty, to provide financial or material support to people in need. As part of the government's welfare reforms the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will stop making discretionary Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans through the Social Fund from 1st April 2013. It is proposed that Central Bedfordshire Council should start a scheme that provides local welfare provision, to replace the abolished Social Fund. Crisis Loans are small short term payments made to assist with emergency living expenses. Community Care grants are normally larger payments to households who urgently require assistance with special difficulties. For example, looking after someone in the community rather than them going into care.
18. The DWP will continue to administer Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans until 31 March 2013. Community Care Grants were primarily intended to help vulnerable people live as independent a life as possible in the community. They were awarded to households receiving means-tested benefits such as Jobseekers Allowance. Crisis Loans were intended for applicants who are unable to meet their immediate short term needs in an emergency or as a consequence of a disaster. They were awarded for immediate living expenses in order to avoid serious damage or risk to the health or safety of the applicant or a member of the family.
19. The system operated by the DWP relies on applicants telephoning a call centre or completing an application form. Relatively few checks are made on the information given by applicants or the use to which they put the funds provided. It is not expected that councils will replicate the existing scheme and government is looking to them to develop innovative approaches including using partner organisations to deliver some aspects of the provision. It is intended that the scheme for the Council will make use of third sector white goods and furniture recycling schemes alongside vouchers to deliver some aspects of service, as these are perceived as being more cost effective and less open to abuse than cash grants.

20. In devising a scheme for Central Bedfordshire a phased approach is being conceived, underpinned by a rigorous project managed approach to delivery. The first phase of the project will focus on delivery of a service from 1 April 2013. The second phase of the project will focus on embedding provision within the Council's Customer First programme and maximising procurement opportunities to ensure all assistance is non cash based and meets the actual requirements of vulnerable households.

Funding and Demand

21. In 2011/12, the DWP provided £377,200 in support for crisis loans and community care grants to residents of Central Bedfordshire. The government will make available a grant in 2013/14 and 2014/15 to the Council of £355,903, a reduction of £21,297 (just under 6%). In addition there is an allocation of £75,205 to cover administrative set up costs, reducing to £68,943 for the financial year 2014/15. The administrative cost will contribute to employing two FTE staff for a defined temporary period to assist with both Emergency Provision assessments and Grant Provision assessments and there is existing service provision to manage demand. The government grant is not ring fenced and will be paid to the General Fund. There is therefore a potential funding shortfall, which is the greatest risk arising from the scheme.
22. Information from the DWP shows that, in 2011/12 the average Crisis Loan, in Central Bedfordshire was £60 and the average Community Care Grant £567. The DWP also reports that it costs more to ensure the repayment of the loan than is collected back, as very small loans of this nature are not a financially efficient method of providing support. As a consequence it has to be recognised that much of the funding will not be recoverable, although attempts will be made to reclaim some funds
23. There is considerable uncertainty surrounding the level of likely demand for assistance and the nature of the help requested. The DWP is unable to provide figures at a local authority level to show the type of measure provided and the nature of the crisis or other event experienced by applicants. In addition, the impact on demand for assistance from changes to other benefits and allowances can not be anticipated with any degree of certainty. However, the DWP have made available a transitional fund which will assist in meeting the needs of those households that are in crisis. Households will also be able to access a new Budgetary Loan being made available by the DWP
24. The adoption of a local scheme would provide the opportunity to introduce a "case worker" type approach which would provide a more holistic response to identified need. This would allow clients to be helped through accessing charitable funds and possible referral to appropriate support from the voluntary sector. There is the potential to increase self reliance and resilience by signposting applicants to organisations who can assist with life skills, budgeting advice, mutual support and self help. It would also be possible to make engagement with such support a condition of financial assistance in certain cases.

25. The phased approach to implementation of a local scheme will enable the Council to measure more accurately the level and type of demand and therefore devise appropriate demand management strategies and ensure accurate monitoring of expenditure. This will also enable the Council to tackle potential fraud. This approach has been discussed with officers at Luton Council and Bedford Borough and the DWP to ensure a consistency of approach and to minimise the risk of fraud.

Proposed Scheme

26. The scheme will be called Local Welfare Provision and will be separated into Emergency Provision and Grant Provision, which in essence will mirror the present system of crisis “loans” and community care grants.
27. Access to the service will be via telephone and all customers will be expected to meet the eligibility criteria to qualify. For Emergency Provision, if all the eligibility criteria are met then the outcome will be a transfer of funds into the customers’ account. The maximum limit will be £60, but there will be a banding of payments between £0-20, £21-40, £41-60. The Scheme will also try to maximise the use of ‘All Pay’ cards, (subject to established contracts or new provision) which are cards that entitle the holder to buy goods limited to the amount of credit contained on the card. This would be targeted to those few households that may not have a bank account. Cash provision has been considered, but carries a large degree of risk in terms of fraud, security and implementation. Where food is required customers will be offered assistance via the Food Banks in Dunstable or Biggleswade or the nearest local provision via the Food Bank Network. For Grant Provision, if the eligibility criteria are met, an appointment will be made with the Housing Needs Service to fully assess the needs of the customer. Work is underway to enable the Council to access furniture through appropriate procurement processes.
28. As a consequence of the reduced funding from the DWP it is necessary to review the eligibility criteria. **APPENDIX A** sets out the eligibility criteria and the rationale for change. In Phase 1 of the scheme the only change to the criteria will be the introduction of a local connection provision. This will allow better targeting of assistance to the residents of Central Bedfordshire. The Council’s statutory provision is already geared to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people, therefore this provision is targeted to those customers who genuinely require assistance, but are not eligible for the statutory provision.
29. It must be noted that any changes made to this criteria that may result in an increase in demand for welfare provision that would have a potentially negative effect on the fixed budget and may require additional funding. It is envisaged that in Phase 2 of the Project a broad consultation will be launched with regards to the Eligibility Criteria.
30. An Appeals Process has also been designed to enable customers to appeal decisions on both Emergency provision and Grant Provision. The scheme does not intend to provide a 24 hour service as all night emergencies will continue to be dealt with by the Council’s Emergency Duty Team

Administration of the Scheme

31. In designing the scheme for LWP it was key that it was embedded into the Council's Customer First programme to maximise efficiency gains and to provide a single point of access to all customers, through Customer Services. However, due to the lead-in periods for Customer First it will not be possible for the processes to be embedded with Customer Services by 1 April 2013. There are also issues surrounding data capture and complexities of using the QL IT system for Housing in a Customer Services environment
32. A change request has been incorporated into the Customer First Programme to accommodate Local Welfare Provision .It is anticipated that the changes will not be implemented until after 'go live' date for Local Welfare Provision around June 2013 . The CRM used by Customer Services would be a much more adaptable platform fit for purpose and be better able to handle data requirements.
33. As a consequence the Operational design of the scheme has been altered in order to accommodate the scheme successfully into the Customer First programme at a later date. Initially it is proposed that the scheme will be run by the Council's Housing Needs Service from 1 April 2013. **APPENDIX B** highlights the two operational designs that have been considered
34. This report proposes that Option 2 is the most viable Operational option for Phase1 of this scheme and minimises many elements of risk. By allowing the Housing Needs Service to run the scheme, intelligence and data on demand can be captured and used to design business process into Phase 2 and integration with Customer First. The Housing Needs Service is experienced in dealing with vulnerable households and also has experience of administering grant funded services for vulnerable households. This period will also allow for the fine tuning of procedures and processing and monitoring of the scheme and its effectiveness and indeed its future direction.

Conclusion and Next Steps

35. The Local Welfare Provision scheme Project will continue to be managed and developed up until the end of Phase1 with a 'go live' date of 1 April 2013. A communications plan has been developed and the DWP do not plan any publicity on the changes before February 2013
36. In February 2013 there will be an opportunity for key stakeholders to understand how Local Welfare Provision will work in Central Bedfordshire via an invited one day event

Appendices:

Appendix A – Eligibility Criteria

Appendix B – Operational Design Options Phase 1

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

Equality Impact Assessment

Rm 56 Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable LU6 1LF

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APPENDIX A



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Current DWP Criteria	Proposed CBC Criteria
<p><u>Crisis Loans</u></p> <p>You may be able to get a Crisis Loan for day to day living expenses if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are aged 16 or over, and • In an emergency or because of a disaster, you do not have enough money to meet the immediate needs of yourself and your family, if you have one <p>And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no other way to prevent serious damage or serious risk to the health, or safety of yourself or a member of your family <p>You may be able to get a Crisis Loan to help with paying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent in advance • Board and lodging in advance • Hostel charges <p>IF</p>	<p><u>Emergency Provision</u></p> <p>You may be able to get Emergency Provision for day to day living expenses if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are normally continuously resident in Central Bedfordshire; (6 out of last 12 months or 3 out of last 5 years) and • You are aged 16 or over, and • In an emergency or because of a disaster, you do not have enough money to meet the immediate needs of yourself and your family, if you have one <p>And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no other way to prevent serious damage or serious risk to the health, or safety of yourself or a member of your family <p>You may be able to get Emergency Provision to help with paying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent in advance • Board and lodging in advance • Hostel charges IF <p>You are normally continuously resident in Central Bedfordshire</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are aged 16 or over • and • In an emergency or because of a disaster, you do not have enough money to pay rent in advance, advance board and lodging charges or hostel charges, and there is no other way to prevent serious damage or serious risk to the health, or safety of yourself or a member of your family, or • You are moving out of a care home or institutional care, and • Your new tenancy is not for local authority accommodation, and • You have a Community Care Grant to help you get established <p>You may be able to get a Crisis Loan for items and services other than day to day living expenses if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are aged 16 or over, and • Because of a disaster you do not have enough money to meet the immediate needs of your family for items other than day to day living expenses. A disaster includes the effect of a major fire, flood or explosion, but does not include less serious situations such as a small fire in one room or a leak from a washing machine 	<p>AND/IF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are aged 16 or over and • In an emergency or because of a disaster, you do not have enough money to pay rent in advance, advance board and lodging charges or hostel charges, and there is no other way to prevent serious damage or serious risk to the health, or safety of yourself or a member of your family, or • You are moving out of a care home or institutional care, and • Your new tenancy is not for local authority accommodation, and • You have a Community Care Grant to help you get established <p>You may be able to get Emergency Provision for items and services other than day to day living expenses if:</p> <p>You are normally continuously resident in Central Bedfordshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are aged 16 or over, and • Because of a disaster you do not have enough money to meet the essential needs of your family for items other than day to day living expenses. A disaster includes the effect of a major fire, flood or explosion, but does not include less serious situations such as a small fire in one room or a leak from a washing machine <p>You cannot apply again within 28 days of any successful application. If more than one successful application is made then a financial review will be triggered</p>
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<u>Community Care Grants</u>	<u>Grant Provision</u>
<p>To qualify you must get one of these benefits (or likely to get them in the next 6 weeks):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Support • Income-related Employment and Support Allowance • Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance • Pension Credit <p>Also, one of the following must apply to you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are leaving residential or institutional care – eg a care home or prison • Are being resettled into a new home by your council or a voluntary organisation following an unsettled period in your life • Are looking after someone who is ill, disabled or just out of prison • Need help to stay in your home and not go into residential care or hospital • Need help with expenses to go to a relative’s funeral or visit someone who is ill • Need help because you or your family face exceptional pressure – eg because of a family breakdown or illness. <p>You cannot get a grant if you’ve already asked for help for the same things in the last 28 days.</p>	<p>To qualify you must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be normally continuously resident in Central Bedfordshire; and • be in receipt of one of these benefits (or likely to get them in the next 6 weeks): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Support • Income-related Employment and Support Allowance • Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance • Pension Credit • Universal Credit <p>Also, one of the following must apply to you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are leaving residential or institutional care – eg a care home or prison • Are being resettled into a new home by your council or a voluntary organisation following an unsettled period in your life • Are looking after someone who is ill, disabled or just out of prison • Need help to stay in your home and not go into residential care or hospital • Need help with expenses to go to a relative’s funeral or visit someone who is ill • Need help because you or your family face exceptional pressure – eg because of a family breakdown or illness. <p>You cannot get a grant if you’ve already asked for help for the same things in the last 28 days.</p>

Changes in Criteria

Crisis Loans now **Emergency Provision**

- **You are normally continuously resident in Central Bedfordshire; (6 out of last 12 months or 3 out of last 5 years)**
- **You cannot apply again within 28 days of any successful application. If more than one successful application is made then a financial review will be triggered**

Community Care Grants now **Grant Provision**

- **You are normally continuously resident in Central Bedfordshire; (6 out of last 12 months or 3 out of last 5 years)**

Alternatives

Assistance can be provided through other Statutory Services such as

- Children’s Services (S17 or S20 assistance (Children’s Act 1989 & 2004));
- Social Care Services;
- Statutory Homelessness Services;
- DWP assistance in the form of budgeting loans or transitional funding
- Charity and voluntary sector
- Alternative Funding is available for assistance from DWP

To broaden out the eligibility criteria may require extra funding and that may have a negative affect on other front line services provided by the Council

All customers who are refused assistance will be given a right of review. 2 days response for Emergency Provision and 21 days for Grant Provision

APPENDIX B

Operational Design Options Phase 1

Operational Model	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Option 1 – Customer Services Model</p> <p>The Customer Service Centre will manage all applications and decision making for Emergency Provision requests where appropriate following predefined scripts. Grant Provision calls will require data to be captured and an appointment to be scheduled with Housing via Outlook. All Customer data and outcomes to be recorded manually on a spreadsheet /database. Calls will be transferred to Housing if there are any issues /anomalies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls will be handled by Contact Centre fitting in with corporate agenda. • Resource levels higher and absence easier to manage. • Existing telephony capability in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Capture will be manual with no control over quality and accuracy. Data integrity and accuracy is a key deliverable as it is required to drive Phase 2 activity. • Any development to the housing information system (QL) required will impact timescales and potentially costs and these are not budgeted for in Project costs. • For Grant Provision there will be duplication of effort as contact will have to be recorded twice. Once by Contact centre on application and then again by Housing in QL when customer attends for interview. • With the development of the Customer Reception Management (CRM) system any designed process may have to be amended to fit with “Customer First” causing duplication of effort and unnecessary expenditure developing QL. • Difficult to agree the division of labour and resource costs with the Contact Centre at present as we still do not have call volumes .lengths and handling time data available. • Manual Processes may increase the risk of Customer Fraud

Operational Design Options Phase 1

Operational Model	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Option 2 – Housing Model</p> <p>Housing to manage the application process. A new telephone number and hunt group to be set up for Customers to call in. Applications will be managed following pre defined script. Emergency provision to be dealt with immediately. Grant Provision interviews to be booked directly into outlook. Data to be captured direct to QL (Housing IT system) and reported from system. QL housing scripts to be amended to accommodate required changes. Reports can then be produced directly from QL to assist with monitoring budgets and outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QL development minimal providing a more accurate reporting tool and efficient system. • More accurate data collected to understand fully what is required from Contact Centre in terms of resource and call handling so appropriate operational levels/budget allocation can be agreed for handover. • Handover to Contact Centre can be scheduled for Phase 2 and supports the Corporate agenda, developing and promoting Customer First. • Single point of contact for customers and providers • Seamless transition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource not in place and timescales short to get people seconded into roles. Potential risk. • Training resource for Housing not identified at present.

Meeting: Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 21 January 2013
Subject: Approach to establishing Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire
Report of: Cllr Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing
Summary: The report proposes an approach to establishing Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire as the local consumer champion for people who use health and social care services.

Advising Officer: Julie Ogle, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
Contact Officer: James Robinson-Morley, Commissioning Manager for Long-Term Conditions and Planned Care
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable by creating Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire as the consumer champion for people using local health and social care services.

Financial:

2. Base budget and Department of Health funding has been identified to support Healthwatch from 2013-15. The Council will assess the suitability of the proposed new company to effectively deliver the functions of Healthwatch and effective financial management by compliance with Charity Commission regulations.

Legal:

3. The Council's legal obligations are outlined in the text of the report. The proposals reflect the provisions of Part 14 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 as amended by the Health Services and Social Care Act 2012. The Government has recently made regulations which specify a number of criteria that must be met by Local Healthwatch Organisations. It will be important to ensure that Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire matches these criteria.

Risk Management:

4. The following risks have been identified:
 - Failure to discharge statutory responsibilities
 - Failure to identify and respond to the needs of the local community

- Failure to deliver the vision of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire
- Failure of collaborative working
- Lack of community engagement
- Risk of service/supplier failure
- Financial risks, including continuity of funding.

These risks have been identified and appropriate mitigating action will be taken.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. Healthwatch is to be a new legal entity which will continue functions carried out by LINK in addition to new responsibilities. TUPE regulations for relevant transfers apply when a business or undertaking or part of one transfers to a new employer or when a service provision change takes place. The employees employed by the current employer automatically become employees of the new employer when the transfer takes place. The employees affected have the right to be informed and consulted about these changes.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. Public authorities have a statutory duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and 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. National research demonstrates that health experiences can vary across a range of protected characteristics.
7. As part of the development of a service specification for Healthwatch an equality impact assessment has been developed. This has concluded that the specification recognises the need to promote equality and diversity to enable all service users and their representatives, irrespective of age, gender, disability and other protected characteristics to use this channel to voice problems and suggestions for improving the care they need and receive.
8. Equality and diversity requirements were considered to be well documented in the specification to ensure that the service is culturally sensitive and appropriate to the diverse needs of service users and flexible enough to meet the requirements of different people. It also has a focus on improving and widening accessibility, especially for hard to reach groups, through the use of a range of accessible routes including social media, internet, telephone and face-to-face mechanisms.
9. Consideration may need to be given to ensure mechanisms for data gathering and performance monitoring effectively track the involvement and outcomes for groups of people with protected characteristics, as well as geographical monitoring to ensure representative involvement from urban and rural areas. This would provide the necessary assurance that the local Healthwatch remains a representative voice of Central Bedfordshire residents.

Public Health

10. Healthwatch will play a key role in gathering patient experience data and representing the health concerns and experience of local people. Healthwatch will have input into the refreshing of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Central Bedfordshire to ensure that the health and wellbeing needs of local residents are identified.

Community Safety:

11. Not Applicable.

Sustainability:

12. Not Applicable.

Procurement:

13. An approved waiver will be sought stating the reasons for the approach being taken, as outlined in the text of this report.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Committee is asked to:-

- 1. Consider the approach to creating Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire as outlined in this report.**
- 2. Consider co-opting a representative of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire on to the Committee as the Local Involvement Network (LINK) will cease to exist from April 2013.**

Background information

14. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 aims to expand and develop patient and public involvement in health and social care. Nationally, Healthwatch England has been established to give a national voice to the key issues that affect people who use health and care services. In April 2013, local Healthwatch organisations will be set up across the country to ensure that the public and service users have a voice that influences health and social care services. Through the network of local Healthwatch organisations, Healthwatch England will make sure the voices of people who use health and social care services are heard by the Secretary of State, the Care Quality Commission, the NHS Commissioning Board. Upper tier local authorities will be under a statutory duty to establish a local Healthwatch organisation as an effective replacement for the existing Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) from April 2013.
15. The main differences between LINKs and Healthwatch will be:

LINKs	Healthwatch
Influence local services	Participate in decision making via the Local Authority and Health And Wellbeing Board
Focus on community voice	Provide information and signposting to individuals in addition to a focus on community voice

Local voice	Local voice and also a national voice through Healthwatch England
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16. Under the Act, the Council will also have responsibility for commissioning Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy from 1st April 2013. In the first instance, Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy for Central Bedfordshire will be commissioned for 1 year through a regional contract with other Local Authorities and the current regional provider for Independent Complaints Advocacy (ICAS), POhWER. This will enable the Council to gather more learning about what is required from a local Independent NHS Complaints Advocacy and to inform a procurement process for a new service from 1 April 2014. This approach also provides continuity of service for patients already involved in making a complaint about NHS services at a time of considerable other change in the health and social care landscape.
17. The Department of Health (DH) describes Healthwatch as being a ‘consumer champion’, reflecting the Department’s vision for Healthwatch to:
18.
 - (a) Provide information to the public about accessing health and social care services and exercising choice in relation to aspects of those services. This includes the signposting function currently provided by the Patient Advisory Liaison Service (PALS) becoming a function of Healthwatch from 1 April 2013.
 - (b) Make the views and experiences of people known to Healthwatch England, helping it to carry out its role as national champion
 - (c) Make recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission to carry out special reviews or investigations into areas of concern (or, if the circumstances justify it, go direct to the CQC with their recommendations, for example if urgent action were required by the CQC)
 - (d) Promote and support the involvement of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services
 - (e) Obtain the views of people about their needs for and experience of local health and social care services and make those views known to those involved in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of those services
 - (f) Make reports and make recommendations about how those services could or should be improved

19. Building on the role of LINKs, Healthwatch will have a duty to represent the views people of all ages who use health and social care services, including children and young people rather than just adults. Colleagues from Children's Services have been key partners in developing the approach to Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire. As part of this work, a presentation was made to the Central Bedfordshire Youth Parliament outlining Healthwatch and seeking views on how local children and young people want to be involved and represented through Healthwatch. The Youth Parliament gave a clear message to Council officers that children and young people wish to continue involvement in health and social care issues through existing programmes such as Young Inspectors and Young Commissioners. The Youth Parliament agreed that they will be part of Healthwatch and thereby ensure the views and experience of children and young people are represented through Healthwatch to the Children's Trust Board. Children's Services will also have a role in the performance management of Healthwatch.
20. The Council has a duty under the Health & Social Care Act 2012 to oversee the creation of a local Healthwatch organisation which is:
- (a) A corporate body (legal entity) carrying out statutory functions
 - (b) Not for profit
 - (c) Able to employ staff and sub-contract statutory functions (if deemed appropriate).
21. The Council will also have an ongoing responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire.

Learning from Healthwatch Pathfinder experience

22. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 is not prescriptive as to how local Healthwatch is developed and provides flexibility to Local Authorities to consider how they wish to proceed. As one of the national Pathfinder areas for Healthwatch the Council has been able to learn from other Local Authorities and key pieces of learning informing the approach to Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire include:-
- (a) Healthwatch as a network of networks which draws together data from a range of sources in order to provide members of the public with information about local services and produce a strong evidence base of customer experience to inform decisions by commissioners of local health and social care services
 - (b) Approaches in East Sussex, Norfolk and Staffordshire highlight that a collaborative approach with existing community and voluntary sector providers is key to creating a local Healthwatch organisation that can function as a network of networks.
23. The Council has also been learning from the experience of LINKs and recognises the commitment of volunteers who have given of themselves to listen to and help improve the experience of people who use local health and social care services. Legacy work has identified the following challenges faced by LINKs and which the proposals for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire seek to take into address:
- (a) A relatively low level of engagement by the wider community and voluntary sector with LINKs

- (b) The open membership model for LINKs, along with the tripartite structure of local authority, host organisation and the LINK itself, has led to a lack of identity and accountability
- (c) Issues of LINKs national visibility and leadership may perhaps be due to the lack of a national organisation, such as Healthwatch England, to provide and to oversee and support local arrangements.

Vision of values of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire

24. Responding to this learning, the vision and values for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire have been co-produced with stakeholders, including LINKs, through a programme of conferences, research and workshops. The vision for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire is as, “The local consumer champion promoting choice and influencing the provision of high quality health, social care and wellbeing services for all across Central Bedfordshire”. Some of the key values underpinning the delivery of this vision are that Healthwatch will:
- (a) Have local understanding
 - (b) Represent the health and social care views and experience of Central Bedfordshire communities
 - (c) Raise issues by drawing upon a robust evidence base of customer experience
 - (d) Work in partnership
25. A group of community and voluntary organisations, including the LINK, have been working collaboratively to produce a model for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire in line with the vision, values and also the learning from LINK and other Pathfinder areas. The Central Bedfordshire Healthwatch Pathfinder group is chaired by John Gelder, Director of Community and Voluntary Action (serving south Central Bedfordshire) and includes senior representation from:
- Autism Bedfordshire
 - Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
 - Carers in Bedfordshire
 - Centre for Voluntary Services (serving north Central Bedfordshire)
 - Disability Resource Centre
 - Headway (supporting people with acquired brain injuries and their families)
 - LINK for Central Bedfordshire
 - MIND
 - Older People’s Reference Group
 - Patient Advisory Liaison Service (PALS)
 - Voluntary Organisations for Children, Young People & Families (VOCyfp)

Corporate model

26. It is proposed that the group of local community and voluntary sector organisations which have been working on plans for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire should now create a company limited by guarantee with registered charity status which will deliver the statutory Healthwatch functions to Central Bedfordshire from 1 April 2013. The benefits of this approach are deemed as:
- (a) Learning from best practice examples in East Sussex, Essex and Norfolk which have adopted a similar approach
 - (b) Drawing upon the breadth of skills and expertise within the local community and voluntary sector whereas a competitive tender route may mean the Council commissioning one organisation to provide Healthwatch functions from the existing pool of Community and Voluntary Sector organisations involved
 - (c) The opportunity to build on what already exists across the community and voluntary sector, particularly in respect of information and signposting provision
 - (d) An opportunity to improve engagement across the community and voluntary sector which LINKs legacy work had identified as a lesson to be learned moving into Healthwatch.

Membership model

27. Membership of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire will be open to individuals who are living in, receiving care in, or caring for someone who lives or receives care in Central Bedfordshire. Membership will also be open to organisations delivering health and social care information, advice and guidance, community engagement, advocacy or research services to people living in, receiving care in, or caring for someone who lives or receives care in Central Bedfordshire.

Governance model

28. A Chair and Board of Directors will be recruited as volunteers and selected by an independent appointments panel based on evidence of relevant skills and experience (strategic leadership, finance, communications, etc) against specified role descriptions. The aim of this skills-based approach is to provide a focus for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire in hearing and representing the health and social care needs of the different communities within Central Bedfordshire. The role of the Chair and Board will be to provide the strategic leadership and governance of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire. Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire will be accountable to:
- (a) The public through its seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board and publication of an Annual Report
 - (b) Healthwatch England through its Annual Report and contribution of public experience data to a Healthwatch England database
 - (c) The Council as the authority responsible for commissioning Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire

Operational model

29. A paid Executive role will be recruited which will be responsible for the resourcing and delivery of the core functions of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire which have been identified as:
 - (a) **Local insight** – gathering local experience data from customers/patients and providers of health and social care services.
 - (b) **Local voice** - using the data gathered to represent the customer voice in decisions about local health and social care services.
 - (c) **Signposting and information** – building on and coordinating existing signposting and information provision to enable the communities of Central Bedfordshire to access health and social care services
30. Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire will share back office functions (HR/Payroll, ICT, etc) with existing voluntary organisations where appropriate to avoid duplication, maximise partnership working and support value for money.
31. All staff and volunteers of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire will have clear specified role descriptions to ensure a credible, professional and skills based approach to the work of the organisation.
32. The Committee is asked to consider co-opting a representative of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire in view current LINK arrangements ending in March 2013.

Funding

33. The Council will receive non-ringfenced funding for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire including the PALS signposting function from April 2013 to March 2015 in addition to current LINK funding within the Council's base budget.

Monitoring

34. Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire will be grant funded and this funding will be awarded on the basis that Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire is able to carry out its functions effectively. The Council, including Children's Services, will have responsibility for performance managing Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire and will monitor the work of Healthwatch on a quarterly basis against the service level agreement produced by the Council which sets out the key outcomes, outputs and performance indicators for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire. Secondary regulations for Healthwatch are expected in December 2012 and a Quality Framework will be issued by Healthwatch England in January 2013 which will form a key part of monitoring arrangements between the Council and Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire.
35. In the event that there is any serious deficiency in Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire's performance, the Council would agree a recovery plan with the provider which would set targets and timescales for improvements deemed necessary by the Council. The continuation of funding may be dependent on acceptance of and progress against the recovery plan.
36. In the unlikely event of service failure, the Council would have the option to terminate the service level agreement and go to the market to find an alternative provider.

Managing risk

37. A contingency plan is in place to go to the market to procure a local Healthwatch organisation. The risks to this approach are timescales and the probability that the Council would commission one organisation from the broader skill-pool of community and voluntary organisations currently involved in developing the proposed model for Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire.

Conclusion and Next Steps

38. The collaborative approach taken to creating Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire provides an opportunity to build on existing provision and respond to some of the weaknesses of previous models for public engagement in health and social care by creating a Healthwatch that has been developed and owned by existing organisations including LINK members.
39. This proposal for establishing of Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire will be put before the Council's Executive Committee on 5 February 2013.
40. Subject to the Executive's decision, the Council will work with the newly created company, or go to the market, to ensure a functional Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire by 1 April 2013.

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Meeting: Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 21 January 2013
Subject: Tenant's Scrutiny Panel and Designated Persons and Tenant's Complaints Panel
Report of: Cllr Mrs Carole Hegley , Executive Member for Social Care Health and Housing
Summary: The report proposes the setting up and adoption of a Tenant's Scrutiny Panel and Designated Persons and Tenants Complaints Panel for the Council's Landlord Service as part of the new revised regulatory requirements for social housing providers, under the Localism Act 2011.

Advising Officer: Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
Contact Officer: Carol Rooker, Head of Housing Management
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: South of Central Bedfordshire
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. As a landlord, the Council is responsible for providing good quality homes and services to the Council's tenants. Many of these residents are vulnerable.

Tenant scrutiny will provide a means of ensuring that the Council has sound financial and service management and this will contribute to the Council providing value for money, and enabling the Council to successfully deliver its priorities.

Financial:

2. The costs involved in developing and supporting the Tenants Scrutiny Panel and Complaints Panel can be covered within the existing Landlord Service Business Plan.

Legal:

3. The Council, as part of the new revised regulatory framework for social housing providers, is expected to give tenants a wide range of opportunities to influence, and be involved, in the following areas:

- Formulating their landlord's housing related policies and priorities
- Making decisions about how housing related services are delivered, including setting service standards
- Scrutinising their landlord's performance and recommending how performance might be improved

The new Tenants Scrutiny Panel will provide the formal scrutiny role for tenants, who will then, if necessary, hold the Council to account for any concerns they have with the services that they receive.

The new Designated Persons and Tenants Complaints Panel will also ensure that the Council responds to the changes in the way complaints against social landlords are processed.

Risk Management:

4. There is a reputational risk to the Council if there are inadequate arrangements in place to ensure that tenants are supported in being able to hold the Council as their landlord to account.

There is also a risk of intervention by the Homes and Communities Agency (Regulation Committee) if they consider that the Council is not complying with the new regulatory arrangements, in terms of co-regulation.

There is a governance risk of the Panel failing to act in the best interests of the tenants and community. The above risks will be mitigated by the introduction of clear terms of reference and a robust Code of Conduct for the Tenants Scrutiny Panel and the mechanism for reporting the Panel's findings back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

- 5 Not applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. The Council, as a public body, must act to eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimization and harassment against people on the grounds of race, religion or belief, age, sex, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and disability. Further, the duty requires the Council to advance equality of opportunity between different groups, and foster good relationships between different groups.

The new National Standard for Housing Providers - on Tenant Involvement and Empowerment – requires that the Council understands and responds to the diverse needs of tenants. The new Tenants Scrutiny Panel will assist in progress on meeting this aim.

The Panel's Terms of Reference refers to "committed to respecting the values of all members of the community it represents and will take active steps to ensure that it does not inadvertently discriminate on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission".

Any report or recommendations that the Panel may produce will still be subject to an equalities analysis.

Public Health

- 7 Good quality housing and services have a positive impact on public health and well being.

Community Safety:

- 8 Not applicable.

Sustainability:

- 9 Not applicable.

Procurement:

- 10 Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Committee is asked to recommend to the Executive that:-

- 1. The terms of reference are agreed.**
- 2. A Tenant's Scrutiny Panel and a Designated Persons and Tenant's Complaints Panel are established and that the Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Complaints procedure is revised to include the role of Designated Persons, in respect of housing complaints.**
- 3. That both Panels become operational in April 2013.**
- 4. That the Tenant's Scrutiny Panel be invited to present their reports and findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration**

Background

- 11 As part of the Government's new revised regulatory framework for social housing, housing providers are expected to support tenants in enabling them to monitor and shape the housing services that are provided, and to hold their landlords to account.
- 12 As part of this new requirement for co-regulation, the Council's tenants have been widely consulted on possible arrangements for Central Bedfordshire. Tenants have concluded that setting up a new formal Tenants Scrutiny Panel would ensure that tenants are at the heart of service delivery.
- 13 In order to prepare for these new arrangements, a small working group, with external consultancy support and including Councillors Turner and Mustoe, has been meeting on a regular basis, to prepare for this new role.
- 14 The Group has now completed the initial work in terms of agreeing the Panel's Terms of Reference, the required skills and experience of panel members, the recruitment process, and has now selected 5 Panel members to set up the first Tenant's Scrutiny Panel.
- 15 In addition to the new regulatory requirements, the Government is also introducing a number of changes in the way complaints against social landlords are processed.
- 16 At present, complaints from council tenants are referred to the Local Government Ombudsman but from April, tenant complaints will, instead, be referred to the Housing Ombudsman Service, and there is the creation of the role of Designated Person to support local resolution of complaints.

Activity and Structure of the Tenants Scrutiny Panel

- 17 The small working group has recommended that the Tenant's Scrutiny Panel should:-
 - Work on behalf of tenants to ensure that that the Council delivers housing services of the highest standard to all, providing and independent view on all aspects of housing services;
 - Ensure that the Council complies with the new regulatory framework in the way it delivers services by monitoring and challenging standards and performance;

- Ensure that the Council provides a high quality housing service that places tenants at the heart of the organisation.

18 In order to deliver the above objectives, The Tenant's Scrutiny Panel will:

- Gather data and other information to enable housing services to be scrutinised.
- Examine data and other information and make recommendations for service improvement.
- Scrutinise the efficiency of strategies, policies and operations.
- Report recommendations to Councillors and Senior Management and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee where the panel considers it appropriate.
- Agree and monitor action plans.
- Include a maximum of 12 members, and anyone living in a council property can apply to be a member of the panel.
- Membership will last for 3 years, before they will have to reapply
- If the panel numbers fall below 8, then recruitment will be recommended.
- Members must abide by a Code of Conduct

19 The Tenant's Scrutiny Panel will develop its own programme of work, considering all areas of housing services, and will consider various sources of evidence to assist in identifying and planning its work. It will produce reports, work with the Council to publish the results, and will prepare regular reports for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

See Appendix A - for proposed Terms of Reference and Appendix B for Governance arrangements.

20 The Panel members themselves are to be unpaid, although reasonable expenses will be paid.

21 The Landlord Service, however, will have to recruit dedicated administrative support to ensure that the Panel are supported to undertake their work.

22 The Panel will now begin a more intensive training programme and will be offered support to commence a project as a pilot before they become fully operational in April.

23 The Panel will fit into the current structures of tenant involvement as completely independent from current forums, but will refer their reports and recommendations through to this Committee. See appendix A

Designated Persons and Tenants Complaints Panel

24 At present, council tenant's complaints are referred to the Local Government Ombudsman. As from April 2013, all social housing complaints will now be dealt with by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

(Complaints about access to Housing and the Landlord Service will both be considered).

25 The following people (designated persons) can refer complaints to the Ombudsman:

- A Member of the House of Commons

- All Central Bedfordshire Members
 - A designated Tenant Panel
- 26 The introduction of the Designated Persons role is linked to the changing role of the Housing Ombudsman, which acknowledges that complaints are best resolved as soon as possible through the efforts of the Landlord.
- 27 The focus for the Housing Ombudsman will be on helping parties to reach resolution themselves, through the existing complaints procedure with the Designated Persons undertaking a role in taking the right steps to resolve disputes.
- 28 Complainants will have the opportunity to approach a Designated Person if they are not satisfied with the Council's final response to their complaint. The Designated Person may then act on the complainant's behalf, by for example requesting a service review of the outcome of the complaint or by referring the complaint to the Housing Ombudsman if they consider that the outcome is unreasonable or unfair.
- 29 The Housing Ombudsman will not consider complaints which in his/her opinion:
- Are made prior to having exhausted the Council's complaints process.
 - Are made within 8 weeks of having exhausted the Council's complaints procedure - unless a designated person has refused to refer the complaint to the Ombudsman or has agreed to the complaint being brought to the Ombudsman.
- 30 In addition, the Ombudsman may refer cases to the Designated Person if he/she considers that it may increase the chance of local resolution.
- 31 Although consideration was given to having the Complaints Panel made up of the new Tenant's Scrutiny Panel, on balance it has been suggested that a separate Panel with clear role distinctions is the preferred way forward. The Panel members will be provided with a comprehensive training on their role, as this will be essential to ensure a consistent, impartial and balanced approach to the process.
- 32 It is proposed that the Panel would meet when a complaint is referred to it by a complainant who has exhausted the internal procedure. The Panel members would comprise of 3 members so that there is a manageable number of views to take into account, and decisions can be made based on the majority.
- 33 The Panels would be supported, organised and managed by the Customer Relations Team, who are there to ensure that the Panel members are able to consider the complaint and ensure that the complainant has a fair hearing.
- 34 The Customer Relations Team will also advise on the how the Landlord Services processes works and what the Regulations say about Housing complaints and the escalation process. The Panel will consider the complaint and will determine their recommendations, with the Chair being responsible for ensuring the process is fair.

- 35 The Panel would hear from both the Housing Service and the complainant, (and the investigator will also be present, if the complaint has been investigated by an external investigator). The complainant would be asked to focus on their reasons for their ongoing dissatisfaction and the resolution that they would like to see taking place. They would also hear representations from the Assistant Director, who would have been the officer responsible for the decision to take no further action on the complaint. Following the representations, the Panel would deliberate in private.
- 36 The Panel would need to consider whether the complaint has been handled thoroughly and fairly, and would have the option of referring the case back to the Assistant Director recommending that further work be undertaken to seek a remedy or further investigation, or the proposed remedy be reconsidered.
- 37 As the level of complaints is relatively low, there is a risk of the Panel “losing touch” if they only meet a few times a year. To mitigate this, it is proposed that the role of a “critical friend” be developed and that quarterly meetings be held with the Panel to review the nature and outcome of complaints and any learning opportunities to improve service delivery.
- 38 Recruitment to the Tenant’s Panel has not yet commenced, but it is possible that some tenants may be more interested in this role, as there is only expected to be a minimal time implication. Members of existing Tenant Forums such as the Way Forward Panel and Sheltered Tenants Action Group may also be interested in joining this new Panel. (Existing members of these groups are precluded from joining the Tenant’s Scrutiny Panel unless they resign their previous role - to ensure true scrutiny).
- 39 Currently, Members of Parliament and Councillors both play a role in representing local constituents with concerns regarding council services. The role of Designated Person will be in addition to this and it is possible that Members of Parliament hard pressed for time, or without an in depth knowledge of the area or topic may fast track the complaint directly to the Housing Ombudsman, losing the opportunity for a local resolution.
- 40 It is proposed that early communications with local Members of Parliament and Council members will be put in place to explain the new process that will operate within the Landlord Service.
- 41 There are still a small number of issues to resolve in terms of how the new Scheme will work, but expert advice is being sought so that the scheme will be ready for operation by April 2013. As part of the preparations, the Adult Social Care, Health and Housing complaints procedure will also need to be amended to incorporate the Tenants Panel, and their role in the process. There will also be a new procedure for the Tenants Panel members on handling complaints.
- 42 In addition, as part of the preparations for the new Scheme, a comprehensive communications plan will also be drafted, to ensure that tenants, Members of Parliament and Members are all aware of the new arrangements.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- 43 As recruitment to the Tenant’s Scrutiny Panel is almost complete, it is now necessary to get approval from the Executive for the new Panel to be properly constituted and for it to be recognised as the formal scrutiny arrangement undertaken by tenants.

- 44 The Working Group have worked well together to develop these proposals, and are very clear that the Tenant's Scrutiny Panel will work on behalf of the Council's tenants to ensure that the Council delivers housing services of the highest standard to all, by providing an independent view on all aspects of housing services.
- 45 This joint approach to service delivery and overview is very much in line with the new co-regulatory framework for social housing. Regulatory intervention is to be regarded as the back stop arrangements with self regulation to be the main means of oversight.
- 46 The Government's focus on regulation has developed to one that is less about inspection and auditing of social housing, with a system where the onus is placed on residents to identify issues of concern. The proposed new Tenants Panel for complaints further complements this approach.
- 47 This new tenant-led scrutiny role provides a formal route for tenants to raise these concerns with the Landlord Service. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee can also ask the Panel to investigate any issue if thought appropriate, in a similar way to a Task and Finish Group arrangement.
- 48 The Tenant's Scrutiny Panel will now commence a training programme in order for them to start this important, exciting and challenging role on behalf of tenants. The Customer Relations Team will also begin their arrangements, alongside Landlord Service staff to prepare for the new complaints process and Tenants Panel recruitment.
- 49 Once the Tenants Scrutiny Panel is up and running and has completed their first project, the Panel will be invited to report on their findings to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Appendix A - Terms of Reference of Tenants Scrutiny Panel.

Appendix B - How the Panel fits into current governance arrangements.

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Appendix A

Central Bedfordshire Council Tenants Scrutiny Panel

Terms of Reference

Vision Statement: Question, Understand and Improve

1. Aims and Objectives

The Tenants Scrutiny Panel will work on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) tenants to ensure that CBC delivers housing services of the highest standard to all, by providing an independent view on all aspects of housing services.

To ensure that CBC complies with the new regulatory framework in the way it delivers services by monitoring and challenging standards and performance.

To ensure that CBC provides a high quality housing service that places tenants at the heart of the organisation.

2. The Role of the Tenants Scrutiny Panel

Gather data and other information to enable housing services to be scrutinised.

Examine data and other information and make recommendations for service improvement.

Scrutinise the efficiency of strategies, policies and operations.

Report recommendations to Councillors and Senior Management.

To agree and monitor action plans.

3. Membership

There will be a maximum of 12 Panel members.

Any person living in property owned by CBC is invited to apply for membership to the Panel.

Members will be recruited through a rigorous and comprehensive process to establish that they have the relevant skills and experience.

The membership will be for 3 years, after which members will be able to re-apply.

If, due to loss of members, the Panel drops below 8 members there will be another recruitment campaign to increase numbers to 12 members.

All members will be expected to abide by the Code of Conduct, which is drawn up between CBC and the Tenants Scrutiny Panel.

4. Work Programme

The Tenants Scrutiny Panel will develop its own programme of work, considering all areas of housing services.

The Tenants Scrutiny Panel will consider various sources of evidence to assist in identifying and planning its work.

The Tenants Scrutiny Panel will write reports on all topics discussed and work with CBC to publish the results.

5. Procedure and Frequency of Meetings

The Tenants Scrutiny Panel will meet as frequently as the members think necessary and will agree the dates, times and locations of meetings.

A Quorum will consist of over 50% of members.

A Chair and a Vice-Chair will be elected and will hold the post for 1 year. Elections will be held each year.

Each formal meeting will be recorded and a copy of the meeting minutes sent to all interested parties.

All minutes are to be signed off by the Chair and 2 other members of the Tenants Scrutiny Panel.

6. Training and Development

All members of the Tenants Scrutiny Panel must undertake an initial session of training enabling them to perform their role to a high standard.

Training will be continued at intervals to bring the Tenants Scrutiny Panel up-to-date with any regulatory changes and other identified training required to help them in their tasks.

Appraisals will be undertaken annually.

7. Equality, Diversity and Principles

The Panel is committed to respecting the values of all members of the community it represents and will take active steps to ensure that it does not inadvertently discriminate on grounds of any of the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

8. Access to Information

Panel members will comply with the Access to Information Protocol

9. Communication

The Panel members will comply with the Communication Protocol.

The Panel will be expected to work with CBC to promote its activities, this may include writing an Annual Report published in 'Housing Matters' and on CBC website.

10. Reporting

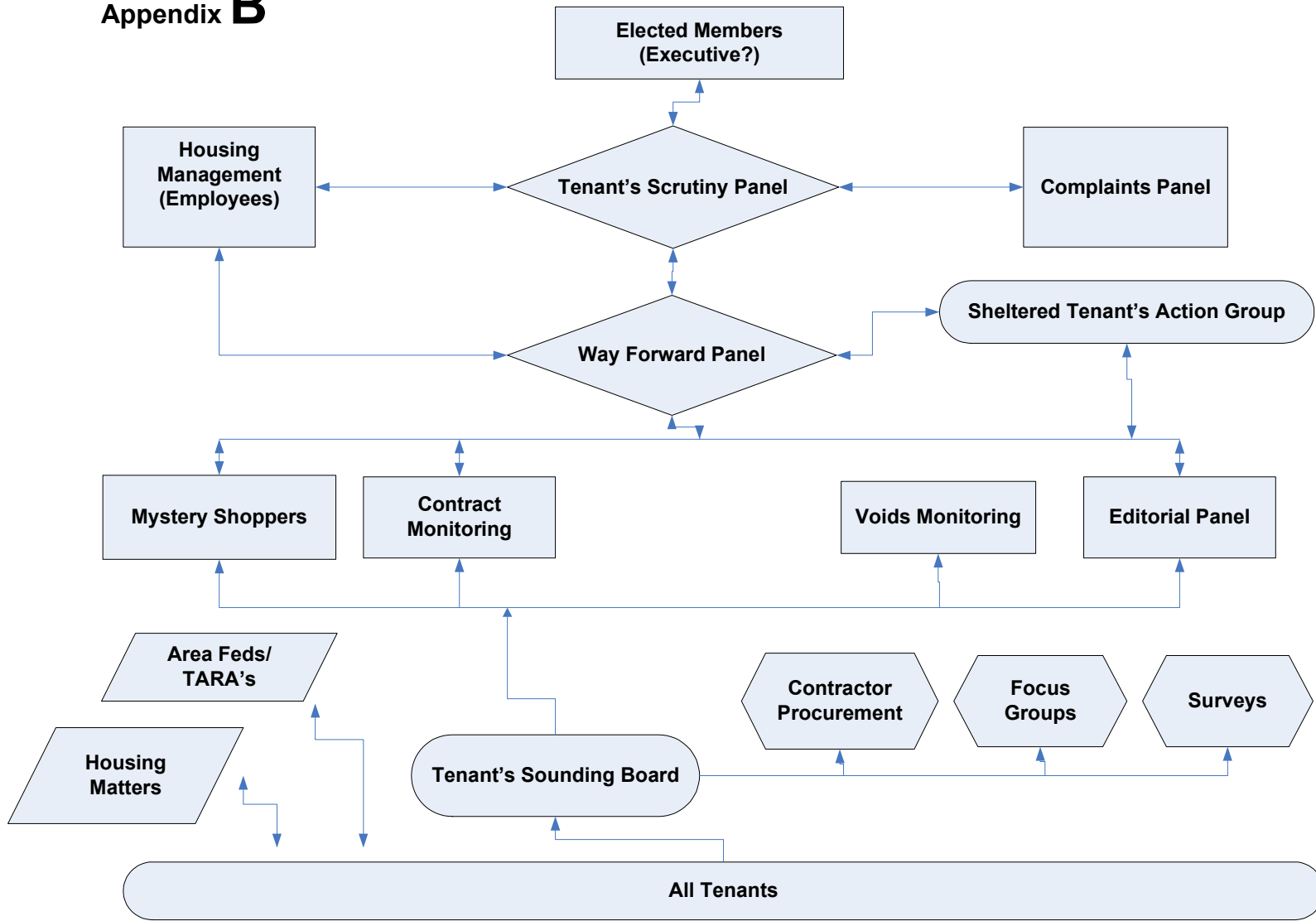
The Panel will prepare regular reports to Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for approval.

11. Support

The Tenants Scrutiny Panel will have the support of the Tenant Involvement Officer at CBC who will provide, as necessary, procedure support.
The members of the Tenants Scrutiny Panel are un-paid; however expenses will be reimbursed in line with the existing CBC expenses policy.

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Appendix B



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Meeting: Social Care, Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date: 21 January 2013
Subject: Draft Budget 2013/14, Medium Term Financial Plan 2013 – 2017 and Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17
Report of: Cllr Maurice Jones, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources
Summary: The report allows Members the opportunity to review the Council's draft Budget for 2013/14, Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme, which was presented to Executive on 8 January 2013.

Advising Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer
Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Executive

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Financial:

1. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Legal:

2. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Risk Management:

3. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

4. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Equalities/Human Rights:

5. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Public Health

6. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Community Safety:

7. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Sustainability:

8. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Procurement:

9. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Overview and Scrutiny:

10. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Committee is asked to:

1. consider the Council's Draft Budget for 2013/14, Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17; and
2. submit its comments, observations and recommendations in respect of the Executive's proposals with particular reference to the Social Care, Health and Housing proposals, to the meetings of the Executive on 5 February 2013.

Executive Summary

Members are requested to bring along the following papers issued for the meeting of the Executive on 8 January 2013 to this Committee meeting:

1. Draft Budget 2013/14 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2013 – 2017 (Executive Item 08); and
2. Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2016/17 (Executive Item 09).

Appendices:

None

Background Papers (open to public inspection):

None

Meeting: Social Care, Health & Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 21 January 2013

Subject: Fees and Charges 2013/14

Report of: Cllr Maurice Jones , Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources

Summary: The report proposes the revised fees and charges rates to be effective from 1 April 2013 and identifies those charges where increases are different from the 2% advisory increase as per the 2013/14 Budget Strategy.

Advising Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer

Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Head of Financial Performance

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. The annual review and setting of the Council's Fees and Charges are integral to the Council's Budget Strategy and the legal requirement to deliver a balanced budget. The review ensures a rigorous, responsible and realistic approach is taken to determine the appropriateness and relevance of the Council's schedule of fees and charges. Setting a balanced budget ensures the Council allocates its resources to deliver the priorities. These are:

- Enhancing Central Bedfordshire
- Improved Educational Attainment
- Better Infrastructure
- Great universal services
- Value for money

Financial:

2. The financial implications are set out in the report. The proposals set out in this report may be subject to amendment, once the Local Government Financial Settlement has been announced. At the time of writing this report this announcement is still awaited and it could have significant adverse financial implications for the Council, requiring it to make adjustment to the charges proposed in this report

Legal:

3. The Council has various powers to charge for aspects of the services it provides. The general rule is that when it is carrying out a statutory duty the Council can only make a charge where there is specific power to do so.

Section 93 of the Local government Act 2003 provides that when the Council is providing a discretionary service, it may charge for the service, provided the person receiving the service has agreed to its provision. Overall the income from such charges must not exceed the cost of the provision.

Risk Management:

4. Risks relating to service take-up and organisational reputation can be associated with increases to fees and charges that are perceived to be 'comparatively' high. The key risks are:

- Subject to the level of increase (and in view of the current financial climate), services might become unaffordable to some members of the community, which may impact take-up and therefore overall income levels. This may also impact on the Council's reputation.
- Those paying fees and charges may perceive that a higher than expected increase on any given area will be used to cross-subsidise increased costs of other service areas and not to cover the direct cost of the service they receive. This again may present a reputational risk.
- Services subject to significant increases in fees might attract unfavourable media attention, which again could result in reputational damage to the Council.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. Not applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. Where appropriate, Equalities Impact Assessments will be carried out for proposals.

Community Safety:

7. Not applicable.

Sustainability:

8. Not applicable.

Procurement:

9. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Committee is asked to:-

1. Consider the report and schedule of proposed fees and charges and comment as necessary to the Executive

Background

10. The Council's Charging Policy states that '*All fees and charges will be reviewed annually and adjusted as necessary in line with the Council's charging policy. The Chief Finance Officer will provide services with guidance each year as to the maximum inflation rate that may be applied.*'

11. It also states that '*All fees and charges should be reviewed on a more fundamental basis at least every 3 years, where it will be necessary to examine all the factors set out below in accordance with good practice guidance i.e. the CIPFA Practical Guide for Local Authorities on Income Generation (Fully revised 2008).*' This was undertaken in 2010/11 with the Revenue Income Optimisation Project where successful business cases were integrated into the fees and charges as agreed by Council in February 2011 and published thereafter. The next review is scheduled for autumn 2013.

In accordance with the policy, the Chief Finance Officer has advised that the minimum inflation rate to be applied in line with the Corporate Budget Strategy is 2% which is below the latest reported Retail Price Index. Where there have been significant variations from this advisory level these have been identified separately in this report.

12.

The proposals set out in this report may be subject to amendment, once the Local Government Financial Settlement has been announced. At the time of writing this report this announcement is still awaited and it could have significant adverse financial implications for the Council, requiring it to make adjustment to the charges proposed in this report

General 2% increase

13. For the majority of services there will be a 2% increase for 2013/14. There are instances where this is not practically possible and these are highlighted in the following paragraphs. The detail of the changes is set out in Appendix A.

14. Social Care Health and Housing

Adult Social Care charges have been increased by 2% in line with the Council's budget strategy. It is usual practice to increase these charges in line with the DWP statutory increase in benefits and pensions. The inflation rate that is expected to be applied is 2.2% (based on CPI for September 2012) but this is subject to final confirmation by the government. If this is confirmed then the 2% proposals would stand. If not the charges can be reviewed again once the announcement is made.

15. As part of the Landlord Services' plans to develop an Outreach Service to non-tenants a new charge is proposed that will combine the provision of a Careline Emergency Response facility with one or more visits from a Sheltered Housing Officer per week.

16. In Learning Disabilities it is considered that the charge for Linsell House is no longer representative of the costs involved in providing the service. An initial evaluation is being conducted by the Head of Learning Disabilities and Mental Health and the Finance Manager to determine the level of disparity and to make recommendations for the level of increase which may differ from the 2% currently proposed

17. In Mental Health services consideration over 2013/14 will be given to the advisability of implementing the charge for adult customers with mental health needs attending day centres provided by the NHS
18. Children's Services
Music Services
Children's Services are recommending to hold prices for music services at the 2012/13 rate. The service was redesigned in 2011 to be a front end cost neutral provision.
19. Sustainable Communities
Key Changes include:
20. Public Protection
Licences:
Riding establishments – it is proposed to vary the cost of the licence based on the number of horses. This means that those who have the highest risk pay the most. The variances will better reflect the cost to the Council and reduce burden on businesses.
Dangerous wild animals and renewal of dangerous wild animals, Pet shops, Animal breeders and Animal Boarding Establishments – it is proposed to reduce the cost of the licence so that they better reflect the cost to the Council and reduce burden on businesses.
Animals Boarding and Breeding – where animal breeders and animal boarding are carried out on the same site, it is proposed to charge a reduced combined rate to reflect the reduced cost to the Council.
Animal Home Boarding – it is proposed to introduce a new charge due to an increase in the number of home run boarders.
Zoos – it is proposed to change the way this licence is charged for to better reflect the amount of officer time required.
Licensing of Hackney Cabs and Private Hire Vehicles – following consultation with the Licensing Committee and the trade, it is proposed to freeze the charges.
Acupuncturists – a new charge for acupuncturists already registered with a recognised professional body is proposed to be introduced due to the reduction in work required by the Council.
21. Building Control
High Hedges – it is proposed to increase the charge to better reflect the cost of the service including the need to run any potential appeals
22. Highways and Transport
Off street parking hourly charges, penalty charge notices and permits (except annual – see below) are proposed to be held at 2012/13 rates.
Parking permits – following requests from Members it is proposed to decrease the Residents permit per annum.
Book 25 visitors day tickets – due to the low take up it is proposed to reduce this charge. It will also be offered in conjunction with the first permit to try and increase take up.

Replacement of concessionary travel permits and Travel Aid Scheme – it is proposed to increase these charges to better reflect the true cost and bring the Council in line with other Concessionary Fare Authorities.

Construction of Crossover – it is proposed to charge a 10% admin fee to cover the costs of administration

23. Rights of Way

Documents – it is proposed to add £2 for postage and packing for documents when a request is made to post them.

24. Libraries

Following benchmarking it is proposed to freeze the following library charges:

- CDs
- Videos
- Fines
- Lost and damaged items
- Requests (apart from Additional charge for books borrowed from outside Bedfordshire)
- Lost ticket replacement
- Colour CD-ROM and internet prints
- Colour photocopies
- UK faxes

Picture hanging service – it is proposed to delete this charging structure as it is not required (i.e. the service does not receive requests).

Display of commercial posters and Libraries sale items – it is proposed to delete this charging structure as it is not required (i.e. the service does not receive requests). More fundamentally, the service wants to use library wall space to create attractive displays for library events and activities and promote their own services in order to increase usage.

Charity and commercial group sales – it is proposed to delete this charging structure as it is not required (i.e. the service does not receive requests). It was originally set up when the library service used to receive requests from charities to operate charity Christmas card sales. This has not happened for many years.

Meeting Room Hire – it is proposed to harmonise the Leighton Buzzard Theatre meeting room hire charge, with the Leighton Buzzard (and Flitwick) Libraries’ room hire charge.

25. Planning

Pre application advice - This has now been replaced by a new charging scheme due to user feedback. The future scheme will make a simpler charging regime and one which does not discourage larger developments.

26. Corporate Resources

27. The Registration Service is provided for Bedford Borough Council via a Service Level Agreement and both authorities must agree those fees which are set locally.

28. Fees for marriages and civil partnerships use at Local Authority premises have been held at 2012/13 levels.
29. Fees for Celebratory Ceremonies have been reduced as a consequence of a change of process which has reduced costs.
30. Local Land Charges are required by a statutory instrument to be non profit making and the current set fees are at an appropriate level to comply with this.
31. Charges for Freedom of Information (FOI) requests that require more than 18 hours to collate and extract information to complete are subject to the FOI Act Fees Regulations where the charge can be no more than £25 per hour.

Fees and Charges Schedule

32. The full revised schedule in respect of the Social Care, Health and Housing directorate is shown at Appendix A.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Fees and Charges Schedule

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

None

Appendix A

Adults Social Care

Directorate: Social Care Health and Housing	2012/13 Rate	2013/14 Rate
	£	£
		Upper
Housing		
Service Charges (VAT n/a) - per week (48 week basis)		
Door Entry Systems	0.20	0.20
District Heating	3.70 - 19.20	3.80 - 19.60
Communal Heating	0.10 - 4.10	0.10 - 4.20
Communal Cleaning	0.40 - 5.90	0.40 - 6.00
Communal Electric	0.10 - 6.80	0.10 - 6.90
Window Cleaning	0.30	0.30
General Management for sheltered and mini schemes	0.10 - 2.90	0.10 - 3.00
Staircase Lighting - General Dwellings	0.10 - 1.50	0.10 - 1.50
Supporting People Charges (VAT n/a) - per week (48 week basis)		
Red House Court	19.10	19.50
Other sheltered accommodation	19.00	19.40
Designated elderly person dwellings	6.80	6.90
Community Alarm System		
persons in council sheltered accommodation or disabled	3.70	3.80
not in council sheltered accommodation (includes VAT)	4.40	4.50
Guest Rooms		
Per night		
Single	9.30	9.50
Double	14.50	14.80
Laundry - per let or week whichever is the shorter	6.60	6.70

Directorate: Social Care Health and Housing	2012/13 Rate	2013/14 Rate
	£	£
Garages VAT n/a)		
Per week exclusive of rates (48 week basis)		
Council Tenant	9.60	9.80
Not Council Tenant (includes VAT)	11.50	11.70
Cesspit Charges (VAT n/a) - per week (48 week basis)	4.00	4.10
Emergency Accommodation Management Fee (VAT n/a)		
Self contained accommodation	n/a	3.50
Shared accommodation single person	n/a	3.50
Shared accommodation family of 2	n/a	4.00
Shared accommodation family of 3+	n/a	4.50
Short Term Leased Properties (VAT n/a) - per week (52 weeks)	146.40	149.30
Homeless Hostel (VAT n/a) - per week (52 weeks)		
Scheme Manager	36.50	37.20
Communal Heating	1.50	1.50
Communal Electric	3.00	3.10
Heating & Domestic Hot Water	3.80 - 5.70	3.90 - 5.80
TV	0.30	0.30
Communal Cleaning	2.30	2.30
Window Cleaning	0.30	0.30
Communal Television (VAT n/a) - per week (48 week basis)	0.30	0.30
Careline Emergency Response (VAT n/a) - per week (48 week basis)	2.70	2.80
Outreach Service (VAT n/a)		
Careline + 1 visit from Sheltered Housing Officer per week	n/a	4.50
Careline + 2 visits from Sheltered Housing Officer per week	n/a	6.00
Careline + 3 visits from Sheltered Housing Officer per week	n/a	8.00

	2012/13 Rate	2013/14 Rate
Directorate: Social Care Health and Housing	£	£
Sealing on Redemption Fee (+ registry search fee)		
Sealing on Redemption Fee (VAT n/a) - one off fee	107.10	109.20
Land Registry Search Fee (VAT n/a) - one off fee	4.00	4.00
Charges for reference to banks & building societies (VAT n/a)	27.90	28.50
Retrospective Consent Applications (RTB) (VAT n/a)	41.20	42.00
Consent for Cable Installations (VAT n/a)	121.30	123.70
Housing Act 2004 Enforcement (VAT n/a)		
Recipient of Housing Act Enforcement Notice (per person)	204.00	208.10
Admin charge for undertaking Works in Default in relation to enforcement activity - per Enforcement Notice	20% of cost	20% of cost
Houses of Multiple Occupation		
Licensing Scheme (per property) - license granted for 5 years	389.70	397.50
Traveller site pitch fees (VAT n/a) - per week (52 weeks)		
Single pitch	95.20	97.10
Double pitch	103.80	105.90
Service charges	9.43	9.60
Sheltered Housing		
Sheltered Communal Lounge hire (per hour)	12.90	13.20
Careline Response Charge (VAT n/a - per response)	20.40	20.80
Big Button Telephone (VAT n/a) - supply and fit	14.30	14.60

Directorate: Social Care Health and Housing	2012/13 Rate	2013/14 Rate
	£	£
Charges to Customers and Individuals <i>Maximum Applicable charge following Financial Assessment</i>		
Residential Care (VAT n/a) Linsell House (Home for Adults with Multiple Disabilities) (per week)	1,863.20	1,900.50
Day Opportunities and Day Care (VAT n/a) Day Centres for Adults with Learning Disabilities (per day)	51.50	52.50
Day Centres for Adults with Mental Health Needs (per day)		TBA
Day and Social Centres for Older People (per day)	28.90	29.50
Travel to Day Centre (per journey)	1.50	1.50
Domiciliary Care Home Care (per hour) (VAT n/a)	17.80	18.20
Care provided in Supported Living units (per hour) (VAT n/a)	17.80	18.20
Care provided in Extra Care Sheltered Housing (per hour) (VAT n/a)	17.80	18.20
Telecare Services Telecare Service provided to meet eligible social care needs per week (VAT	4.00	4.10
Flat rate charge Meals: (VAT n/a) Frozen meal (per meal)	3.20	3.30
Hot meal (per meal)*	3.60	3.70
Meals at day centres (per meal)*	3.60	3.70

Directorate: Social Care Health and Housing	2012/13 Rate	2013/14 Rate
	£	£
Telecare Services		
Telecare Service provided outside social care eligibility criteria where customer has VAT exemption (VAT n/a)	4.00	4.10
Telecare Service provided outside social care eligibility criteria	4.80	4.90
Fee for Issue of a Blue Badge	10.00	10.00
Charges to Organisations and Other Local Authorities		
Social Care Services		
Linsell House (Home for Adults with Multiple Disabilities) (per week)	1,863.20	1,900.50
Day Centres for Adults with Learning Disabilities incl. transport (per day)	63.20	64.50
Day Centres for Adults with Learning Disabilities excl. transport (per day)	51.50	52.50
Day Centres for Older People - per day incl. transport (per day) (VAT n/a)	42.90	43.80
Day Centres for Older People excl. Transport (per day) (VAT n/a)	28.90	29.50
Lettings: (VAT n/a)		
Side Room / Small Room		
up to 4 hours	28.80	29.40
additional hour	5.20	5.30
Main Hall		
up to 4 hours	41.20	42.00
additional hour	10.50	10.70
Kitchen		
up to 4 hours	13.80	14.10

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Meeting: Social Care, Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date: 21 January 2013

Subject: Draft Budget report for the Housing Revenue Account (Landlord Service) Business Plan

Report of: Cllr Maurice Jones, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Cllr Mrs Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing

Summary: The report sets out the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) during the first year of the Self Financing regime and presents the proposed 30 year Landlord Service Business Plan. The report also looks at the budget setting process for 2013/14, and the assumptions that have been made in arriving at the projections in the Plan, to create the financial framework for the Landlord Service to operate within. There is a further proposal concerning the average increase to tenants' rents.

Within this report, recommendations are made concerning debt repayment over the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), together with proposals that will effectively make resources available, to enable the Council to achieve the ambitions proposed in the developing Housing Asset Management Strategy (HAMS).

Advising Officer: Julie Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing and Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer

Contact Officer: Tony Keaveney, Assistant Director Housing

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Those in which council houses are situated, entirely in the south of Central Bedfordshire.

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Financial:

1. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Legal:

2. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Risk Management:

3. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

4. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Equalities/Human Rights:

5. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Public Health

6. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Community Safety:

7. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Sustainability:

8. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Procurement:

9. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

Overview and Scrutiny:

10. Please see Executive Report (circulated separately).

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Committee is asked to:

1. **consider the Council's Draft Budget report for the Housing Revenue Account (Landlord Service) Business Plan; and**
2. **submit its comments, observations and recommendations in respect of the proposals to the meeting of the Executive on 5 February 2013.**

Executive Summary

Members are requested to bring to this meeting the papers issued for the meeting of the Executive on 8 January 2013 in respect of the draft budget report for the Housing Revenue Account (Landlord Service) Business Plan (Item 10).

Appendices:

None

Background Papers (open to public inspection):

None

Meeting: Social Care Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date: 21 January 2013
Subject: Work Programme 2012/2013 & 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 Social Care Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee will contribute indirectly to all of the Council priorities.

Financial:

1. Not applicable.

Legal:

2. Not applicable.

Risk Management:

3. Not applicable.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

4. Not applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

5. Not applicable.

Public Health

6. Not applicable.

Community Safety:

7. Not applicable.

Sustainability:

8. Not applicable.

Procurement:

9. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. that the Social Care Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee
 - (a) considers and approves the draft work programme attached, 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

10. Attached at **Appendix A** is the current work programme for the Committee. The Committee is requested to consider the programme and amend or add to it as necessary. This will allow officers to plan accordingly but will not preclude further items being added during the course of the year if Members so wish and capacity exists.
11. 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.

Task Forces

12. The Committee has currently established Task Forces to cover the following:-
 - A Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Task Force to consider the review of acute services in the South East Midlands region (the Healthier Together programme);
 - hospital discharge in Central Bedfordshire; and
 - the strategic change agenda for housing.

Conclusion

13. Members are requested to consider and agree the attached work programme, subject to any further amendments/additions they may wish to make and highlight those items within it where they may wish to establish a Task Force to assist the Committee in its work.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Social Care Health and Housing OSC Work Programme
Appendix B – The latest Executive Forward Plan.

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)
None

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands

Appendix A

Work Programme for Social Care, Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2012 - 2013

Ref	Indicative Overview & Scrutiny Meeting Date	Report Title	Report Description	Comment
1.	04 March 2013	Joint Community Bed Review		
2.	04 March 2013	Evaluation of the Short Stay Pathway	To consider a 6-month review of performance in relation to the Short Stay Medical Unit at Poplars and the Step Up Step Down facility at Greenacres.	For comment
3.	04 March 2013	Mental Health	To receive a presentation relating to mental health and the implications of loneliness on a persons mental health	This presentation was requested by the OSC at their meeting on 18 June 2012 and it has been recommended that this be delivered with support from SEPT.
4.	04 March 2013	Tenancy Strategy	To receive the draft Tenancy Strategy for Central Bedfordshire in light of public consultation	For comment. Executive: 19 March 2013

NOT PROTECTED

Note: an item on the Committee's work programme and updates from LINK and the Executive Member will be received at each meeting

Last Update: 20 December 2012

Ref	Indicative Overview & Scrutiny Meeting Date	Report Title	Report Description	Comment
5.	04 March 2013	Prevalence of Problem Drug Use	To consider activity undertaken by the Council in relation to the prevalence of problem drug users.	This presentation was requested by the OSC at their meeting on 18 June 2012 to be considered by the appropriate OSC. An invitation will be extended to all SCOSC Members to attend due to the cross-over of this issue.
6.	04 March 2013	Arlesey Village Agent	To receive an evaluation report on the Arlesey Village Agent scheme.	As requested at the OSC on 17 December 2012.
7.	04 March 2013	Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group: Integrated Plan		
8.	29 April 2013	Biggleswade Hospital	To receive an update in relation to Biggleswade Hospital.	
9.	29 April 2013	Q3 Budget Monitoring Report	To receive Q3 reports for the Social Care Health and Housing Directorate in relation to (1) Capital Budget; (2) Revenue Budget; and (3) Housing Revenue Account	Executive: 19 March 2013 Reporting by exception
10.	29 April 2013	Q3 Performance Monitoring Report	To receive the Q3 performance position for the Social Care Health and Housing Directorate.	Executive: 19 March 2013 Reporting by exception
11.	10 June 2013	Homelessness Strategy	To consider the Homelessness Strategy	For Members to inform proposals Executive: TBC

NOT PROTECTED

Note: an item on the Committee's work programme and updates from LINK and the Executive Member will be received at each meeting

Last Update: 20 December 2012

Ref	Indicative Overview & Scrutiny Meeting Date	Report Title	Report Description	Comment
12.	10 June 2013	Allocations Policy		For Members to inform proposals Executive: TBC
13.	10 June 2013	Implications of the Health Reforms	To receive a presentation providing an update on the implications of the health reforms and introducing health colleagues to the Committee.	To receive a presentation providing an update on the implications of the health reforms and introducing health colleagues to the Committee.

NOT PROTECTED

Note: an item on the Committee's work programme and updates from LINK and the Executive Member will be received at each meeting

Last Update: 20 December 2012

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Appendix B

Central Bedfordshire Council Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 February 2013 to 31 January 2014

- 1) During the period from **1 February 2013 to 31 January 2014**, 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 Nigel Young	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) Whilst the majority of the Executive’s business at the meetings listed in this Forward Plan will be open to the public and media organisations to attend, there will inevitably be some business to be considered that contains, for example, confidential, commercially sensitive or personal information.

This is a formal notice under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012 that part of the Executive meeting listed in this Forward Plan will be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

- 4) 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.
- 5) The agendas for meetings of the Executive will be published as follows:

Meeting Date	Publication of Agenda
15 May 2012	3 May 2012
3 July 2012	21 June 2012
21 August 2012	9 August 2012
2 October 2012	20 September 2012
6 November 2012	25 October 2012
4 December 2012	22 November 2012
8 January 2013	20 December 2012
5 February 2013	24 January 2013
19 March 2013	7 March 2013
7 May 2013	25 April 2013
25 June 2013	13 June 2013

Central Bedfordshire Council

Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 February 2013 to 31 January 2014

Key Decisions

Date of Publication: 28 December 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.	Commissioning Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire -	To adopt the approach being taken to commissioning Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire.	5 February 2013	LINK Workshop – June 2011 Community Stakeholders Conference – September 2011 Healthwatch Steering Group (LINK, CBC, NHS) Workshop – March 2012 Monthly updates to LINK Board and to public via LINK Bulletin since June 2012 Voluntary and Community Sector Provider Workshop - August 2012 Monthly 'Pathfinder' meetings of voluntary and community organisations and LINK since September 2012.	Report	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 04/01/13 to Contact Officer: James Robinson-Morley, Lead Commissioner (Carers & Service User Engagement) Email: james.robinson-morley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6681

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)
2.	A1 South Biggleswade Roundabout -	To consider the proposed development of an enlarged roundabout on the A1 at the South Biggleswade junction.	5 February 2013		Exempt Report - Exempt Paragraph 3	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 04/01/2013 to Contact Officer: Peter Burt, MRICS, Head of Property Assets Email: peter.burt@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5257
3.	Abolition of the Discretionary Social Fund and Transfer of Funding to Central Bedfordshire Council for a New Provision -	To approve the proposal for The local Welfare Provision Scheme.	5 February 2013		Report and Appendices	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 04/01/13 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)
4.	Contract for Refurbishment of Timberlands Gypsy and Travellers Site -	To award the contract to the preferred contractor for the refurbishment of Timberlands Gypsy and Travellers Site, Pepperstock, Slip End.	5 February 2013		Report Exempt Appendices - Exempt Paragraph 3	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 04/01/13 to Contact Officer: John Holman, Head of Housing Asset Management Email: john.holman@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5069 or ian.johnson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5202, Ian Johnson, Housing Asset Manager
5.	Local Lettings Policy to Rural Exception Sites in Central Bedfordshire -	To adopt the Local Lettings Policy for Rural Exception Sites for Central Bedfordshire Council.	5 February 2013	A wide ranging public and stakeholder consultation has taken place between February 2012 and May 2012. Method via questionnaires and consultation workshop in April 2012. Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be consulted on 17 December 2012.	Report	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 04/01/13 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)
6.	Implementation of the Refreshed School Organisation Plan: New School Places Programme 2013/14 - 2017/18 -	To consider the implementation of the refreshed School Organisation Plan: New School Places programme 2013/14 to 2017/18.	5 February 2013		Report	Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 04/01/13 to Contact Officer: Pete Dudley, Assistant Director Children's Services (Learning & Strategic Commissioning) Email: pete.dudley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk k Tel: 0300 300 4203
7.	Council's Admissions Arrangements for the Academic Year 2014/15 -	To determine the Council's Admissions Arrangements for the Academic Year 2014/15.	5 February 2013		Report	Deputy Executive Members for Children's Services Comments by 04/01/13 to Contact Officer: Pete Dudley, Assistant Director Children's Services (Learning & Strategic Commissioning) Email: pete.dudley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk k 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)
8.	Land Rear of Central Garage, Cranfield Development Brief -	To endorse the Land Rear of Central Garage, Cranfield Development Brief for Development Management purposes.	5 February 2013	Members and Officers briefed from August 2012. Members and Officers briefed on 4 September 2012 at West Placemaking. Public exhibition on 13 November 2012. Public consultation between 13 November and 13 December 2012.	Land Rear of Central Garage, Cranfield Development Brief Site Allocations Development Plan Document (Adopted 2011)	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 04/01/13 to Contact Officer: Stuart Robinson, Planning Officer (Project Support/Admin) Email: stuart.robinson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4236
9.	Council to Build New Council Housing -	To approve proposals to develop affordable Extra Care Housing in Dunstable.	5 February 2013	Representatives of the Council's Sheltered Tenants Action Group (STAG) have met jointly with members of the Older Persons Reference Group to inform the development of proposals for Dunstable. In addition, STAG and also Way Forward group will be consulted in January 2013. The Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the proposals on 21 January 2013.	Report and appendices	Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 04/01/13 to Contact Officer: Tony Keaveney, Assistant Director Housing Services Email: tony.keaveney@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5213

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)
10.	Options for Resolving Current Delays in Academy Conversions caused by Disputed Liabilities for Pension Payments -	To receive a report on the options for resolving current delays in Academy Conversions caused by Disputed Liabilities for Pension Payments.	5 February 2013		Report - Exempt under Paragraph 1	Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 04/01/13 to Contact Officer: Pete Dudley, Assistant Director Children's Services (Learning & Strategic Commissioning) Email: pete.dudley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4203
11.	Legal and Planning Consultancy Frameworks -	To receive a report on the Legal and Planning Consultancy Frameworks.	5 February 2013		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 04/01/13 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)
12.	Approval of Expenditure for the Procurement of a Corporate Call-off Contract for the Provision of Legal Consultancy Services -	In line with corporate procurement procedures, the Executive Committee is required to approve contract values exceeding £500k. Intended decision: Approval of expenditure for the procurement of a corporate call-off contract for the provision of legal consultancy services.	5 February 2013	Alan Fleming – Director Business Services Peter Burt – Head of Property Assets Terry Gittins – Procurement Process & Policy Manager		Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 04/01/13 to Contact Officer: Alan Fleming, Service Director - Business Services email: alan.fleming@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6968
13.	Astral Park Football Project -	To approve expenditure for playing pitches, changing facilities and car parking at Astral Park, Leighton Buzzard. The project is led by Leighton Linlade Town Council, with project management advice and support provided by Leisure Services. The scheme is funded entirely by Section 106 funds of £1.1m.	19 March 2013	Consultation carried out with Leighton Linlade Town Council.	Report	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Comments by 18/02/13 to Contact Officer: Jill Dickinson, Head of Leisure Services Email: jill.dickinson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4258

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)
14.	Outdoor Access Improvement Plan -	To endorse the Outdoor Access Improvement Plan.	19 March 2013	The Central Bedfordshire and Luton Local Access Forum has established a sub group input into the development of the plan this will be followed by a full 13 week public consultation with both stakeholder and public engagement activities during period.	Report	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Comments by 18/02/13 to Contact Officer: Paul Cook, Head of Transport Strategy and Countryside Access Email: paul.cook@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6999
15.	Revenue and Capital Quarter 3 Budget Monitor Reports -	To consider the revenue and capital quarter 3 budget monitor reports.	19 March 2013		Reports	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 18/02/13 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance 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)
16.	Draft Gypsy and Traveller Plan -	To recommend to Council the draft Gypsy and Traveller Plan for approval prior to submission.	19 March 2013	In line with Regulation 18 of the new Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012, consultation will have been undertaken in autumn 2012 on what a Gypsy and Traveller plan ought to contain. This report follows that consultation and will propose the preferred sites and policies for Gypsy and Traveller provision.	Report and draft Plan	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 06/04/13 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)
17.	East Leighton Linslade Framework Plan -	To consider the east Leighton Linslade Framework Plan for the delivery of up to 2,500 dwellings and 16 hectares of employment land together with its supporting infrastructure.	19 March 2013	<p>September 2012 – Placemaking meeting to take place at which the Landowners are to offer a presentation on the Draft Framework Plan.</p> <p>October 2012 – Executive Member and Director of Sustainable Communities to sign off the Draft Framework Plan for the purposes of public consultation.</p> <p>October 2012 – A 7 week public consultation to begin that will include a 2 day public exhibition event. Consultation with residents, councillors and statutory consultees. Consultation will be conducted using letters, emails, the Council’s consultation services, including Central Bedfordshire Council updates and the Member’s bulletin.</p> <p>February 2013 – A presentation on the Framework Plan (together with consultation responses) will be given to the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee seeking Members to endorse it before the Executive take a decision.</p>	Framework Plan and the Framework Plan supplementary written document	<p>Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development</p> <p>Comments by 18/02/13 to Contact Officer:</p> <p>Mark Saccoccio, Local Planning and Housing Team Leader Email: mark.saccoccio@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5510</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)
18.	Local Area Transport Plans -	To endorse the third round of Local Area Transport Plans (LATP) (covering Potton, Chiltern, Haynes and Old Warden) and which form part of the Local Transport Plan adopted in April 2011, together with endorsement of updates to the Arlesey and Stotfold and Biggleswade and Sandy LATPs that formed part of the first round of plans.	19 March 2013	Public consultation between 1 August 2012 – 23 November 2012.	Report	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Comments by 18/02/13 to Contact Officer: Ben King, Principal Transport Planner - Transport Strategy Team Email: ben.king@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4824
19.	Draft Supplementary Planning Document : Wind Turbine Development in Central Bedfordshire -	To adopt the guidance for development management purposes.	19 March 2013	Public consultation due to take place in January 2013.	Report	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Comments by 18/02/13 to Contact Officer: Sue Frost, Senior Planning Officer Email: sue.frost@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4952

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.	Tenancy Strategy 2013 - 2018 -	To adopt a Tenancy Strategy for Central Bedfordshire	19 March 2013	A wide ranging public and stakeholder consultation is taking place between November 2012 and February 2013. Method is questionnaires and consultation workshops, including a Member seminar held in August 2012. Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be consulted on 4 March 2013.	Draft Tenancy Strategy 2013 - 2018	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 01/02/2013 Tony Keaveney, Assistant Director Housing Services Email: tony.keaveney@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5213
21.	Commissioning of New School Places -	To receive a report on the commissioning of new school places.	19 March 2013		Report	Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 18/02/2013 to Contact Officer: Rob Parsons, Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning Email: rob.parsons@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5572

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)
22.	Community Infrastructure Levy -	To approve the consultation and subsequent Submission of the Community Infrastructure Levy draft charging schedule.	14 May 2013		Report	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 13/04/13 to Contact Officer: Jonathan Baldwin, Senior Planning Officer Email: jonathan.baldwin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5510
23.	Central Heating Installations Contract District Wide -	To award the contract to the preferred contractor for the central heating installations contract district wide for 2013 to 2016 to council housing properties.	14 May 2013		Report	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 13/04/13 to Contact Officer: Basil Quinn, Housing Asset Manager Performance Email: peter.joslin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5395 or basil.quinn@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5118, Peter Joslin, Housing Asset Manager

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)
24.	Central Bedfordshire Council's Equality Strategy -	To approve the Council's Equality Strategy which sets out the Council's vision and approach to ensuring all sections of the community get high quality services appropriate to their needs and also sets out how the Council will meet its legal responsibilities to ensure consideration of equality is integrated in to its service planning, delivery and human resource systems.	14 May 2013	Public Consultation, Equality Forum and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Draft Equality Strategy 2013-16	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 13/04/13 to Contact Officer: Clare Harding, Corporate Policy Advisor (Equality & Diversity) Email: clare.harding@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6109
25.	Arrangements for Fostering and Adoption with Bedford Borough Council -	To agree the future arrangements between Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council for the delivery of the Fostering and Adoption Services. Possible contract negotiations will be ongoing between the two Councils during spring 2013.	25 June 2013		Report	Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 24/05/13 to Contact Officer: Fiona Mackirdy, Interim Head of Adoption and Fostering Email: fiona.mackirdy@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6752

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)
26.	Revenue and Capital Provisional Outturn 2012/13 -	To consider the revenue and capital provisional outturn 2012/13.	25 June 2013		Reports	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 24/05/13 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147
27.	Leisure Strategy -	To adopt Leisure Strategy: Chapter 2, Recreation and Open Space Strategy and Chapter 3, Playing Pitch Strategy as supplementary planning documents, subject to minor amendments. To adopt Chapter 4 Physical Activity Strategy and Overarching Leisure Strategy.			Chapter 2, Recreation and Open Space Strategy Chapter 3, Playing Pitch Strategy Chapter 4, Physical Activity Strategy Overarching Leisure Strategy	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services Jill Dickinson, Head of Leisure Services Email: jill.dickinson@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4258

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)
28.	Central Bedfordshire's Flood and Water Management Act 2010 Duties -	To approve a local flood risk strategy for Central Bedfordshire and to create a Sustainable Urban Drainage Advisory Board.	3 September 2013	<p>CBC is required under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. The draft strategy will be subject to public consultation. Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the draft strategy and the public consultation response to the strategy in August/September 2013.</p> <p>Following Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs confirmation of the mandatory sustainable drainage application processes, CBC will also be required to establish a SUDS Approval Board to evaluate, approve and adopt suitable SUDS measures for all new developments.</p>	Summary of Flood and Water Management Act Draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	<p>Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Services</p> <p>Iain Finnigan, Senior Engineer - Policy and Flood Risk Management Email: iain.finnigan@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4351</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)
NON KEY DECISIONS						
29.	Housing Revenue Account 2013/14 -	To recommend to Council the Housing Revenue Account budget 2013/14 for approval.	5 February 2013		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 04/01/13 to Contact Officer: Chief Finance Officer Email: charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6147 or tony.keaveney@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5210, Tony Keaveney, Assistant Director Housing Services
30.	Budget 2013/14 and Medium Term Financial Plan -	To recommend to Council the proposed budget for 2013/14: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue budget • Capital budget • Fees and Charges 	5 February 2013	Draft budget proposals have been considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committees.	Reports - the Capital Programme Report may contain exempt information under paragraph 3	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 04/01/13 to Contact Officer: Chief Finance 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)
31.	Quarter 3 Performance Report -	To consider quarter 3 performance report.	19 March 2013		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 18/02/13 to Contact Officer: Elaine Malarky, Head of Programmes & Performance Management Email: elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5517
32.	Minerals and Waste Core Strategy -	To recommend to Council the adoption of the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy.	7 May 2013	A wide range of stakeholders were involved in consultations undertaken from 2006 to 2012, using methods which include an internet portal, deposit of hard copies at points of presence, and displaying the Core Strategy on the Council website. Consultees included the Parish Councils, statutory bodies, special interest groups, minerals industry, waste management industry, and individuals who had expressed an interest at previous consultations.	Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and the Inspector's report following the Examination in public.	Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development Comments by 06/04/12 to Contact Officer: Roy Romans, Minerals and Waste Team Leader Email: roy.romans@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6039

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 2012/13 the Forward Plan will be published on the thirtieth day of each month or, where the thirtieth day is not a working day, the working day immediately proceeding the thirtieth day, or in February 2013 when the plan will be published on the twenty-eighth day:

Date of Publication	Period of Plan
13.04.12	1 May 2012 – 30 April 2013
15.05.12	1 June 2012 – 31 May 2013
15.06.12	1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013
13.07.12	1 August 2012 – 31 July 2013
15.08.12	1 September 2012 – 31 August 2013
14.09.12	1 October 2012 – 30 September 2013
05.10.12	1 November 2012 – 31 October 2013
30.10.12	1 December 2012 – 30 November 2013
30.11.12	1 January 2013 – 31 December 2013
28.12.12	1 February 2013 – 31 January 2014
30.01.13	1 March 2013 – 28 February 2014
28.02.13	1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014

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