

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



**please ask for** Sandra Hobbs  
**direct line** 0300 300 5257  
**date** 3 July 2014

## NOTICE OF MEETING

### EXECUTIVE

Date & Time

**Tuesday, 15 July 2014 at 9.30 a.m.**

Venue

**Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford**

Richard Carr  
**Chief Executive**

To: The Chairman and Members of the EXECUTIVE:

Cllrs	J Jamieson	– Chairman and Leader of the Council
	M Jones	– Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources
	M Versallion	– Executive Member for Children's Services
	C Hegley	– Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing
	N Young	– Executive Member for Regeneration
	B Spurr	– Executive Member for Community Services
	Mrs P Turner MBE	– Executive Member – Partnerships
	R Stay	– Executive Member – External Affairs

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**

To receive apologies for absence.

2. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 27 May 2014.

3. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members any declarations of interest.

4. **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive any matters of communication from the Chairman.

5. **Petitions**

To consider petitions received in accordance with the Scheme of Public Participation set out in Annex 2 of Part A4 of the Constitution. The following petition will be presented:

- Social Club at Co-op site, Houghton Regis.

6. **Public Participation**

To respond to general questions and statements from members of the public in accordance with the Scheme of Public Participation set out in Appendix A of Part A4 of the Constitution.

7. **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

To receive the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015.

<b>Decisions</b>
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<b>Item</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Page Nos.</b>
8.	<b>March 2014 - Revenue Budget Monitoring Provisional Outturn Report (Subject to Audit)</b>	37 - 72
	The report sets out the provisional financial outturn position for the General Fund (subject to audit) for 2013/14 as at the end of March 2014.	
9.	<b>March 2014 - Capital Budget Monitoring Provisional Outturn Report ( Subject to Audit)</b>	73 - 102
	The report provides information on the provisional capital outturn position for 2013/14 as at March 2014.	
10.	<b>March 2013/14 Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring Provisional Outturn Revenue and Capital Report ( Subject to Audit)</b>	103 - 114
	The report provides information on the 2013/14 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) provisional outturn revenue and capital position as at March 2014.	
11.	<b>Customer Strategy</b>	115 - 140
	To seek the Executive's agreement to the Customer Strategy of Central Bedfordshire Council.	
12.	<b>Discretionary Housing Payment Policy</b>	141 - 186
	The report summarises the Councils Discretionary Housing Payment Policy and the results of the public consultation on the Policy.	
13.	<b>A Review of the Impact on Children Living with Domestic Abuse: Report of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee February 2014</b>	187 - 204
	The report reviews the actions taken in Children's Services following the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny meeting on Domestic Abuse.	
14.	<b>Agreement to Homes and Communities Agency Grant Funding Conditions</b>	205 - 218
	The report proposes the Executive agrees to accept the funding conditions for the receipt of capital grant in respect of the development of Priory View, Dunstable and the Empty Homes Leasing scheme.	

15. **Capital Proceeds arising from the sale of the former LuDun Industries site** 219 - 224

The report proposes investing the Council share of the proceeds arising from the sale of the former LuDun site to create an on-going legacy through a Trust Fund for people with disabilities in Central Bedfordshire.

16. **Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract (North)** 225 - 230

To seek approval to extend the Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract (North).

17. **New Residential Children's Homes Contract - Delivering Outcomes for Vulnerable Children** 231 - 236

The report proposes that the Executive agrees to award a new contract for the management of residential children's homes from November 2014.

**Monitoring Matters**

- | <b>Item</b> | <b>Subject</b>                      | <b>Page Nos.</b> |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| 18.         | <b>Quarter 4 Performance Report</b> | 237 - 252        |

To consider the quarter 4 performance report.

19. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To consider whether to pass a resolution under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that the consideration of the items is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**Exempt Papers**

- | <b>Item</b> | <b>Subject</b>  | <b>Exempt Para.</b> | <b>Page Nos.</b> |
|-------------|---|---------------------|------------------|
| 20.         | <b>Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract (North)</b> | 3                   | 253 - 256        |

To receive the exempt papers for the Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract (North).

21. **Children's Homes Contract**

3

257 - 260

To receive the exempt papers for the award of the Children's Homes Contract.

This agenda gives notice of items to be considered in private as required by Regulations (4) and (5) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012.

Details of any representations received by the Executive about why any of the above exempt decisions should be considered in public: none at the time of publication of the agenda. If representations are received they will be published separately, together with the statement given in response

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**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 27 May 2014.

**PRESENT**

Cllr J G Jamieson (Chairman)

Executive Members:	Cllrs	C Hegley B J Spurr R C Stay	Cllrs	Mrs P E Turner MBE M A G Versallion J N Young
Deputy Executive Members:	Cllrs	A D Brown Mrs S Clark I Dalgarno A L Dodwell	Cllrs	D J Hopkin A M Turner B Wells R D Wenham
Apologies for Absence:	Cllr	M Jones		
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	P N Aldis Mrs A Barker A R Bastable R D Berry D Bowater Mrs B Coleman Mrs R J Drinkwater P A Duckett C C Gomm Mrs S A Goodchild	Cllrs	Ms A M W Graham D Jones Mrs J G Lawrence D J Lawrence K C Matthews J Murray B Saunders A Shadbolt I Shingler Miss A Sparrow
Officers in Attendance		Mr S Andrews Mr R Carr Ms D Clarke Mrs M Clay Dr D Cox Mr R Fox Mrs S Frost Mrs E Grant Mrs S Hobbs Mr T Keaveney Mr J Longhurst Mr S Mooring Ms C Murphy		Strategic Planning and Housing Manager Chief Executive Director of Improvement and Corporate Services Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer Chief Assets Officer Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy Local Planning and Housing Manager Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services Committee Services Officer Assistant Director Housing Services Director of Regeneration and Business Environmental Policy Manager Principal Planning Officer

Mr R Parsons

Head of School Organisation and  
Capital Planning

Mr M Pyecroft

Major Projects Officer

Mr C Warboys

Chief Finance Officer

E/14/1. **Minutes**

**RESOLVED**

**that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

E/14/2. **Members' Interests**

Councillor Stay declared a prejudicial interest in items 8 'Ashton CofE VA Middle School proposal to change the School's Age Range from a 9 to 13 years Middle School to an 11 to 16 years Secondary School' and 9 'Proposals to Close Brewers Hill Community Middle School, Streetfield Community Middle School and Ashton Church of England VA Middle School', as he was a School Governor at Caddington Village School, which was itself consulting on age range changes. Councillor Stay had voiced his opinions on this issue publicly before the meeting. Councillor Stay was not present during these items.

It was noted that all Executive Members had a personal interest as they were School Governors.

E/14/3. **Chairman's Announcements**

Lightening had struck Red House Court, Houghton Regis, a sheltered housing scheme, on Thursday 22 May 2014. Residents had to be evacuated and rehoused with either relatives at Caddington Hall. The Chairman had visited Caddington Hall and received positive feedback from residents on how well they had been supported and thanked all those involved. He requested the Chief Executive to thank those employees involved, which Members supported.

The Chairman announced that item 18 'Housing Allocations Policy' would be considered after item 7 'Forward Plan of Key Decisions'.

E/14/4. **Petitions**

See minute number E/14/8.

E/14/5. **Public Participation**

The following statements were received in accordance with the Public Participation Scheme.



**1. Mike Bishop**

Mr Bishop spoke to item 11 'Development Strategy – Revised Pre-Submission Version' and posed a question about the delivery of the requirement for 30% of new homes to be affordable, bearing in mind that exceptions had had to be made on financial viability grounds.

The Executive Member for Regeneration explained that the Council strived to deliver the 30% affordable housing, but in some cases this was not possible due to the need for critical infrastructure. However, there were developments in Flitwick and Ampthill, for example, where over 30% of the houses would be affordable. The proposed new Market-Led Sustainable Development Policy would also allow a certain amount of development to come forward outside of settlement envelopes that would allow for additional affordable housing.

**2. Mr Allen**

Mr Allen asked for an update regarding road maintenance in Sandy, following a meeting with the Executive Member for Community Services and Council officers.

The Executive Member for Community Services agreed to provide Mr Allen with a written response.

See minute E/14/8 for public participation in relation to Ashton, Brewers Hill and Streetfield Middle Schools.

E/14/6. **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

**RESOLVED**

**that the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 May 2014 to 30 April 2015 be noted.**

E/14/7. **Housing Allocations Policy for Central Bedfordshire**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing that set out the proposed Housing Allocations Policy. The Policy would ensure that social housing in Central Bedfordshire was allocated on a fair and transparent basis to meet local housing need, incentivise employment and promote social mobility.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing highlighted that any non-resident wanting to go onto the housing register would need to be in contracted employment in Central Bedfordshire for a period of at least 6 months. The policy would also help veterans and their families to resolve their housing need, in line with the Central Bedfordshire Armed Forces Community Covenant.

Members noted that additional consultation would be carried out on the specific proposal that older people should have priority for a home in close proximity to where they lived.

Reason for decision: To ensure that the Council had in place and maintained an up to date Housing Allocations Policy that was in line with legal requirements, having taken into consideration the views of stakeholders.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the Central Bedfordshire Housing Allocations Policy, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted as the Allocation Scheme for social housing in Central Bedfordshire;**
- 2. to authorise the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing, in consultation with the Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing to:**
  - 2.1 allocate social housing in accordance with the Housing Allocations Policy, at such time as the Policy could be implemented successfully;**
  - 2.2 amend or vary the detailed wording of the Housing Allocations Policy, where to do so does not change the strategic intent or overarching aims of the policy, so as to ensure the Policy was and remains effective in operational terms, to achieve the Policy objectives;**
  - 2.3 consult for four weeks on the specific proposal that Older People should have priority for a home in close proximity to where they live, to then decide either to retain, modify or remove this specific policy, having taken into account the views of the stakeholders and the public;**
  - 2.4 develop and implement on an annual basis, a Lettings Plan that is aligned to the aims and intent of the Housing Allocations Policy; and**
  - 2.5 develop and implement monitoring arrangements to ensure that the aims of the Policy were achieved and to support the Council's duty to promote Equality, in line with the mitigations set out in the Equalities Impact Assessment.**

E/14/8.

**Determination of the Statutory Proposal of the Governing Body of Ashton CofE Voluntary Aided Middle School**

In accordance with the Scheme of Public Participation set out in Annex 2 of Part 4 of the Constitution, the Executive received the following petition:-

**Save Brewers Hill Community Middle School**

Mrs Varney and Mrs Boulton presented a paper petition, containing a total of 792 signatures opposing the closure of Brewers Hill Community Middle School.

Prior to consideration of the report and the subsequent item, and in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Public Participation, the Chairman invited 7 speakers to address the Executive. Members of the public raised comments and concerns, which in summary included the following:-

- governors and teachers at Ashton Middle School were confident that they would be able to deliver the appropriate curriculum for a secondary school;
- small secondary schools were not unique as there were 377 such secondary schools in England;
- Ashton Middle School had appointed a Business Manager to ensure that their 5-year plan was robust;
- the reason why parents had not listed Ashton Middle School in the admissions process was due to the threat of the school being closed;
- that parents in Dunstable should have the option of choosing a faith-based middle school for their child;
- that pupils attending Ashton Middle School were happy and being supported to learn to their best ability;
- that parents were concerned that the closure of the Middle Schools would affect their children's education;
- that pupils at other upper schools such as Harlington and Redbourn were still achieving high grades without the need for the schools to become secondary; and
- Streetfield Middle School had circulated a business case for them to become a primary school to deliver education for 0-19 years on one campus.

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Children's Services and additional paperwork provided by Ashton Middle School which outlined a significant change proposed by the Governing Body of Ashton Middle School, a Church of England Voluntary Aided School in Dunstable. The prescribed alteration being proposed by the School was to its existing upper and lower age limit with a view to becoming a Secondary School with effect from September 2015, eventually accommodating children aged 11 to 16 years.

An evaluation of the proposal had been carried out against the factors set out in the Department for Education's guidance for decision makers and this indicated weaknesses within the proposal and the information provided by Ashton Middle School.

The Executive took into consideration:

- the demand for the school;
- the size of the school, including the playing fields;
- the national curriculum;
- community cohesion; and
- travel and accessibility.

Reason for decision: To ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations as set out in the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) Regulations 2013, to determine the proposal made by the Governing Body of Ashton CofE VA Middle School of a prescribed alteration to change the school's age range. The Executive was required to make a decision within two months of the end of the representation period which concluded on the 14 April 2014.

## **RESOLVED**

1. **that the procedures established by The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) and The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, have been complied with in bringing forward the proposal to change the age range of Ashton C of E VA Middle School as outlined in the report and in the school's consultation document as attached at Appendix A to the report;**
2. **that receipt of the representation on the 8 April 2014 at Appendix C to the report in respect of the proposal to make a prescribed alteration to change the age range of Ashton C of E VA Middle School and the statutory notice as set out in Appendix B to the report, issued on the 17 March 2014 under section 19(3), of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 be confirmed;**
3. **that receipt of the business case dated 4 April 2014 attached at Appendix D to the report submitted by the Governing Body of Ashton C of E VA Middle School outlining its support and rationale for the proposal to change the age range of Ashton C of E VA Middle School as outlined in the report be confirmed; and**
4. **that the statutory proposal, (Appendix B) published by the Governing Body of Ashton C of E VA Middle School on 17 March 2014, to change the age range of Ashton C of E VA Middle School, the linked Prescribed Alterations (Appendix A) and the current business case (Appendix D) and the statutory proposal for the reasons set out in paragraph 76 of the report be rejected.**

E/14/9.

**Consideration of the outcome of statutory consultations of proposals to close Brewers Hill Community Middle School, Streetfield Community Middle School and Ashton Church of England (C of E) Voluntary Aided (VA) Middle School in August 2016.**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Children's Services that provided information on the responses to the consultations on the phased closure of Brewers Hill Middle School and Streetfield Middle School and the Church of England Voluntary Aided School of Ashton Middle from September 2015, with full closure from August 2016. The responses to each of the consultations had not identified any viable alternative proposals.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Children's Services acknowledged that there would be new housing development in Dunstable and Houghton Regis but the forecast indicated that this would not produce significant additional pupil yield in the relevant area that could not already be accommodated within the surplus places that currently existed. If a decision was taken in August to close the three schools the sites would need to be offered up for educational use.

He explained that the business plans for Ashton and Streetfield Middle School were not robust and did not appear to be financially viable. The Executive advised the schools to work on their business plans for further consideration at the Executive meeting on 19 August 2014.

Reason for decision: To ensure the Council continued to meet its statutory obligations to provide sufficient school places and also to meet the legal requirements placed on the Council by The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools)(England) Regulations 2013 regarding proposals to close the three maintained schools as set out in the report.

**RESOLVED**

- 1. that the publication of statutory notices and final representation period to close Brewers Hill Community Middle School in Dunstable, phased from September 2015, with final implementation in August 2016 be progressed;**
- 2. that the publication of statutory notices and final representation period to close Streetfield Community Middle School in Dunstable, phased from September 2015, with final implementation in August 2016 be progressed; and**
- 3. that the publication of statutory notices and final representation period to close Ashton Church of England Voluntary Aided Middle School in Dunstable, phased from September 2015, with final implementation in August 2016 be progressed.**

[Note – for details on the public speakers see minute no. E/14/8.]

The meeting adjourned from 11.50 a.m. to 12 noon.

E/14/10. **Developing the Early Intervention Offer through Children's Centres**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Children's Services that set out a proposed public consultation exercise covering four potential models of delivery of the Early Intervention, Early Help offer through Children's Centres. The consultation period would be between 28 May 2014 and 19 August 2014 looking at what services the public would like to see working out of the Children's Centres, as well as finding out what services the current Centre users find most useful. It was noted that there was no intention of closing any of the nine hubs.

In response to a question, the Executive Member for Children's Services confirmed that the results of the public consultation would be circulated to the Members of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Reason for decision: To enable the Executive to receive a further report on 23 September 2014 setting out the outcome of the consultation process and to specify the future contract arrangements for Early Intervention and Prevention Services for Children and Families operating within Children's Centres for the next three year period.

**RESOLVED**

**that the commencement of the consultation process, based on the four potential models, as set out in the report, be approved.**

E/14/11. **Development Strategy - Revised Pre-Submission Version**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that included a revised draft Pre-Submission version of the Development Strategy. The Development Strategy was an overarching planning policy document that set out the overall approach to new development in Central Bedfordshire for the period up to 2031, including new homes, jobs and infrastructure and detailed policies to guide decisions on planning applications. The Development Strategy had been revised following the comments received from the public consultation and a changed policy context.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Regeneration confirmed that the Council was working closely with neighbouring authorities to help meet Luton's unmet housing need in line with the Duty to Co-operate.

Pending the adoption of the Development Strategy, the existing policies covering the north of Central Bedfordshire would continue to be used for development management purposes but the Executive Member agreed to seek clarification on points raised about the Marston Vale area and the Airfield at Cranfield.

Reason for decision: To enable progress on the draft revised Development Strategy prior to its formal submission to the Secretary of State in October 2014 and during the Examination period.

**RECOMMENDED to Council**

1. ***that the draft revised Pre-Submission Development Strategy attached at Appendix A to the Executive report be approved for the purposes of Publication and Submission to the Secretary of State; and***
2. ***to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Business, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, to make any minor amendments to the Development Strategy:***
  - (i) ***prior to Publication;***
  - (ii) ***after Publication but before Submission; and***
  - (iii) ***during the Examination process.***

**RESOLVED**

**that the draft revised Pre-submission Development Strategy, be endorsed for Development Management guidance purposes for use in the south of Central Bedfordshire prior to its formal adoption\*.**

*\*In the north of Central Bedfordshire the existing adopted documents will continue to be used.*

E/14/12.

**Plan-making Programme - the Local Development Scheme**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that proposed endorsement of the Local Development Scheme. The Scheme sets out the scope and timetable for the production of future local plans for Central Bedfordshire, including specific reference to the Development Strategy, the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan and Allocations Local Plan. These documents would be refreshed, updated and rolled forward the planning policy framework in Central Bedfordshire.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to have a programme in place for the production of the Local Development Scheme.

**RESOLVED**

1. **that the preparation of the three Local Plans (Development Strategy, Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan and Allocations Local Plan) and other associated documents be supported; and**
2. **that the programme of plan-making, attached at Appendix A to the report, that sets out the formal Local Development Scheme for the whole of Central Bedfordshire be approved.**

E/14/13. **Local Development Order for Woodside Industrial Estate, Dunstable**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that proposed a Local Development Order for the Woodside Industrial Estate and surrounding area in Dunstable to assist economic and employment growth in the area.

Reason for recommendation: To encourage economic and employment growth in the Dunstable area.

**RESOLVED**

**that the proposed Local Development Order (LDO) for the Woodside Estate and surrounding area in Dunstable be adopted, in order to assist businesses and contribute towards economic and employment growth in the area.**

E/14/14. **Strategy for North of Luton**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that sought the commitment of the Council as landowner to actively participate in the North of Luton consortium to enable promotion of the Council's emerging Development Strategy and Framework Plan for North of Luton.

Reason for decision: Due to the potential financial impact on the Council of greater than £500,000 a decision was required by the Executive.

**RESOLVED**

1. **that the Council as landowner, actively participates within the North of Luton Consortium to support the Framework Plan and strategic allocation in the Council's emerging Development Strategy and continues through to at least public examination (estimated by 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2015);**
2. **that the spending allocated in the Capital Programme 2014/15 of up to £125k to enable commitment to a Planning Performance Agreement with the consortium and to achieve a Framework Plan for the site and to enter into a collaboration agreement to bring forward development within the timescales identified in the emerging Development Strategy be approved; and**
3. **to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Business, in consultation with the Director of Improvement and Corporate Services, the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Executive Member for Regeneration to monitor progress, evaluate emerging options and take appropriate actions to sustain the corporate interests of the Council.**



E/14/15. **Development Brief - Land at Potton Road, Biggleswade**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that outlined the proposals contained within the draft development brief for a residential development at Potton Road, Biggleswade. The report also outlined where changes had been made in response to the public consultation.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Regeneration acknowledged the concerns that the additional houses would increase the amount of traffic within Biggleswade. A full transport assessment was being prepared within a scope agreed with the Council, including consideration of contentious junctions within the town. The assessment would need to accompany any planning application submitted.

Reason for decision: A development brief was required by policy HA1 of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document for the North of Central Bedfordshire before applications were submitted to help guide the development management process.

**RESOLVED**

**that the development brief for Land at Potton Road, Biggleswade be adopted as technical guidance for development management purposes.**

E/14/16. **Planning Guidance Note on Solar Farm Development in Central Bedfordshire**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that set out the draft solar farm planning guidance note to provide clarification within the development management process. The technical guidance would provide the Council with a robust platform for negotiation with developers to ensure that those communities and areas affected were in a position to benefit as much as possible from any development.

In response to a question, the Executive Member for Regeneration agreed to amend the guidance note as follows:-

- paragraph 5.42 to include a requirement for studies and visuals to identify the zone of theoretical visibility of the proposed development; and
- to clarify airfield safety assessments to all the areas that have airfields e.g. Cranfield and Shuttleworth.

Reason for decision: To provide the Council with an additional planning guidance for the consideration of planning applications for solar farm developments.

**RESOLVED**

1. that the guidance note on solar farm development in Central Bedfordshire, as amended, be adopted as technical guidance for development management purposes; and
2. to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Business, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, to make minor amendments to the technical guidance note prior to its publication.

E/14/17.

**Superfast Broadband Extension Programme**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Regeneration that proposed that the Council fully participated in the Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) Superfast Extension Programme. This would enable the delivery of the necessary infrastructure to provide superfast broadband (speeds of at least 24 Megabits per second) to at least 95% of premises and at least 2 Megabits per second to all premises in Central Bedfordshire. An additional £500,000 capital funding was required to fully match BDUK funding.

Reason for decision: To secure external resources and put in place the necessary infrastructure at the earliest opportunity to accelerate the delivery of superfast broadband, in line with achieving the Council's medium term objectives and Joint Local Broadband Plan.

***RECOMMENDED to Council***

***That an additional £500,000 capital funding to fully match Broadband Delivery UK allocations for the delivery of superfast broadband infrastructure be approved.***

**RESOLVED**

1. that the use of the BDUK procurement framework to select a private partner to put in place necessary infrastructure to deliver at least 95% superfast coverage (speeds of at least 24 megabits per second) and ensure access to infrastructure able to provide at least 2 Megabits per second to all premises be approved;
2. that the local procurement priority, to maximise total coverage, and subject to this, seek to achieve a balance of residential and business premise coverage and to seek to achieve a reasonable geographic spread, taking into account local demand, demonstrated through responses to the Broadband survey be approved;

3. to authorise the Director of Regeneration and Business, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration and Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources, to select the contractor based on any priorities the Council sets and the successful completion of the BDUK procurement process and sign and vary the contract if additional resources are secured during the lifetime of the contract;
4. to authorise the Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, to represent the Council through the Superfast Extension Programme; and
5. that the Council's continued participation with the existing partnership arrangements, updating the collaboration agreement as required be approved. Furthermore, that the Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Business, approves any proposed changes to the membership and terms of reference to the partnership.

E/14/18. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED**

that in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

E/14/19. **Stratton Phases 4 and 5**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that sought guidance on an approach to unlock the potential of Stratton Park.

Reason for decision: Due to the potential cost of exiting the contract for Stratton phase four a decision was required by the Executive.

**RESOLVED**

to authorise the Director of Improvement and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources, to negotiate an exit of the Contractor from Stratton 4 on the best available terms, whether they be cash or land settlement.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 1.40 p.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....

1.	Quarter 4 Performance Report -	To consider the quarter 4 performance report.	15 July 2014		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 14/06/14 to Contact Officer: Elaine Malarky, Head of Programmes & Performance Management Email: <a href="mailto:elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 5517
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**Central Bedfordshire Council  
Forward Plan of Key Decisions  
1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015**

- 1) During the period from **1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015**, 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 Regeneration                          |
| Cllr Brian Spurr       | Executive Member for Community Services                    |

Cllr Mrs Tricia Turner MBE  
Cllr Richard Stay

Executive Member for Partnerships  
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
18 March 2014	6 March 2014
22 April 2014	10 April 2014
27 May 2014	15 May 2014
15 July 2014	3 July 2014
19 August 2014	7 August 2014
14 October 2014	2 October 2014
9 December 2014	27 November 2014
13 January 2015	23 December 2014
10 February 2015	29 January 2015
31 March 2015	19 March 2015

# Central Bedfordshire Council

## Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015

### Key Decisions

Date of Publication: 3 July 2014

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.	Central Bedfordshire Council's Homelessness Duty -	To adopt a policy to discharge the Council's Homelessness Duty to a suitable property.	19 August 2014	Stakeholder engagement (internal and external) undertaken in February 2014. Four week consultation March 2014. The consultation was managed via a formal consultation document. This was available in paper format; downloadable from the CBC website, or was obtainable by telephoning or writing to the contact details provided in the letters to prospective housing register applicants.	Draft Policy to discharge the Council's Homelessness Duty to a suitable property, consultation report and equalities impact assessment.	Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing Comments by 18/07/14 to Contact Officer: Nick Costin, Head of Housing Solutions Email: <a href="mailto:nick.costin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">nick.costin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 5219

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
3.	Consideration of Representations Received to Statutory Notices Published for Proposals to Close Brewers Hill Community Middle School, Streetfield Community Middle School and Ashton CofE VA Middle School in August 2016. -	Determination of the statutory proposals, subject to any decision taken by the Executive in May.	19 August 2014	<p>Statutory consultation undertaken - 24 February 2014 to 7 April 2014 with a further representation period from 9 June 2014 to 7 July 2014 with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the governing body of the schools which are the subject of proposals;</li> <li>• families of pupils, teachers and other staff at the schools;</li> <li>• the governing bodies, teachers and other staff of any other school that may be affected;</li> <li>• families of any pupils at any other school who may be affected by the proposals including families of pupils at feeder schools;</li> <li>• trade unions who represent staff at the schools and representatives of trade unions of any other staff at schools who may be affected by the proposals;</li> <li>• The Board of Education of the Diocese of St Albans;</li> <li>• The Ashton Schools Foundation;</li> <li>• Constituency MPs for the schools that are the subject of the proposals;</li> <li>• Dunstable Town Council; and</li> <li>• consultation materials and information including leaflets, press releases, public meetings and statutory notices.</li> </ul>	Report and representations received in response to Statutory notices published for proposals to close Brewers Hill Community Middle School and Ashton CofE VA Middle School in August 2016.	Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 18/07/14 to Contact Officer: Helen Redding, Assistant Director School Improvement Email: <a href="mailto:helen.redding@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">helen.redding@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 6057



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.	New School Places in Stotfold, Biggleswade and Silsoe -	Approval to commence statutory consultation of proposal for commissioning new lower school places in Stotfold for implementation from September 2015. Determination of proposals for commissioning new middle and upper school places in Biggleswade and new lower school places in Silsoe, for implementation in September 2016.	19 August 2014	<p>The governing body of the schools which are the subject proposals. Families of pupils, teachers and other staff at the schools.</p> <p>The governing bodies, teachers and other staff of any other school that may be affected.</p> <p>Families of any pupils at any other school who may be affected by the proposals including families of pupils at feeder schools.</p> <p>Trade unions that represent staff at the schools and representatives of trade unions of any other staff at schools who may be affected by the proposals.</p> <p>Constituency MPs for the schools that are the subject of the proposals.</p> <p>The local parish/town council where the school that is the subject of the proposals is situated.</p> <p>Consultation period between March and July 2014 for Biggleswade and Silsoe, and between September and November 2014 for Stotfold, including press releases, public meetings and statutory notices.</p>	Report and outcome of consultation	<p>Executive Member for Children's Services</p> <p>Comments by 18/07/14 to Contact Officer:</p> <p>Karen Oellermann, Acting Assistant Director - Commissioning &amp; Partnerships</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:karen.oellermann@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">karen.oellermann@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Tel: 0300 300 5265</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)
5.	Developing the Early Intervention Offer -	To consider the outcome of the public consultation on developing the Early Intervention Offer through Children's Centres.	14 October 2014	Public consultation from 27 May to 19 August 2014.	Summary report following consultation	Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 13/09/14 to Contact Officer: Sue Tyler, Head of Child Poverty and Early Intervention Email: <a href="mailto:sue.tyler@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">sue.tyler@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 6553
6.	Central Bedfordshire Council's Admissions Arrangements and Co-ordinated Scheme -	To approve commencement of consultation on the Council's Admissions Arrangements and co-ordinated scheme for the academic year 2016/17.	14 October 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Governing bodies of Local Authority schools.</li> <li>b) All other admission authorities within the relevant area.</li> <li>c) Parents of children between the ages of two and eighteen.</li> <li>d) Other persons in the relevant area who have an interest in the proposed admissions.</li> <li>e) Adjoining neighbouring authorities.</li> <li>f) The Church of England and Catholic Diocese.</li> </ul> <p>Method of consultation: website. In addition: email/letter to a, b, e and f. Information distributed to academies/schools, nurseries, pre-schools, children's centres, leisure and community centres, libraries and town and parish councils as well as advertising in the local media to consult with c and d.</p>	Report	Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 13/09/14 to Contact Officer: Karen Oellermann, Acting Assistant Director - Commissioning & Partnerships Email: <a href="mailto:karen.oellermann@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">karen.oellermann@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 5265

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
7.	West of A1 Stotfold -	Approval to dispose of land including selection of appropriate methodology.	14 October 2014		Public Report with Exempt Appendices.	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 13/09/14 to Contact Officer: Andrew Gordon, Head of Estate Management Email: <a href="mailto:andrew.gordon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">andrew.gordon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 5882

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.	New School Places in Stotfold -	Determination of proposal for commissioning new lower school places in Stotfold for implementation from September 2015.	9 December 2014	<p>The governing body of the school which is the subject proposal.</p> <p>Families of pupils, teachers and other staff at the school.</p> <p>The governing bodies, teachers and other staff of any other school that may be affected.</p> <p>Families of any pupils at any other school who may be affected by the proposal including families of pupils at feeder schools.</p> <p>Trade unions that represent staff at the school and representatives of trade unions of any other staff at schools who may be affected by the proposals.</p> <p>Constituency MPs for the school that is the subject of the proposal.</p> <p>The local parish council where the school that is the subject of the proposal is situated.</p> <p>Consultation period between September and November 2014 including press releases, public meetings and statutory notices.</p>	Report and outcome of consultation	<p>Executive Member for Children's Services</p> <p>Comments by 08/11/14 to Contact Officer:</p> <p>Karen Oellermann, Acting Assistant Director - Commissioning &amp; Partnerships</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:karen.oellermann@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">karen.oellermann@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Tel: 0300 300 5265</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)
9.	NNDR Discretionary Relief Policy -	To approve the NNDR Discretionary Relief Policy.	13 January 2015	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 July 2014 and 23 September 2014.	Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 12/12/14 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer Email: <a href="mailto:charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 6147
10.	Central Bedfordshire Council's Admission Arrangements and Co-ordinated Scheme -	To determine the Council's Admission Arrangements and co-ordinated scheme for the academic year 2016/17.	31 March 2015		Report	Executive Member for Children's Services Comments by 30/04/15 to Contact Officer: Karen Oellermann, Acting Assistant Director - Commissioning & Partnerships Email: <a href="mailto:karen.oellermann@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">karen.oellermann@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 5265

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)
<b>NON KEY DECISIONS</b>						
11.	Medium Term Financial Plan -	To approve the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process for 2015/16 and an update on the current MTFP numbers.	19 August 2014	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 18/07/14 Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer Email: <a href="mailto:charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 6147
12.	Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring -	To receive the quarter 1 budget monitoring reports for the Revenue, Capital and Housing Revenue Account.	19 August 2014		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 18/07/14 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer Email: <a href="mailto:charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> 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)
13.	Quarter 1 Performance Report -	To consider the quarter 1 performance report.	14 October 2014		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 13/09/14 to Contact Officer: Elaine Malarky, Head of Programmes & Performance Management Email: <a href="mailto:elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 5517
14.	Medium Term Financial Plan Fees and Charges -	To recommend to Council the Medium Term Financial Plan fees and charges price increases.	14 October 2014	Members Task and Finish Group on 4 July 2014. Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 September 2014.	Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 13/09/14 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer Email: <a href="mailto:charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 6147
15.	Council Tax Support Scheme -	To recommend to Council the Council Tax Support Scheme for approval.	14 October 2014	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 October 2014.	Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 13/09/14 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer Email: <a href="mailto:charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> 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.	Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring -	To receive the quarter 2 budget monitoring reports for the Revenue, Capital and Housing Revenue Account.	9 December 2014		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 08/11/14 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer Email: <a href="mailto:charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 6147
17.	Quarter 2 Performance Report -	To consider the quarter 2 performance report.	13 January 2015		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 12/12/14 to Contact Officer: Elaine Malarky, Head of Programmes & Performance Management Email: <a href="mailto:elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">elaine.malarky@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 5517
18.	Draft Budget 2015/16 -	To consider the draft Budget for 2015/16.	13 January 2015	The draft budget will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees during their cycle of meetings in January 2015.	Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 12/12/14 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer Email: <a href="mailto:charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> 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)
19.	Budget 2015/16 -	To recommend to Council a proposed Budget for 2015/16 for approval.	10 February 2015	Consultation will take place with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the January cycle of meetings.	Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 19/01/15 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer Email: <a href="mailto:charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 6147
20.	Treasury Management Strategy -	To recommend to Council the approval of the Treasury Management Strategy.	10 February 2015		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 09/01/15 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer Email: <a href="mailto:charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 6147
21.	Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring -	To receive the quarter 3 budget monitoring report for the Revenue, Capital and Housing Revenue Account.	10 February 2015		Report	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources Comments by 09/01/15 to Contact Officer: Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer Email: <a href="mailto:charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> 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)
22.	Community Safety Partnership Plan and Priorities for 2015-2016 -	To recommend to Council the approval of the Community Safety Partnership Plan and Priorities for 2015-16.	31 March 2015	The CSP Plan will be considered by the Community Safety Partnership and the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	Report and Community Safety Partnership Plan 2015/16	Executive Member for Community Services Comments by 27/02/15 to Contact Officer: Joy Craven, CSP Manager Email: <a href="mailto:joy.craven@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk">joy.craven@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 0300 300 4649

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:

<b>Date of Publication</b>	<b>Period of Plan</b>
1 April 2014	1 May 2014 – 30 April 2015
16 April 2014	1 June 2014 – 31 May 2015
4 June 2014	1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015
3 July 2014	1 August 2014 – 31 July 2015
18 July 2014	1 September 2014 – 31 August 2015
3 September 2014	1 October 2014 – 30 September 2015
23 September 2014	1 November 2014 – 31 October 2015
29 October 2014	1 December 2014 – 30 November 2015
28 November 2014	1 January 2015 – 31 December 2016
23 December 2014	1 February 2015 – 31 January 2016
18 February 2015	1 March 2015 – 29 February 2016
5 March 2015	1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016

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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 15 July 2014  
**Subject:** March 2014 – Revenue Budget Monitoring Provisional Outturn Report (Subject to Audit)  
**Report of:** Cllr Maurice Jones, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources  
**Summary:** The report sets out the provisional financial outturn position for the General Fund (subject to audit) for 2013/14 as at the end of March 2014. It excludes the Housing Revenue Account which is subject to a separate report.

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**Advising Officer:** Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer  
**Contact Officer:** Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key Decision** Yes  
**Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in (if appropriate)** Not applicable

<b>CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS</b>
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<b>Council Priorities:</b>
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Sound financial management contributes to the Council's Value for Money and enables the Council to successfully deliver its priorities. The recommendations will contribute indirectly to all 5 Council priorities.
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<b>Financial:</b>
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| 1. The financial implications are set out in the report. |
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<b>Legal:</b>
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- |          |
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| 2. None. |
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<b>Risk Management:</b>
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- |          |
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| 3. None. |
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**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

4. Any staffing reductions will be carried out in accordance with the Council's Managing Change Policy and in consultation with the Trades Unions.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

5. Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken prior to the allocation of the 2013/14 budgets and each Directorate was advised of significant equality implications relating to their budget proposals.

**Public Health:**

6. None.

**Community Safety:**

7. None.

**Sustainability:**

8. None.

**Procurement:**

9. None.

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

10. The Revenue Budget Monitoring Provisional Outturn report will be considered by the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 July 2014.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Executive is asked to approve:**

1. **the outturn position which is an underspend of £0.6m. This enables a contribution to reserves to be made, thus strengthening the Council's long term financial position; and**
2. **the proposed transfers to the General Fund Reserve as set out in section 54.3 and Earmarked Reserves as set out in Appendix A to the report.**

*Reason for Recommendations:* *To facilitate effective financial management and planning.*

**Executive Summary**

11. The report sets out the provisional financial outturn position for 2013/14 based at the end of March 2014. Further explanations are set out in Appendices A - C. This report enables the Executive to review the overall financial outturn position of the Council, which is subject to audit.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

### 12. In Summary

- The 2013/14 provisional revenue outturn is an underspend of £0.6m.
- Efficient management of the Council's finances has enabled additional contributions to general and earmarked reserves, which will facilitate the Council's response to future reductions in funding.

### 13. Directorate forecast outturn variances

The full year outturn for Directorates as at March, after proposed use of existing and creation of new reserves is a £0.6m underspend. The following are the key areas:

- i) Social Care Health and Housing £0.07m above budget.
- ii) Children's Services £3.5m above budget.
- iii) Community Services £0.1m below budget.
- iv) Regeneration £0.4m below budget.
- v) Improvement and Corporate Services £1.8m below budget.
- vi) Corporate Costs and Contingency £1.8m below budget.

## DIRECTORATE COMMENTARY

### 14. **Social Care, Health and Housing**

15. The general fund position for the directorate at outturn is an overspend of £0.065m (0.1%) as at the end of March (£0.1m underspend forecast for February 2014) after the use of existing and new proposed earmarked reserves (EMR). The outturn result includes new proposed EMR of £0.8m relating to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards and also £0.5m to contribute to the costs of bringing the BUPA Care Homes back in house.

Month: March 2014					
Director	Budget	Actual b/f Use of Reserves	Net Use of Reserves	Total Act inc Net of Reserves	Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£001	£000
<b>Social Care Health and Housing</b>					
Director of Social Care, Health, Housing	190	230	-	230	40
Housing Management (GF)	1,516	1,047	-	1,047	(469)
Adult Social Care	59,356	59,438	1,393	60,831	1,475
Commissioning	12,424	11,767	264	12,031	(393)
Business and Performance	(7,585)	(8,140)	(33)	(8,173)	(588)
<b>Total Social Care and Health</b>	<b>65,901</b>	<b>64,342</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>65,966</b>	<b>65</b>

16. Housing Management underspent by £0.469m mainly due to underspends in Homelessness and Local Welfare Provision for which £0.34m has been provisionally earmarked as a reserve to counter the effects of Welfare Reform and the withdrawal of funding from 2015/16 onwards.

17. Provision of “Crisis Loans” and “Community Care Grants” were devolved to local authorities from Department of Works & Pensions (DWP) from April 2013. The Council received a grant of £0.431m consisting of £0.356m programme funding and £0.075m administrative funding. The Council scheme is called “Local Welfare Provision”, with Emergency Provision replacing the former crisis loans and Grant Provision replacing Community Care Grants, the criteria being based broadly on the DWP system.
18. There have been substantial efficiency savings in the delivery of the service compared with DWP. This has contributed to the low level of expenditure; however the cost of temporary staff during the launch period has exceeded the administrative funding. The overall efficiencies are in line with those experienced by other local authorities in this area.
19. The Adult Social Care service is showing an overspend of £1.475m after use of reserves. Within this division is the risk of increases in the Older People and Physical Disability package costs. People are living longer and the costs of dementia are on the increase. Demographic pressure of £1.75m has been built into the budget with a number of former self funders requiring Council support. This was offset however by the efficiencies targets for this area totalling £2.8m.
20. Care Package budgets within Adult Social Care saw an overspend of £1.5m on 65+ age group, with residential spot placements contributing £2m to this position. For other care packages there were underspends on Physical Disabilities (£0.134m), Learning Disabilities (£1.36m) and overspends on Mental Health (£0.091m).
21. In respect of former self funders, these continued to exert pressure on residential and nursing placements budgets. Thirty have required council support during 2013/14 at a cost of £0.269m (with a full year effect into 2014/15 of £0.505m). Given the current financial climate this trend is unlikely to diminish and will also need to continue to be closely monitored during next year.
22. The Reablement service achieved significant reductions in care hours during 2013/14 - 2,424 hours which is an in year saving of £0.357m with a projected full year effect of a saving of £0.388m. Further work is being undertaken to examine the return on investment that the Reablement service provides across the short to medium term.
23. Within Learning Disabilities, there were approximately 60 young people in transitions who required Social Care funding. Of the additional budget of £1.149m provided to cover the impact of new customers in 2013/14, this was almost fully used. Significant levels of Continuing Health Care funding were achieved totalling £0.995m.
24. In addition within Learning Disabilities, the cost of the Ordinary Residence rules continued to be seen but due to delays in respect of a major de-registering provider, the reserve for these costs is still available in 2014/15.



25. The outturn for the Commissioning service was an underspend of £0.393m (£0.502m forecast in February). The key variances after reserves were the underspends of £0.2m on the dementia premium budget, £0.264m on Learning Disability transfer contracts with the balance across a range of contracts and Service Level Agreements.
26. The outturn for the Resources division was an underspend of £0.588m (February £0.439) the majority of which relates to a projected over achievement of the customer contributions budget.
27. HRA is subject to a separate report.

28. **Children's Services**

29. Children's Services net expenditure budget for 2013/14 is £39.205m. The provisional outturn position (after use of and proposed transfer to reserves) for 2013/14 is £3.5m overspend. Quarter three reported a forecast overspend of £2.622m, so there is an increase to overspend of £878k.
30. This is mainly due to earmarked reserves of £1.230m (Fostering Fee Scheme £998k and Children Centres £232k) set aside to address pressures raised in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2014/15 and 2015/16, and a £200k reserve for the Children's and Families Act development. This has been offset by further savings from within the directorate of £552k. Had the pressure for the Directorate not been managed in year by reserves set aside from the 2012/13 financial year the total overspend would be £7.9m.

Month: March 2014					
Director	Budget	Actual b/f Use of Reserves	Net Use of Reserves	Total Act inc Net of Reserves	Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£001	£000
<b>Children's Services</b>				-	
Director of Children's Services	193	255	94	349	156
Children's Services Operations	28,866	32,614	(1,349)	31,265	2,399
Commissioning & Partnerships	4,432	3,818	77	3,895	(537)
Joint School Commissioning Service (Transport)	7,012	7,664	(50)	7,614	602
Partnerships	610	627	(27)	600	(10)
School Improvement (incl Music)	1,218	(590)	1,725	1,135	(83)
<b>Total Children's Services (ex Schools / Overheads)</b>	<b>42,331</b>	<b>44,388</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>44,858</b>	<b>2,527</b>
DSG Contribution to Central Support	(1,567)	(718)	-	(718)	849
ESG Contribution to Central Support	(1,558)	(1,434)	-	(1,434)	124
<b>Total Children's Services (excluding Schools)</b>	<b>39,206</b>	<b>42,236</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>42,706</b>	<b>3,500</b>

31. The overspend of £3.5m after use of reserves, is mainly due to Children in Care and Intake and Assessment (£992k), Fostering and Adoption (£1.9m), Transport (£602k) and the ability for the Dedicated Schools Grant allocation to be set against allowable services (£848k). Academy conversions have also impacted the overspend (£125k) as Education Services Grant reductions take place periodically through the year with each transfer.

32. The tables below reflect the increased number of Looked after Children (LAC) and related placement costs.

	Total March 2013	Total March 2014	% increase / (decrease)
Number of LAC	254	273	7%
In House Placements	93	96	3%
Independent Placements	90	109	21%
Child Protection Plan	266	196	(26%)
Children in Need	1669	1508	(10%)
Number of Referrals (YTD)	2330	2598	12%

Placement Type	March cost per placement
Average Cost per Placement*	£3,437
Highest Cost Placement (Residential CWD)	£25,093
Lowest Cost Placement (externally funded)	£0

\*Placements total 272, however the average cost per placement includes 20 no cost placements. The lowest cost placement excluding externally funded is £668 per month.

33. The savings in the final quarter of 2013/14, to manage the in year pressure, have been as a result of additional income, salary savings, discretionary spend and demand led activities being less than forecast. A planned £188k saving from within Children With Disabilities and Workforce Development have been put forward as reserves to meet expected spend in 2014/15.
34. Central Bedfordshire Council's Adoption Reform Grant allocation of £555k for 2013/14 is to provide support to Local Authorities with the implementation of the reforms. The main allocations for the grant are as follows:-
- Pilot a 'fostering for adoption' project.
  - Increase legal capacity.
  - Increase Social Work capacity by 2fte to assess adopters.
  - Support for Children's life story work, an important part of fostering and adoption support to ensure a successful placement.

35. There have been £4.595m transfers to Reserves as follows;

**MTFP Pressures**

- Foster Carer's Fee Scheme 2014/15 and 2015/16 £998k (funded in MTFP).
- Children's Centres Co-location 2014/15 and 2015/16 £232k (funded in MTFP).
- Children's & Families Act £200k.
- Central Bedfordshire Academy of Social Work and Early Intervention £118k.
- Completion of refurbishment Maythorn and South Hub £70k.

**Grant Receipts**

- Challenge Award £150k.
- Troubled Families Grant £304k.
- Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) £7k.
- Assets of Community Value £13k.
- SEN Reform Grant – Support and Aspiration £65k.
- Dedicated Schools Grant £2.439M.

36. The Early Intervention Grant which funded £9.77m of core services in 2012/13 has now been subsumed into the Revenue Support Grant and is not separately identifiable for 2013/14. The main core services that this funded are as follows:

- Children with Disabilities Short Breaks.
- Early Years Workforce Development.
- Learning & School Support including Education Psychology, Access & Inclusion and provision for Looked after Children in the Music Service.
- Commissioning for Youth Service.
- Early Intervention & Prevention.

37. The Children's Services budget did not increase in line with the transfer to Revenue Support Grant due to the national reduction and two year old funding moving to the Dedicated Schools Grant. This has been managed in year by an Earmarked reserve of £1.193M and a funded pressure for 2014/2015.

38. **Community Services**

39. Community Services' overall financial position was £104k underspend after the use of earmarked reserves of £133k for one-off specific projects.

Month: March 2014					
Director	Budget	Actual b/f Use of Reserves	Net Use of Reserves	Total Act inc Net of Reserves	Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£001	£000
<b>Community Services</b>				-	
Community Services Director	251	186	-	186	(65)
Highways Transportation	13,658	13,511	287	13,798	140
Environmental Services	24,071	24,312	(420)	23,892	(179)
<b>Total Community Services</b>	<b>37,980</b>	<b>38,009</b>	<b>(133)</b>	<b>37,876</b>	<b>(104)</b>

40. Highways and Transport overspent by £140k.

- There was an overspend of £260k on fleet costs including maintenance and leasing costs due to an ageing fleet. Underspends on parking totalled £167k.
- Overspend of £65k as a result of over provision of services in the first term of operating the Oak Bank service and ongoing fuel and staffing issues. Work is being undertaken to review the service and costs.
- There were overspends on pothole repairs of £271k and £56k on winter maintenance, of which £26k relates to the additional salt bins. Underspend on bridges was £140k.
- Underspend on salaries of £217k due to vacant posts and superannuation has partly offset the overspends above.

41. Environmental Services underspent by £179k.

- Libraries have underspent by £167k, this is primarily against the staffing budget and mainly relates to unfilled vacancies and higher levels of staff churn in the first six months of the year following a Library Service Staffing re- structure.
- There was an underspend of £138k on Community Safety down to salary savings and one-off income being received.
- There were underspends on salaries of £27k on emergency planning and £38k on leisure services. Waste services underspent by £28k as a result of variation in tonnages of waste collected.

42. **Regeneration and Business Support**

43. Regeneration and Business Support were underspent by £441k (7.6%) after the use of and new proposed Earmarked Reserves (EMR) of £113k. The majority of this is due to the work on strategic planning documents within Development Housing spend being deferred to 2014/15. Underspends relating to ringfenced Adult Skills grants are proposed to be carried forward as spend will be incurred in 2014/15.

Month: March 2014					
Director	Budget	Actual b/f Use of Reserves	Net Use of Reserves	Total Act inc Net of Reserves	Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£001	£000
<b>Regeneration and Business Support</b>				-	
Director	536	506	-	506	(30)
Business Support & Skills	936	1,350	(402)	948	12
Planning	4,135	3,266	563	3,829	(306)
Programme Delivery	228	159	(48)	111	(117)
<b>Total Regeneration and Business Support</b>	<b>5,835</b>	<b>5,281</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>5,394</b>	<b>(441)</b>

44. Business Support and Skills overspent by £12k. Within that, the Adult Skills service proposes to transfer £482k to reserves as majority of expenditure is being deferred to 2014/15.
45. Planning underspent by £306k. The major elements of this are:
- Underspend on salaries of £188k due to vacancies, maternity leave and take up of pensions partly offset by overspend on temporary staff of £34k.
  - An underspend of £151k in development planning and strategic housing on professional fees as a result of delays to key strategic planning documents, including the Development Strategy, which were due to be at Public Examination in this financial year, but will now not reach examination until the new financial year.
46. Programme Delivery has achieved an underspend of £117k mainly due to lower consultancy costs.
47. **Public Health**
48. Public Health achieved budget after accounting for grant funding carried forward to 2014/15 and a contribution from Public Health to offset the Council's overheads.
49. An allowable element of the Public Health funding was used to make a contribution to offset the cost of relevant Council overheads. As this was unbudgeted it shows up as a forecast underspend (shown within Corporate Costs).

Month: March 2014					
Director	Budget	Actual b/f Use of Reserves	Net Use of Reserves	Total Act inc Net of Reserves	Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£001	£000
<b>Public Health</b>				-	
Director of Public Health	(8,643)	(8,862)	219	(8,643)	-
Assistant Director of Public Health	8,643	8,000	643	8,643	-
<b>Total Public Health (Excl overheads)</b>	-	<b>(862)</b>	<b>862</b>	-	-
Contribution to Central Support	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Public Health</b>	-	<b>(862)</b>	<b>862</b>	-	-

50. **Improvement and Corporate Services**

51. Improvement & Corporate Services (ICS) underspent by £1.8m after movement to and from earmarked reserves.

Month: March 2014					
Director	Budget	Actual b/f Use of Reserves	Net Use of Reserves	Total Act inc Net of Reserves	Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£001	£000
<b>Improvement and Corporate Services</b>				-	
Improvement and Corporate Services Leadership	204	354	(73)	281	77
Communications	887	855	150	1,005	118
Customer Services	1,924	2,070	-	2,070	146
Programme and Performance	550	550	(13)	537	(13)
Policy & strategy	165	134	-	134	(31)
Procurement	371	309	(10)	299	(72)
People	2,674	2,522	144	2,666	(8)
Information Assets	7,036	6,977	(57)	6,920	(116)
Legal & Democratic Services	3,807	3,613	61	3,674	(133)
Assets	6,225	4,822	(359)	4,463	(1,762)
<b>Total Improvement and Corporate Services</b>	<b>23,843</b>	<b>22,206</b>	<b>(157)</b>	<b>22,049</b>	<b>(1,794)</b>

52. Within Assets, the outturn position is an underspend of £1.8m. This is largely resulting from £1.0m additional income from the Farms Estate and £0.7m for rental & recharges. There were savings of £0.2m for Facilities and Maintenance services across the portfolio and a further £0.3m for the management of surplus properties.

53. The benefit of this increased income has been reduced by pressures of £0.3m for transformation and agency costs, and £0.1m for an unachievable efficiency and staff costs with the Capital Team operation.

54. Within Legal & Democratic Services there is a net underspend of £0.13m. This is due to additional planning income (-£0.1m), saving on Education Appeals due to bringing the service in house and additional DSG funding (-£0.1m), staff savings on Executive Support and lower than budgeted Canvass fees (-£0.1m), additional income and staff savings for Local Land Charges (-£0.2m), savings within Members' Costs (-£0.1m).

55. These savings have been reduced by staff pressures in Legal Services and unachievable vacancy factor (£0.3m), and increases of in court fees (£0.2m), largely resulting from additional demand from Children's Services

56. There is an outturn overspend of £0.15m in Customer Services due to additional staff costs in the Customer Contact Centre as a result of Your Space 2 relocation and less staff capitalisation than budgeted.

57. **Corporate Resources and Costs**

58. The full year budget of £16.2m is made up of:

- Corporate Resources £5.188m
- Corporate Costs £14.245m
- Contingency & Reserves (£3.234m)

The outturn is an underspend of £1.8m (14%).

Month: March 2014					
Director	Budget	Actual b/f Use of Reserves	Net Use of Reserves	Total Act inc Net of Reserves	Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£001	£000
<b>Corporate Resources</b>				-	
Chief Executive	299	304	-	304	5
Finance	5,301	3,454	1,552	5,006	(295)
Housing Benefit Subsidy	(412)	71	-	71	483
<b>Total Corporate Resources</b>	<b>5,188</b>	<b>3,829</b>	<b>1,552</b>	<b>5,381</b>	<b>193</b>
<b>Corporate Costs</b>				-	
Debt Management	11,710	10,988	-	10,988	(722)
Premature Retirement Costs	2,954	2,866	15	2,881	(73)
Corporate Public Health Recharges	-	(605)	-	(605)	(605)
Corporate HRA Recharges	(90)	(120)	-	(120)	(30)
Efficiencies	(329)	(97)	-	(97)	232
Contingency and Reserves*	(3,234)	(6,058)	2,018	(4,040)	(806)
<b>Total Corporate Costs</b>	<b>11,011</b>	<b>6,974</b>	<b>2,033</b>	<b>9,007</b>	<b>(2,004)</b>
<b>Total Corporate Resources and Costs</b>	<b>16,199</b>	<b>10,803</b>	<b>3,585</b>	<b>14,388</b>	<b>(1,811)</b>

59. Overall Corporate Resources were overspent by £0.2m. This is made up of:

- £0.3m saving in Revenues and Benefits as a result of receiving unbudgeted grant from central government for Welfare Reform.
- Pressure of £0.5m in Housing Benefit related transactions mainly due to net impact of final audit results of previous year's HB Subsidy claims.
- There was a pressure of £0.3m in Insurance income as a result of providing services to fewer schools as more become Academies and £0.5m due to higher than budgeted contribution to Insurance Reserve.

60. These have been mitigated by savings in a number of areas:

- £0.2m saving in Insurance due to reduced premiums (partly offset the volume reduction above).
- £0.1m higher than budgeted Insurance recharges to the HRA.
- £0.1m reduction in bad debt provision.
- £0.1m savings in Chief Finance Officer due to one off savings on supplies & services.
- £0.1m saving in Financial Performance & Support due to lower than budgeted staff costs and £0.1m saving in Audit staff costs as a result of vacancy savings.

61. In Corporate Costs there was a reduction of interest payable (-£0.4m), as a result of borrowing levels being lower than budgeted. There was also a reduction of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) of (-£0.3m). This is due to a lower than budgeted spend on the Authority's Capital Programme in 2012/13 (MRP is adjusted a year in arrears).

62. Also within Corporate costs was a contribution to overheads from Public Health £0.6m.

63. £0.2m Outturn pressure in Cross Cutting Efficiencies. There have been unachievable prior years' efficiencies in Channel Shift (£0.1m) and 2013/14 Customer First Efficiencies (£0.5m). These have been mitigated in part by a £0.4m saving due to unused superannuation increase budget provision.

64. A movement in number of Contingency and Reserve items has resulted in an underspend of £0.8m. This is made up of:
- A pressure of £0.1m as a result of Vacant Property Review carried out to optimise future years' New Homes Bonus.
  - Creation of a £1.0m earmarked reserve for future costs relating to "Great Places" in Central Bedfordshire.
  - An increase of £0.5m to the Insurance reserve.
  - Release of unused contingency of £2.1m and an unbudgeted grant (Capital Provision Redistribution Grant) of £0.2m received late in year.

65. **RESERVES POSITION**

**Earmarked Reserves**

- 65.1 The opening balance of EMR is £21.433m (Excluding HRA). The current reported position proposes the planned use of £6.8m EMR (used of offset expenditure), release of £0.065m (no longer required) and proposed transfer to EMR of £0.25m (budgeted).
- 65.2 In addition £7.6m of Grants received late in 2013/14 (includes £2.4m Dedicated Schools Grant related) and £5.4m of new proposed EMR are reflected in the outturn position.
- 65.3 This results in a proposed closing position of £27.8m EMR at year end an increase of £6.3m year on year - See Appendix A for details of which reserves have been used.
- 65.4 When recommending new proposed EMR to be carried forward to 2014/15 the following principles were followed:
1. Planned in the MTFP Strategy (i.e. there is an existing commitment approved by the Council).
  2. Ringfenced grants (therefore very limited discretion other than to make EMR).
  3. Grants in advance (received late in 2013/14 with spend planned in 14/15).
  4. New emerging issue (for example BUPA Care Homes).

**General Reserves**

- 65.5 The opening position for 2013/14 is £14.2m with a budgeted closing position of £13.8m. The provisional outturn underspend means that the budgeted draw down of £0.4m was not required and would result in a further £0.6m increase in General Fund reserves bringing the closing balance for 2013/14 to £14.8m.
- 65.6 Appendix B shows an assessment of the level of general reserves that the Council is advised to hold based on the risks identified.



66. Debtors

Debtors March 2014														
DIRECTORATE	1 to 14 Days		15 to 30 Days		31 to 60 Days		61 to 90 Days		91 to 365 days		1 year and over		Total Debt	
	£k	%	£k	%	£k	%	£k	%	£k	%	£k	%	£k	%
Social Care Health & Housing	1,340	22%	1,001	17%	1,574	26%	884	15%	672	11%	514	9%	5,985	100%
Children's Services	1,138	73%	329	21%	38	2%	5	0%	28	2%	11	1%	1,549	100%
Community Services	190	48%	140	36%	22	6%	10	3%	-38	-10%	69	18%	393	100%
Regeneration	482	20%	732	30%	-540	-22%	751	31%	124	5%	888	36%	2,437	100%
I.C.S	775	43%	466	26%	5	0%	-2	0%	399	22%	145	8%	1,788	100%
Finance	1	1%	50	35%	3	2%	26	18%	23	16%	40	28%	143	100%
Public Health	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	172	100%	0	0%	172	100%
Unallocated & Non Directorate	-2	3%	-4	6%	-1	2%	-3	5%	-51	77%	-5	8%	-66	100%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>3,924</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>2,714</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>1,101</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>1,671</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>1,329</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>1,662</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>12,401</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>PREVIOUS MONTH</b>	<b>2,534</b>		<b>3,845</b>		<b>1,442</b>		<b>492</b>		<b>1,796</b>		<b>1,707</b>		<b>11,816</b>	

67. The largest items of note within the total debt are:

- Social Care General Fund debt at the end of 2013/14 stood at £6.0m of which £2.0m was house sales debt and £2.9m Health Service debt, which relates to the Clinical Commissioning Group and is due in relation to learning disabilities and older people. Of the remaining general debt of £1.1m, £0.866m (79%) is more than 60 days old. Of this, all is under active management (with solicitors, payable by instalments etc.) with 2% under query and none scheduled to be written off. Excluding Health and house sales debt, there are 27 debtors whose outstanding balance is greater than £0.010m. These are all under active management.
- The total debt for Community Services at the end of March was £393k. About 92% of debt is less than three months old. All debt recovery is in accordance with Council policy.
- Regeneration total debt at the end of February was £2.44m. Invoices relating to developers legal contributions to deliver planning requirements associated with new developments account for 78% of debt. About 58% of debt is less than three months old. All debt recovery is in accordance with Council policy.
- Total debt for Children's Services is £1.550m of which £44k is debt over 61 days.
- Public Health debt is £172k which is over 3 months old. This is under active management.
- Overall corporate debt (ICS/Finance) is £1.9m of which £1.3m is less than 30 days old. £0.6m of debt is over 30 days and is under active management.

68. **General Fund Debt Written Off**

69. The table below shows the number, value and average value of general fund debt written off during 2013/14. This is disclosed in line with our Financial Procedures.

	Number	Value	Ave Value
<b>0 - £5k</b>	537	£116,545.44	£ 406.08
<b>£5k - £10k</b>	5	£ 33,632.65	£ 6,726.53
<b>£10k - £50k</b>	11	£242,542.53	£22,049.32
<b>Over £50k</b>	0	£ -	£ -
	<b>553</b>	<b>£392,720.62</b>	<b>£ 1,296.11</b>
<b>Q1</b>	321	£105,594.00	£ 1,487.24
<b>Q2</b>	169	£122,164.89	£ 722.87
<b>Q3</b>	25	£ 82,450.84	£ 3,298.03
<b>Q4</b>	38	£ 82,510.89	£ 2,171.34
<b>Full Year</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>£392,720.62</b>	<b>£ 1,296.11</b>

70. Of the total amount written off in year, £204,677 relates to the debts of legacy authorities which are fully provided for (no impact on CBC 2013/14 outturn performance).

71. £188,043 of debt is related to CBC activity and is analysed as follows:

	2013/2014	
Category	Number	Value
Music	408	64,222
Commercial Rents	2	58,769
Residential Accommodation	12	22,377
Direct Payments	9	18,973
Void Inspections	3	13,093
Miscellaneous	42	10,607
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>£188,043</b>

72. Any individual debts of £50,000 or more are subject to individual reporting to Executive. A rigorous procedure is followed to recover all debts before write off is considered and every write off is subject to appropriate authorisation.
73. Notwithstanding all efforts, there will always be some cases where further recovery is not possible. For example, of the above amounts, details are as follows:

Music Debts – although high in value as a total, the average debt is £157. Music lessons are stopped to prevent the debts escalating and debt recovery process includes sending the debts to a Recovery Agent and County Court Judgment if deemed viable but there is little success with small debts such as this.

Commercial rents – includes two cases of £22k and £12k respectively – both companies are insolvent and there is no prospect of recovery.

Residential accommodation – includes one case of £9k. The case was being dealt with by our external solicitors and the original debt being pursued was £18k. The family paid the moneys from the deceased’s Estate to cover part of the bills and evidence was supplied that there were no further funds.

Direct Payments cases included 2 cases, one for £6k and one for £3k. Although payments were being made against the £6k, due to the personal circumstances of the debtor and no correspondence being received from them the debt is uneconomical to pursue further. In the case of the £3k debt, after completing land registry searches it was deemed this debt was uneconomical to pursue further.

Void inspections included one case of £12k that the debtor was declared bankrupt and therefore we could not pursue the debt.

**74. Borrowing**

75. As at 31 March 2014 the Council’s total borrowing was £308m, of which £294.5m is Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) debt and £13.5m is Market Debt.
76. Over the year to 31 March 2014 £7.5m of PWLB debt matured and was redeemed from cash balances reducing overall debt from £315.5m at 31 March 2013.
77. The table below shows the split between the General Fund and the HRA.

	PWLB Fixed rate £m	PWLB Variable rate £m	Market (LOBO) fixed rate £m	Total  £m
General Fund	97.0	32.5	13.5	143.0
HRA	120.0	45.0	0.0	165.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>217.0</b>	<b>77.5</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>308.0</b>

78. Overall at 31 March 2014 the authority has 71% of Fixed rate PWLB debt, 25%, Variable rate PWLB debt and 4% Fixed rate Market debt as illustrated in chart A1 of the Treasury Management Performance Dashboard.

79. **Investments and Disposals**

80. When investing, the Council's main priorities remain security and liquidity, before yield. To diversify the investment portfolio the Council uses a range of financial institutions and arrangements, such as fixed term deposits, current accounts, notice accounts and Money Market Funds. Chart B1 in the Treasury management Performance dashboard shows the breakdown of investments and deposits by institution as at 31 March 2014.

81. Investments and deposits are fairly liquid as the Council's relatively low overall cash position is being applied to fund the capital expenditure programme and debt maturities

82. Chart B3 of the dashboard shows the maturity portfolio of the Council's investments and deposits.

83. As at the 31 March 2014, the Council had £6m of the internal investments held in call accounts and Money Market Funds (MMF), equating to 20% of all internal investments and deposits. Following recent reductions in the actual return payable in these accounts, greater use has been made of short term notice accounts and various fixed term deposits. In the final quarter there was no requirement to borrow short term to fund any dips in the cash flow. Currently the Council has deposits placed on varying interest rates between 0.30% and 0.71%.

84. In March 2014 one of the international credit rating agencies, Moody's, downgraded the long-term credit ratings of Royal Bank of Scotland and NatWest to Baa1. The new rating fell below the Council's minimum credit criterion for banks and other financial institutions of A-. The Council's Treasury team no longer makes investments with either RBS or NatWest; this restriction also extends to the Council's use of the NatWest Special Interest Bearing Account (SIBA) which has until now generated interest for any schools that operate NatWest accounts.

85. The Council will continue to bank with NatWest but cash balances will be maintained in the NatWest current account at a level proportionate to the smooth operation of the Council's payment systems which is required for day-to-day liquidity. The Schools were advised of the Council's position and the UK banks which currently meet the Council's acceptable credit rating criteria.

86. **Cash Management**

87. Over the year to 31 March 2014 the level of internal investments and deposits reduced from £36.7m to £20.1m. This is in line with the approved treasury strategy which is to defer long term borrowing by funding capital expenditure and debt maturities from existing cash balances.

88. The Council's deposits and investments represent cash held for both the HRA and the General Fund. At 31 March 2014 the balance of £20.1m reflected an estimated HRA cash position of £26.1m offset by a General Fund deficit of £6m.
89. **Outlook**
90. The UK Bank Base Rate is not expected to rise until 2015/2016 and the short-term rate of return on investments and deposits are expected to remain at very low levels.
91. Over the next financial year the Council plans to continue to use cash flow balances in lieu of borrowing to fund capital expenditure, and to fund small dips in cash flow by borrowing short term.

**Appendices :**

**Appendix A – Earmarked Reserves**

**Appendix B – Balances & Reserves Assessment**

**Appendix C – Treasury Management**

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## Appendix A – Earmarked Reserves

Description	Opening Balance 2013/14 £000	Spent £000	Released £000	Technical Movements £000	Agreed transfers as at Dec £000	Balance before new transfers £000	New Proposed transfers	Proposed Closing Balance 2013/14 £000	MEMO: Net movement after proposals	Description of EMR
<b>Social Care Health and Housing</b>										
Social Care Reform Grant	187	(30)				157		157	(30)	Reserve to fund multi year Transforming People's Lives project. Includes SWIFT/IAIS implementation.
Deregistration of Care Homes	433	(152)				281		281	(152)	Reserve to fund costs associated with deregistering of a national care provider
LD Campus Closure	421	(76)				345		345	(76)	Reserve for the smoothing of double running costs resulting from reprovision of Learning Disabilities services.
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards	81	-				81	800	881	800	Grant given in 12/13 to implement Deprivation of Liberty assessments in hospitals – roll forward of unused balance. Further £500k addition proposed re Supreme Court ruling in April 2014
Reablement	100	(100)				-		-	(100)	NHS Funding to support joint working with other Local Authorities and partners to facilitate seamless care for patients
Winter Pressure 12/13	152	(102)				50		50	(102)	12/13 Winter Pressures grant and Falls Prevention Pilot health funding carry forward of unspent balance net of expenditure met from 10/11 & 11/12 grant reserve
Winter Pressure 13/14	-	-		103		103		103	103	Underspend of CCG Winter Pressures Funding
Mental Health Action Plan	138	(23)				115		115	(23)	To fund improvements identified in the Mental Health Improvement Plan to be jointly delivered with SEPT. Reserve to cover possible S117 repayments
Outcome Based Commissioning	3,067	(62)				3,005	500	3,505	438	To fund costs associated with Residential Futures Programme and also the 2014-15 costs associated with the BUPA homes (includes property maintenance)
Step Up / Step Down	490	-				490		490	-	To be used to fund the Step-up, Step Down unit at Greenacres unspent grant monies from 2011/12
NHS Grant 2013/14 - Better Care Fund	-			280		280		280	280	13/14 NHS Grant - projects not completed by 31st March 14. Agreed with NHS Commissioning Board to be applied to Better Care Fund programme in 14/15 to fund development of joint delivery plan, reporting and governance arrangements.
Welfare Reform - local welfare provision grant	-					-	340	340	340	New reserve for unspent local welfare provision grant and Housing Solutions underspend. Linked to the development of a credit union in Central Beds
Homelessness	-					-		-	-	Housing Solution under spend to be combined with 14/15 Homelessness funding to deliver on services to prevent homelessness. Linked to agreed delivery plan.
Zero Base Review grant	-	-	-	59	-	59		59	59	Grant awarded in 13/14 to develop new performance and financial reporting - report development resource not available until 2014/15
NHS Grant - Strategic Transitions Project underspend	-	-	-	86	-	86		86	86	Funding has been allocated in 13/14 for the Strategic Transitions project and for the Ageing Well Project - likely to be some slippage
<b>Total Social Care, Health and Housing</b>	<b>5,069</b>	<b>(545)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,052</b>	<b>1,640</b>	<b>6,692</b>	<b>1,623</b>	

## Appendix A – Earmarked Reserves

Description	Opening Balance 2013/14 £000	Spent £000	Released £000	Technical Movements £000	Agreed transfers as at Dec £000	Balance before new transfers £000	New Proposed transfers	Proposed Closing Balance 2013/14 £000	MEMO: Net movement after proposals	Description of EMR
<b>Community Services Reserves</b>						<b>0</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	
Leisure Centre Reinvestment Fund	89			35	55	179		179	90	Contractual requirement for share of profits from leisure contracts in North area for the reinvestment in building and worn out equipment. The reserve does hold a one off of £26k for an insurable risk assessment fund which in 13/14 is being funded by the base budget
Integrated consumer protection	140	(24)				116		116	(24)	This money is being held to assist with additional costs associated with protection of consumers either through specialist investigation costs or costs for legal proceedings. Without these monies specialist investigations will be extremely limited which may result in the inability to achieve a successful outcome in relation to consumer protection
Transport Fund	125					125		125	-	Parking income directed to transport infrastructure improvements.
Community Safety partnership fund	159	-		67		226		226	67	Contributions from community safety partners, Home Office (IOM), and money held on behalf of HMCS relating to cash seizures.
Bedford & Luton Resilience Forum	65					65		65	-	Contributions from partners with CBC acting as treasurer to Forum and arising from subscriptions made by each of the partnership organisations to fund work undertaken by BLLRF.
PTR2 Business Process Reengineering	11	(11)				-		-	(11)	Delivery of new IT solution and business processes.
Arts and theatre service reviews						-		-	-	
Waste	449	(449)				-		-	(449)	BEaR project delayed due to additional requests made which was not reflected in the MTFP. More definite figures will be known part way through the year when preferred bidder announced but know project and therefore savings will not commence until 2014/15. amount of the proposed reserve comes from the saving in the waste contracts
DEFRA grant	53	(53)				-		-	(53)	This money has been provided by DEFRA to help fund the remediation of a contaminated land site occupied by a residential premises. These monies are due to be spent from April onwards following procurement of contractors etc. to undertake the work. It cannot be treated as grant in advance as it is not ringfenced.
arts and theatre review	7	(7)				-		-	(7)	reserve split between CS and Regen
Financial Investigation Unit	275	(38)				237		237	(38)	now earmarked reserve not RIA/ GIA
Community Safety Grant	85	(22)		15		78		78	(7)	now earmarked reserve not RIA/ GIA (additional is income from probation that they handed over in 2013/14 for work in 2014/15)
Biggleswade wind farm				23		23		23	23	ringfenced income
countryside access grant				16		16		16	16	Linslade Wood income for Phone Masts and Grant of Easement for Shefford - both Ring fenced income
flood recovery - highways				296		296		296	296	allocation from central government received late march - part rev part capital in relation to work needed as result of bad
<b>Total Community Services</b>	<b>1,458</b>	<b>(604)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1,361</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,361</b>	<b>(97)</b>	



## Appendix A – Earmarked Reserves

Description	Opening Balance 2013/14 £000	Spent £000	Released £000	Technical Movements £000	Agreed transfers as at Dec £000	Balance before new transfers £000	New Proposed transfers	Proposed Closing Balance 2013/14 £000	MEMO: Net movement after proposals	Description of EMR
<b>Children's Services Reserves</b>						<b>0</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	
Fostering & Adoption						<b>0</b>	398	<b>998</b>	998	As per MTFP £493k x 2 years Fostering Fee Scheme
Childrens Homes Co-location						<b>0</b>	232	<b>232</b>	232	As per MTFP £116k x 2 years Children Centres
School Specific Contingency	<b>853</b>	(225)		2,439		<b>3,067</b>		<b>3,067</b>	2,214	DSG Ringfenced
Performance Reward Grant	<b>144</b>					<b>144</b>		<b>144</b>	-	LPSA Grant ring fenced
LSP Sustainable Neighbourhoods	<b>47</b>					<b>47</b>		<b>47</b>	-	LPSA Grant ring fenced
SEN Evaluation & positioning for additional duties when SEN Green paper becomes an Act	<b>75</b>	(75)				<b>-</b>		<b>-</b>	(75)	Green Paper late summer requires new duties that were flagged as risk last year that were not included as pressures
"Working Together" - new National Guidance	<b>50</b>					<b>50</b>		<b>50</b>	-	Existing Reserve held for increasing costs of LSCB due to new Government requirements.
OFSTED Action Plan	<b>180</b>	(180)				<b>-</b>		<b>-</b>	(180)	To be developed following publication of the OFSTED Action Plan, work needed in Health and to address adequate judgement on equalities. <b>£180K held to fund pressures in MTFP for 2013/14</b>
OFSTED Action Plan	<b>70</b>	(70)				<b>-</b>		<b>-</b>	(70)	Carried forward EIG - OFSTED action, Information management and compliance posts - fixed term
Fostering & Adoption	<b>300</b>	(300)				<b>-</b>		<b>-</b>	(300)	Possible risk should disaggregation with BB go ahead. Analysis is ongoing. This figure is subject to discussion with BB about staffing compliments. Continued rising IFA's
Looked After Children / Safeguarding	<b>1,200</b>	(1,200)				<b>-</b>		<b>-</b>	(1,200)	Emergent budget issues, which account for the 22 per cent rise in children coming forward at risk of significant harm
CWD	<b>143</b>	(143)				<b>-</b>		<b>-</b>	(143)	Carried forward EIG - OFSTED action, Information management and compliance posts - fixed term
Impact of future funding cuts (CS - EIG)	<b>1,193</b>	(1,193)				<b>-</b>		<b>-</b>	(1,193)	EIG Reduction
Threshold Review	<b>500</b>	(500)				<b>-</b>		<b>-</b>	(500)	Threshold Review
CWD						<b>-</b>	70	<b>70</b>	70	Refurbishment of flat at Maythorn & South Hub Settlement costs, pressure for MTFP
Transformation Challenge Award				150		<b>150</b>		<b>150</b>	150	Income received March 14 Transformation Challenge Award Earmarked and carried forward
Support and Aspiration Grant				65		<b>65</b>		<b>65</b>	65	Support and Aspiration Grant Earmarked
Children's Services Unspent Grant Income				311		<b>311</b>		<b>311</b>	311	ASYE Grant Programme to train & develop newly qualified SW's £7k, Troubled Families Grant £304k Earmarked
Assets of Community Value				13		<b>13</b>		<b>13</b>	13	New Burdens Grant for Assets of Community Value Earmarked
The Central Bedfordshire Academy of Social Work and Early Intervention						<b>-</b>	118	<b>118</b>	118	Additional Practice Educator to support an increased cohort of newly qualified social workers, project support and leadership qualification funding
Children's & Families Act						<b>-</b>	200	<b>200</b>	200	Development of communications and implementation materials to present whole of CBC's offer to families
<b>Total Children's Services</b>	<b>4,755</b>	<b>(3,886)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,978</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,847</b>	<b>1,618</b>	<b>5,465</b>	<b>710</b>	

## Appendix A – Earmarked Reserves

Description	Opening Balance 2013/14 £000	Spent £000	Released £000	Technical Movements £000	Agreed transfers as at Dec £000	Balance before new transfers £000	New Proposed transfers	Proposed Closing Balance 2013/14 £000	MEMO: Net movement after proposals	Description of EMR
<b>Regeneration Reserves</b>						-		-	-	
Career Development framework	68	(35)				33		33	(35)	This reserve is to fund 2 two year planning trainee 'apprenticeship' posts in partnership with Westminster University . These posts sit in Development Management division .
External Funded Regeneration reserve	434	(94)				340		340	(94)	
Local Development Framework	100					100	265	365	265	To support the examination hearings of development strategy, gypsy and traveller and CIL which had been due to take place in 2013/14. The 2014/15 budget had been reduced in the MTFP process to reflect this.
Physical Regeneration Projects	31	(31)				-		-	(31)	
Pre-application service development	288	(146)		60	100	302		302	14	This reserve is used to resource and support Planning Performance Agreements specifically enabling external technical expertise to be secured to deliver against the milestones set out in the signed agreements. PPAs are entered into by Developers for an assured level of service and bring income into the Authority. Failure to deliver the levels of service set out in the agreement will result in reductions in income levels from PPAs and loss of reputational issues for the Council
Minerals and Waste partnership funds	104					104		104	-	
NIRAH	50	(16)				34		34	(16)	
Woodside connection options appraisal	50					50		50	-	
Business growth grants	84	(33)				51		51	(33)	
Flood Defence	264			51		315		315	51	now earmarked reserve not RIA/ GIA
Natural England	10					10		10	-	now earmarked reserve not RIA/ GIA
Building control	76			129		205		205	129	Previously this has been treated as a receipt in advance - however as building control is a trading account it needs to be treated as an earmarked reserve
Unauthorised Development	50			109		159		159	109	Previously this has been set up as a provision but the correct treatment is as an earmarked reserve.
Broadband						-		-	-	To support the second phase of the broadband project for additional coverage within the area as match funding is required
arts and theatre review	3	(3)				-		-	(3)	
neighbourhood planning grant				30		30		30	30	ringfenced grant
Town centre regeneration						-		-	-	Regeneration of town centres - This would be available to support the priority work of the new Regeneration Programme Delivery Team in the Regeneration Directorate. This would support the delivery of other priority projects in Dunstable and other town centres (Leighton Buzzard, Houghton Regis, Flitwick and Biggleswade).
<b>Total Regeneration</b>	<b>1,612</b>	<b>(358)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1,733</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>1,998</b>	<b>386</b>	
<b>Public Health Reserves</b>						-		-	-	
Transitional Grant Reserve	65		(65)	927		927		927	862	
Risk reserve	-					-		-	-	
<b>Total Public Health</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(65)</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>862</b>	

## Appendix A – Earmarked Reserves

Description	Opening Balance 2013/14 £000	Spent £000	Released £000	Technical Movements £000	Agreed transfers as at Dec £000	Balance before new transfers £000	New Proposed transfers	Proposed Closing Balance 2013/14 £000	MEMO: Net movement after proposals	Description of EMR
<b>Improvement and Corporate Services Reserves</b>						0		-	-	
Pan Public Sector Funding	43	(15)				28		28	(15)	Partnership Funding to facilitate the successful delivery of the Implementation of Total Place in Luton and Bedfordshire through Projects.
Customer First	33	-		2		35		35	2	Support allocated to Customer First Revenue activities
SAP Optimisation	73	(73)				-		-	(73)	To support revenue activities of the SAP Optimisation project.
Elections Fund	12				82	94		94	82	Build sufficient reserve over four years to run council election
Local Land Charges (LLC)	-					-		-	-	Digitise and create electronic database of documents relating to LLC enquiries
Individual Electoral Registration	-			19		19		19	19	
Assets	-					-	40	40	40	Transition - Reduce reliance on Consultants & fund transitional period in staff restructure.
ICT Webcasting	-					-	150	150	150	
ICS - HR (Apprentices & Graduates)	-					-	150	150	150	
<b>Total Improvement &amp; Corporate Services</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>(88)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>355</b>	
<b>Finance</b>										
Housing Benefit Subsidy Audit Reserve	500					500		500	-	Reserve to cover outcome of Housing Benefit Subsidy audits
NNDR Discretionary Relief & NNDR Bad Debts	-			502		502	-	502	502	Receipt of new accounting guidance - will impact 14/15 collection fund
<b>Total Finance</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,002</b>	<b>502</b>	
<b>Corporate Reserves</b>						0		-	-	
Redundancy/Restructure Reserve	3,168	(754)	-	-	-	2,414		2,414	(754)	Reserve to cover redundancy and actuarial costs
Insurance reserve	3,338	(214)		780		3,904	500	4,404	1,066	Reserve to cover insurance costs based on actuarial assessment
Welfare Reform	500	(40)				460		460	(40)	The Government has introduced a range of changes to benefits and other welfare payments, with effect from 1 April 2013. This includes abolition of Council Tax Benefit, replaced with a localised Council Tax Support system and the Under Occupancy Charge for those benefit claimants deemed to be occupying a greater number of bedrooms than is required. There have also been changes in the transfer of the former Social Welfare Fund payments to local authorities. The Council has budgeted for these changes but is aware that the full implications and the impact on vulnerable groups of people has yet to be fully understood. This Earmarked Reserve has been created to provide scope to support any additional initiatives which the Council may wish to take as the position develops during the financial year.

## Appendix A – Earmarked Reserves

Description	Opening Balance 2013/14 £000	Spent £000	Released £000	Technical Movements £000	Agreed transfers as at Dec £000	Balance before new transfers £000	New Proposed transfers	Proposed Closing Balance 2013/14 £000	MEMO: Net movement after proposals	Description of EMR
Teachers Pensions	186			15		201		201	15	Reserve to cover authority's potential liability following historic scheme records issue
s31 NDR Income to offset NDR discounts	-			1,018		1,018		1,018	1,018	
Planning Decisions Legal Challenge	300					300		300	-	
Funding for Transition	321	(321)				-		-	(321)	This Earmarked Reserve has been created to provide additional flexibility during the 13/14 year as we transition to new ways of working more efficiently and implement significant office rationalisation in consolidating into two principal offices. It will be used to support one-off activities necessary to implement these and other efficiencies.
Weed Spraying							200	200	200	Great Places in Central Bedfordshire
Grass Cutting							200	200	200	Great Places in Central Bedfordshire
Additional street cleansing / deep cleansing, footpath clearance, spot weed control, graffiti removal / painting, emergency 'streetscene'							300	300	300	Great Places in Central Bedfordshire
Street sweeping							130	130	130	Great Places in Central Bedfordshire
Town Centre jet wash							100	100	100	Great Places in Central Bedfordshire
Road Marking Line renewal							70	70	70	Great Places in Central Bedfordshire
<b>Total Corporate Reserves</b>	<b>7,813</b>	<b>(1,329)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,813</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,297</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>9,797</b>	<b>1,984</b>	
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>21,433</b>	<b>(6,810)</b>	<b>(65)</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>22,395</b>	<b>5,363</b>	<b>27,758</b>	<b>6,325</b>	

**Appendix B General Fund Balances and Reserves Analysis**

<b>Background</b>	
1.1	The Chief Finance Officer has a statutory duty under Section 25 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 to comment annually on the adequacy of the Council's General Fund Reserves. This is reported as part of the annual budget papers to Executive and Full Council and the analysis within this document supports the Chief Finance Officer's opinion.
1.2	The purpose of General Fund reserves are to act as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A working balance to help cushion the impact of volatility in net expenditure or income across financial years</li> <li>• To smooth the flow of funds eg. When faced with funding cuts a GF Reserve enables the Council to draw down on reserves whilst a more permanent efficiency saving is implemented.</li> <li>• A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies;</li> <li>• A means of building up funds to meet known or predicted requirements. Funds can also be set aside in the form of specific earmarked reserves, which are accounted for separately but legally form part of the General Fund balance.</li> </ul>
1.3	When considering whether the level of General Fund reserves is both adequate and necessary, the Chief Finance Officer considers the strategic, operational and financial risks facing the Council and balances this against utilising the maximum resources available to the Council to achieve its objectives and ensuring that current resources are used to the benefit of the current tax payer.
1.4	The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) released a Local Authority Accounting Panel (LAAP) Bulletin 77 (November 2008) outlining key areas to consider when assessing the adequacy of reserves including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The robustness of the financial planning process (including treatment of inflation and interest rates, estimates of locally raised income and timing of capital receipts)</li> <li>• How the Council manages demand led service pressures</li> <li>• The treatment of planned savings / productivity gains</li> <li>• The financial risks inherent in any major capital project, outsourcing arrangements or significant new funding changes</li> <li>• The strength of the financial monitoring and reporting processes</li> <li>• Cash flow management and the need for short term borrowing</li> <li>• The availability of reserves, Government grants and other funds to deal with major contingencies</li> <li>• The general financial climate to which the Council is subject to and its previous record in budget and financial management.</li> </ul>
1.5	In November 2013 the Audit Commission stated that: <p><i>“Reserves are an essential part of councils’ strategic, financial and risk management. Councils hold reserves either as a contingency fund in the event of unforeseen circumstances, such as unexpected demand for services or a shortfall in income, or to smooth the impact of planned spending requirements over time, for example, setting aside funds for staff redundancies or to invest in large-scale capital projects. Our 2012 report on councils’ decision making on reserves encouraged councils to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>examine routinely how much they hold in reserves, and the purposes for which reserves are held; and</i></li> </ul>

**Appendix B General Fund Balances and Reserves Analysis**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure their decisions on reserves are clearly explained to local taxpayers to promote accountability.”</li> </ul>
1.6	<p>The analysis in Table 1 examines the Council's balances against the criteria outlined in LAAP Bulletin 77 and is based on the Council's procedures and structures. However, the assessment does necessarily include an element of subjectivity and in acknowledgement of this incorporates a range. The calculated range for recommended general fund balances is £11.5m to £25m. The upper end of the range includes the maximum unallocated balances the Council could justify holding, and if balances were at this level, the Chief Finance Officer may recommend that plans were developed to use balances to enhance the Council's expenditure plans in the current year.</p>
1.7	<p>The Council currently holds General Fund reserves of £14.2m, which is 3% of gross income and within the recommended range. Additionally £21.4m has been set aside as earmarked reserves for specific identified purposes.</p>

**Table 1 Assessment of Required General Fund Reserve Balances**

<b>Area of Risk</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
The general financial climate to which the Council is subject	<p>Indications are that Local Government will see sustained reductions in Central Government Funding beyond 2014/15. The Chancellor has stated the Government's aim of running a budget surplus over the next parliament, which would mean approximately a 7% reduction in borrowing as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Chancellor has committed to achieving this without increasing taxes and has indicated that ring-fencing of NHS and Schools Funding will continue. It follows that Local Government may expect to face significant further cuts in future years following the general election in May 2015.</p> <p>This is against a backdrop of early signs that the UK economy is recovering, with unemployment down to almost 7% and continuous period on period growth. The Bank of England has maintained Quantitative Easing at £375bn and low interest rates awaiting stronger signs of recovery, particularly with the wider European economy still facing difficulties.</p> <p>Locally, Central Bedfordshire Council has included identified Central Government funding reductions within its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Grant funding accounts for approximately 60% of Council gross income. The potential social effects of recent Central Government reductions in Housing benefit and Council Tax Support Scheme will become clearer in future years, together with any impact upon the Council's finances. Additionally the Council has new statutory duties for Public Health,</p>	£2m	£4m

**Appendix B General Fund Balances and Reserves Analysis**

	<p>which may result in additional responsibilities and financial implications in future.</p> <p>Schools continue to convert to Academy status placing them outside the Council's control. Education Support Grant funding is provided to Councils on a per pupil basis and is reduced with every Academy conversion. The anticipated reduction is built into the MTFP.</p>		
The overall financial standing of the authority	<p>From commencing with reserves of £5.1m on 31 March 2010, Central Bedfordshire Council has steadily increased reserves to £14.2m as at 31 March 2013, which is 3% of gross income. This reflects continuous improvement in the financial strength of the Council. Additionally the Council has £21.4m in earmarked reserves set aside for specific purposes. A balanced budget has been set for 2014/15 which includes funding a £2.1m comprehensive risk and development contingency.</p>	£0m	£1m
Estimates of level of locally raised income	<p>In 2013/14 the administration of Council Tax Support Scheme was localised with a 10% reduction in funding and National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) moved to a retention system, where Councils keep an element of business rates raised.</p> <p>The reduction in Council Tax Support Scheme funding has been built into the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) of the Council. However it is not clear what impact the reductions in council tax support scheme and housing benefits will have on future collection rates and the ability of individuals to pay their bill. The Council currently has a bad debt provision of £2.3m against a total of £10.7m Council Tax arrears and the changes could result in higher arrears and a higher provision required to be set aside.</p> <p>Retention of an element of Business Rates by Councils means the organisation would benefit from higher Rates income than expected, but also suffer the consequences if Business Rates income was to reduce. The Government had introduced a safety net payment to prevent excessive losses and a levy on gains and Central Bedfordshire Council would be funded for NNDR losses above £1.9m in a financial year and would have to pay 24% of their share of any gains above their baseline funding as a levy back to Central Government.</p> <p>Any surplus NNDR collected is accounted for via the Collection Fund and the General</p>	£1m	£3m

**Appendix B General Fund Balances and Reserves Analysis**

	<p>Fund would have the benefit of this in the subsequent year. However in such a situation the levy would be payable in year resulting in a timing difference between the expenditure and income.</p> <p>The new NNDR retention system requires Councils to determine a provision for NNDR appeals in future years, where individuals may successfully challenge their NNDR rating. It is the first time Councils have had to set this provision which directly affects NNDR income and necessarily involves an element of subjectivity.</p> <p>Both NNDR and Council Tax income forecasts are based on the estimation of property bandings and rateable properties by valuation professionals in each respective area.</p>		
<p>The treatment of planned efficiency savings/productivity gains</p>	<p>The Council has set a balanced budget for 2014/15 which includes £17.4m of efficiencies. A further £25.6m of efficiencies are required over the subsequent 3 years to achieve the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).</p> <p>The Council has a successful track record of achieving efficiency savings having achieved £19.3m in 2011/12, £11.3m in 2012/13 and £16.1m in 2013/14. Efficiencies are monitored in the Council by the Efficiencies Implementation Group (EIG) chaired by the Chief Finance Officer.</p>	<p>£1m</p>	<p>£2m</p>
<p>The treatment of inflation and interest rates</p>	<p>Limited inflation has currently been included in the 2014/15 budget and price inflation has remained fairly constant with both RPI and CPI measures close to 2%. However, there do remain specific risks in relation to contracts and fuel.</p> <p>Low interest rates have been in place for a number of years, with the Bank of England base rate at 0.5%, resulting in the Council receiving low returns on its investments, which has been factored into the budget.</p> <p>The General Fund has externally borrowed £141m, 97% of which is from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) which is a Central Government loan facility. £36m of this borrowing is based on a variable rate of interest with the remainder fixed. In recent years the Council has been borrowing from internal cash balances in lieu of borrowing externally and this is currently £75.4m.</p> <p>An increase in interest rates would</p>	<p>£2m</p>	<p>£3m</p>



**Appendix B General Fund Balances and Reserves Analysis**

	<p>therefore have a direct and immediate cost on variable borrowing. Where amounts which have been internally borrowed are required to be spent, external borrowing may be required at that time to fund these and this would be at a cost to the organisation at that time depending on the rate of interest.</p> <p>The Council has a significant capital programme which forecasts £133m of borrowing over the next 4 years. At present the MTFP has calculated revenue implications on current interest rates and debt taken out on a short term basis. If interest rates were to increase, the revenue implications of this debt would increase when borrowing or refinancing the debt in future years.</p> <p>In 2010/11 the PWLB increased its interest rates by 1%. Whilst borrowing from the PWLB remains the preferred option due to the comparatively low interest rate on borrowing, there is a risk that the PWLB may refuse further borrowing or increase its rates, forcing Councils to the financial markets for borrowing at greater cost.</p>		
<p>The financial risk inherent in any major outsourcing / insourcing arrangements</p>	<p>The Council has a number of large agreements with external providers.</p> <p>The largest of these are contracts for: waste management, highways, passenger transport, social care for residential and nursing care provision, temporary accommodation, agency staff and grounds maintenance.</p> <p>Some of these suppliers are reliant on private finance linked to asset values for their viability. In the current financial climate this poses an increased risk of service failure to the Council.</p> <p>The Council has also engaged with a supplier to run its leisure centres, in a contract which creates a residual risk to be managed by the Council.</p>	<p>£1m</p>	<p>£2m</p>
<p>The treatment of demand led pressures</p>	<p>The Council faces significant population growth over the next few years with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an 8% increase in the total population;</li> <li>• an 11% increase in the over 75's population;</li> <li>• a 16% increase in the over 80's population; and</li> <li>• a 20% increase in the over 85's population</li> </ul> <p>Over the next 20 years projections</p>	<p>£1m</p>	<p>£2m</p>

**Appendix B General Fund Balances and Reserves Analysis**

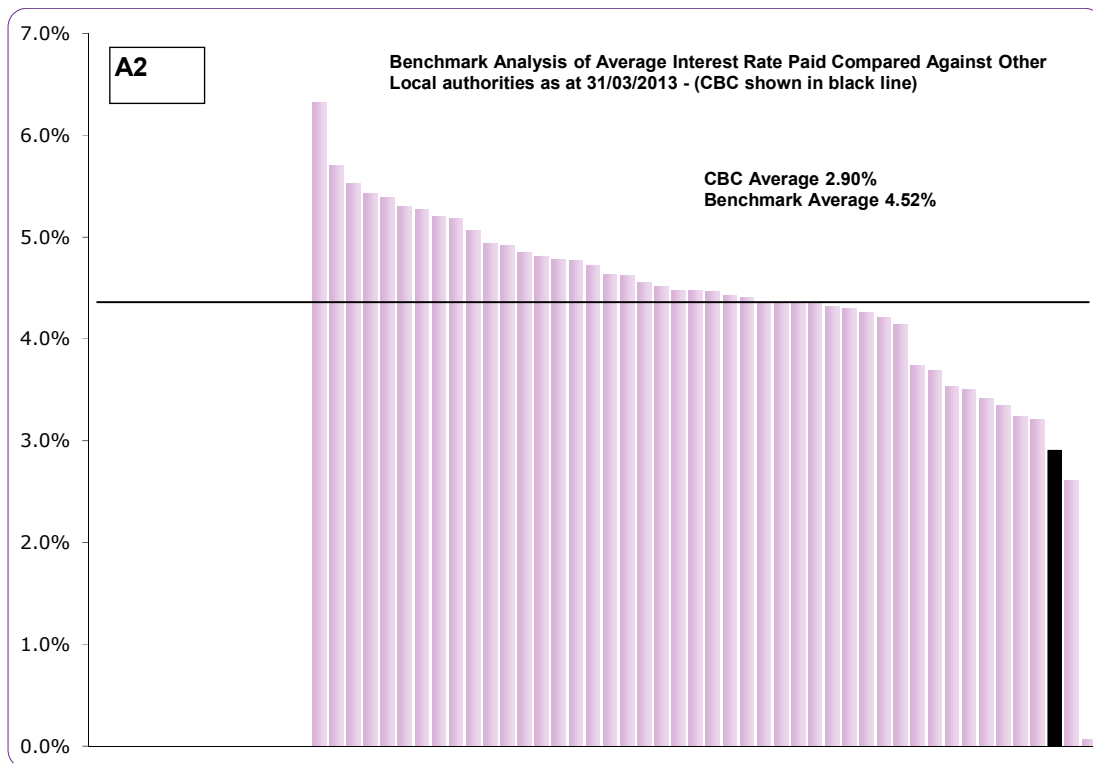
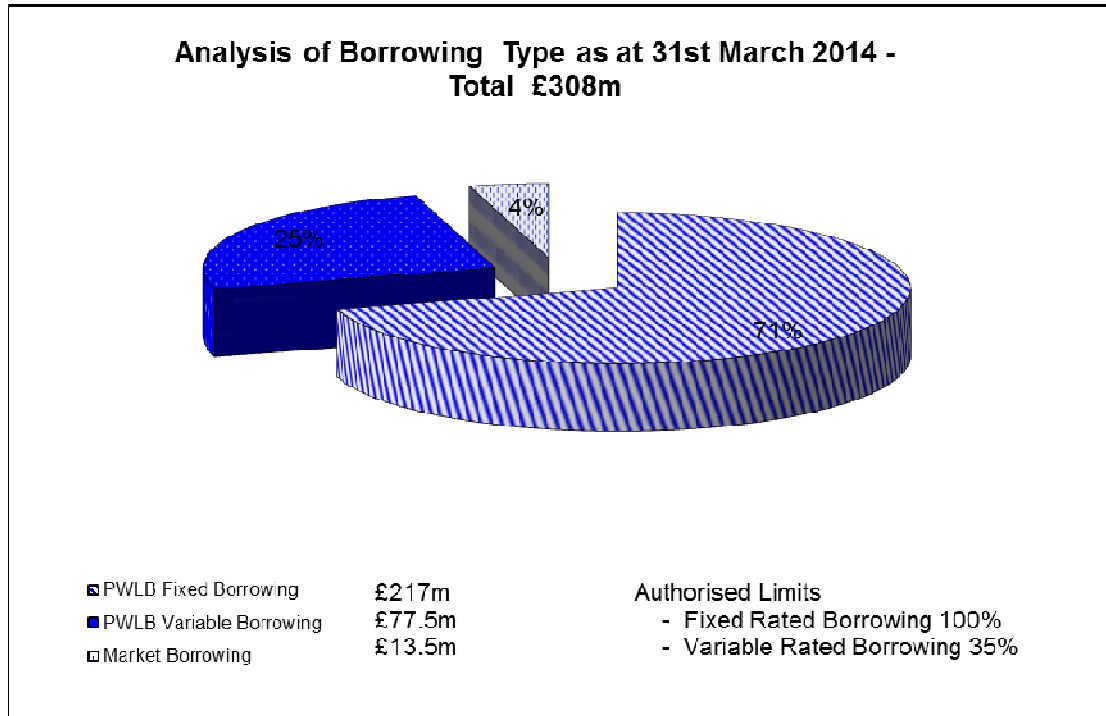
	<p>estimate the trend to continue with a 187% increase in those over 90 years old over the period and a 26% increase in those over 65 with a long term illness.</p> <p>The Council has a robust Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process embedded across the organisation. Through this process, reasonable assumptions about demand and funding pressures have been made and a prudent view of volatile areas has been taken. All known pressures across the Council are included as funded items in the MTFP, with additional funding in future years linked to forecast demand. The budget contingency is largely to take account of potential demand led pressures on key expenditure and income streams.</p>		
The financial risks inherent in any major capital developments	<p>The Capital Programme includes expenditure over the next 4 years of £330m with substantial investment in primary schools places, enhanced waste disposal facilities and Woodside Link. A further £55.3m of expenditure is on the capital reserve list, to be included in the main programme if the project can be accommodated within the Council's financing constraints. There is also expected to be significant investment through the Housing Revenue Account.</p> <p>Increased capital activity and development will result in a corresponding increase in financial risk.</p>	£0.5m	£1.5m
Estimates of the level and timing of capital receipts	<p>Capital Receipts are forecast to be £33.3m over the next four years, based on a schedule of land and properties that have been identified for disposal and form an important source of financing for the capital programme. If disposals are lower than projected than alternative options to achieve disposals or compensatory improvements to asset utilisation will be considered.</p>	£2m	£3m
The availability of reserves, Government grants and other funds to deal with major contingencies and the adequacy of provisions	<p>In the event of a major emergency it is possible that aside from general reserves, Central Government may provide funding to support the Council via the Belwin scheme. However Councils will only be able to access this funding if they have already spent 0.2% of their budget on repairs and thus may incur direct costs as a result.</p>	£0m	£0.5m
The Council's capacity to manage in year budget pressures, and its strategy for managing	<p>There is a well-developed monthly budget monitoring process in place, ensuring adverse variations are identified promptly by service managers. The monthly challenge and review process ensures the early identification and resolution of issues.</p>	£0m	£1m

**Appendix B General Fund Balances and Reserves Analysis**

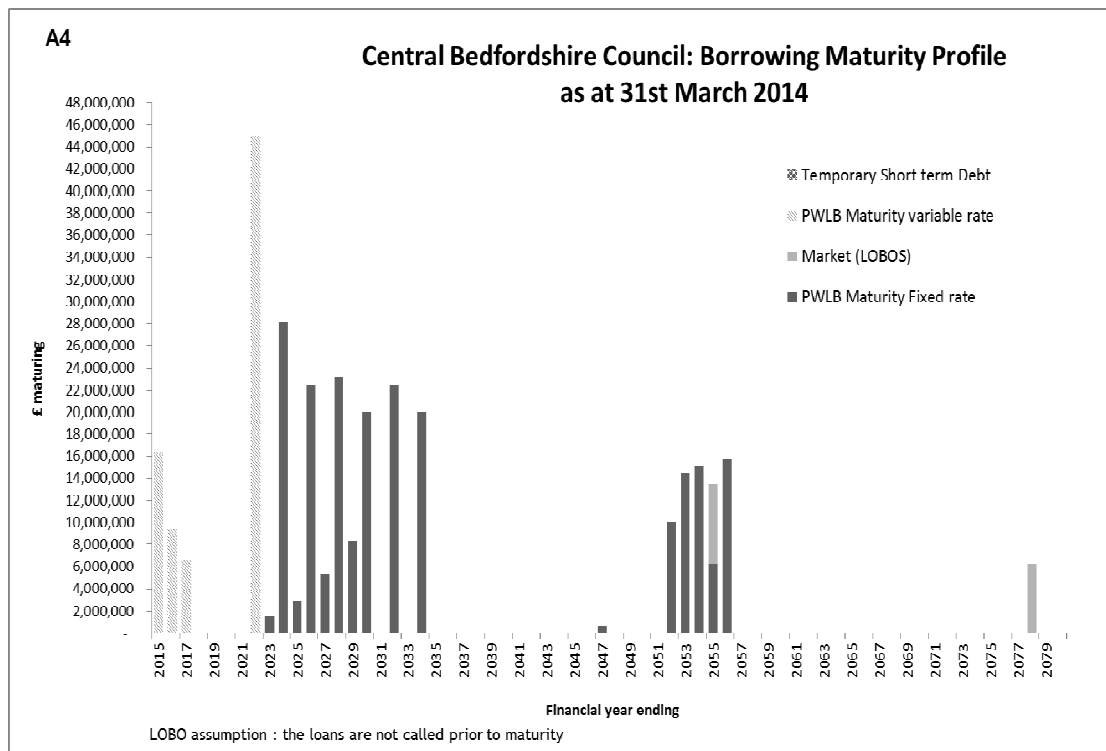
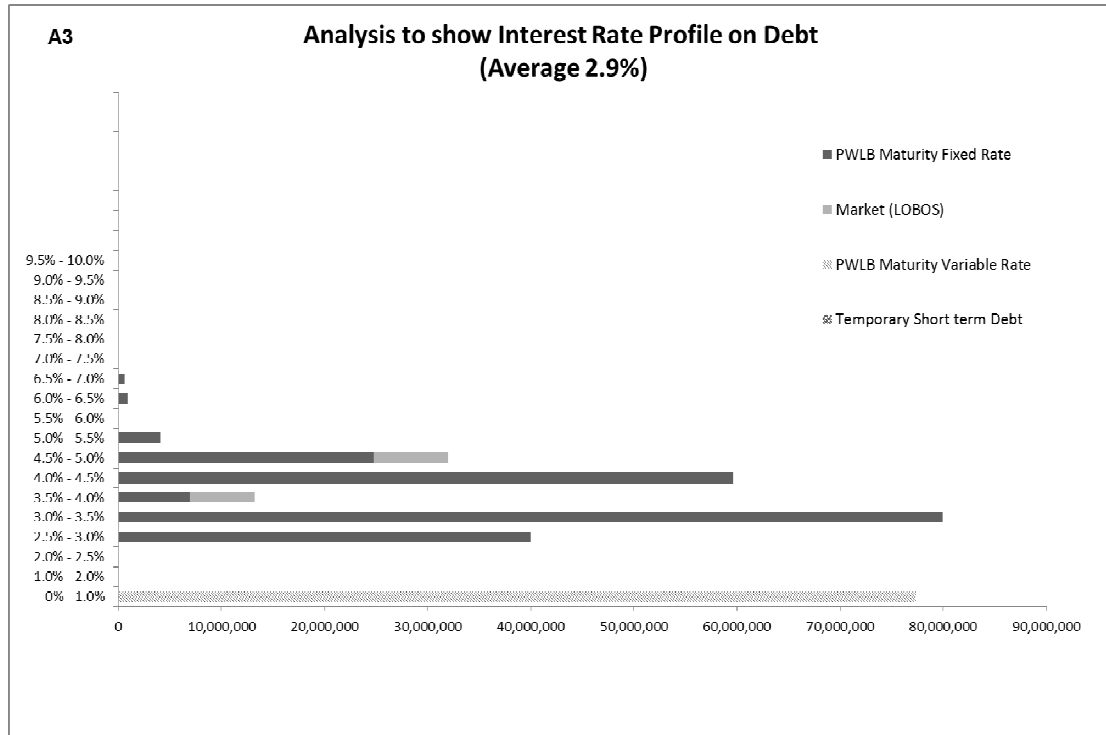
both demand and service delivery in the longer term	Additionally the 2014/15 budget includes a £2.1m risk and development contingency to potentially support any in year issues.		
Miscellaneous	<p>There are a number of risks that face the Council which have a low likelihood of occurring but would have a high impact if the risk was actualised. This includes risks of substantial flooding, disease outbreak or a serious service failure for example in Children's' Services or Adult Social Care. There is also the risk of widespread ICT failure and the Council has strong internal mechanisms for identifying, monitoring and reporting risks on a regular basis.</p> <p>Recent changes in legislation have brought about new community rights and alternative methods of delivering services traditionally provided by the Council. This has led to more and different supply chain partnerships being entered into sharing risks across private, public and voluntary organisations.</p> <p>The Council may also face from time to time potential legal actions. Funds in excess of budgetary provision may be required to defend the Council against such actions.</p> <p>The Council has funds set aside to cover insurance claims which fall within the Council's excess based on an estimated level of future claims. Additionally Mutual Municipal Insurance (MMI) Ltd are a Local Government insurance company currently in administration but still receiving claims, particularly for mesothelioma, and where they do not have sufficient funds to cover their claims the company is able to claw back funds previously paid out to Local Authorities. In January 2014 the company clawed back 15% of amounts paid out, which amounted to £348k for Central Bedfordshire Council. It is possible that further claw backs of funds may be required in future years.</p>	£1m	£2m
<b>Total</b>		<b>£11.5m</b>	<b>£25m</b>

**Appendix C – Treasury Management**

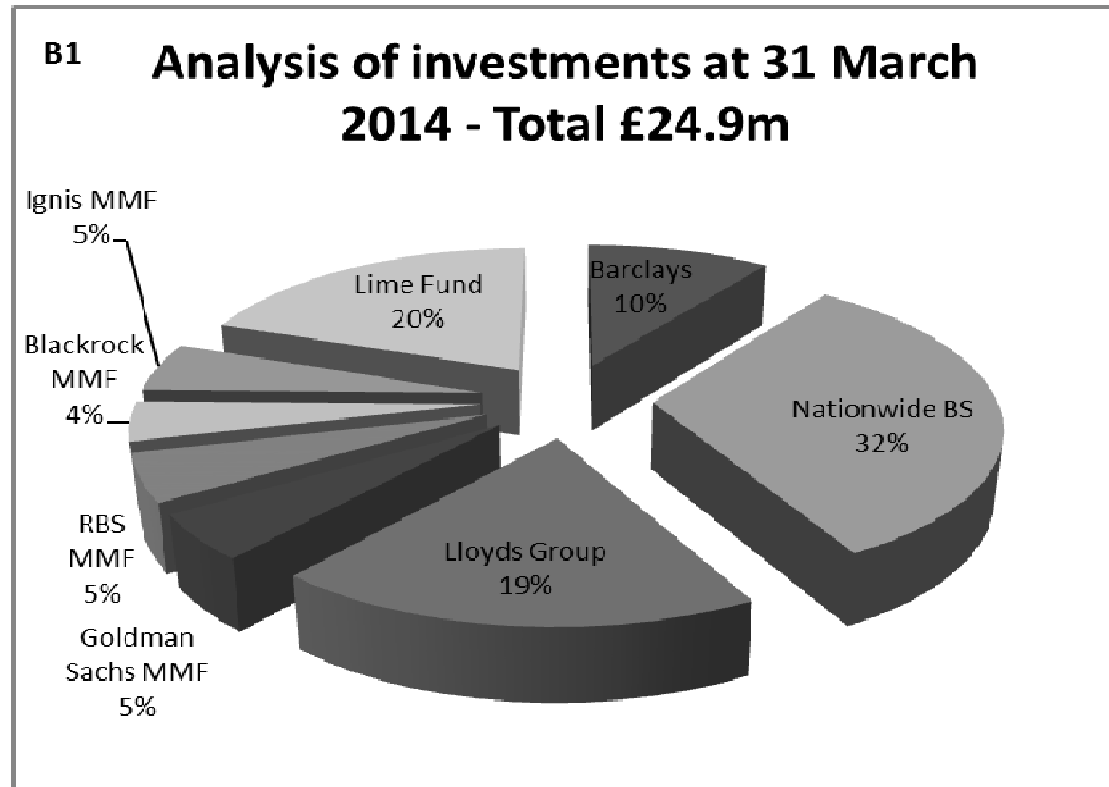
SECTION A: DEBT INFORMATION  
A1



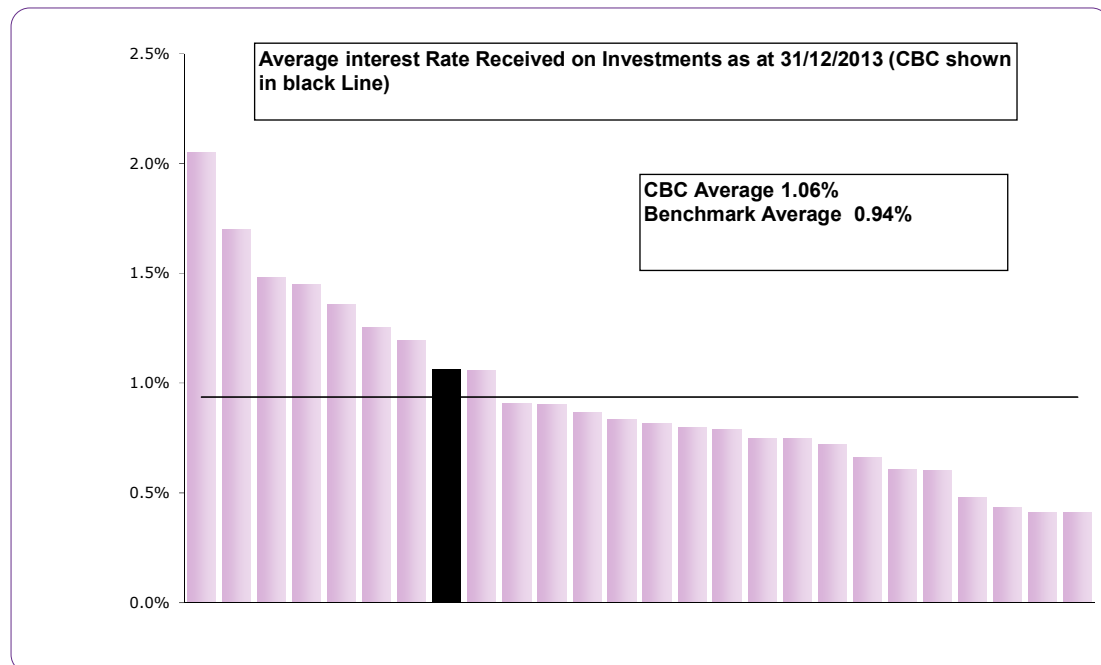
**Appendix C – Treasury Management**

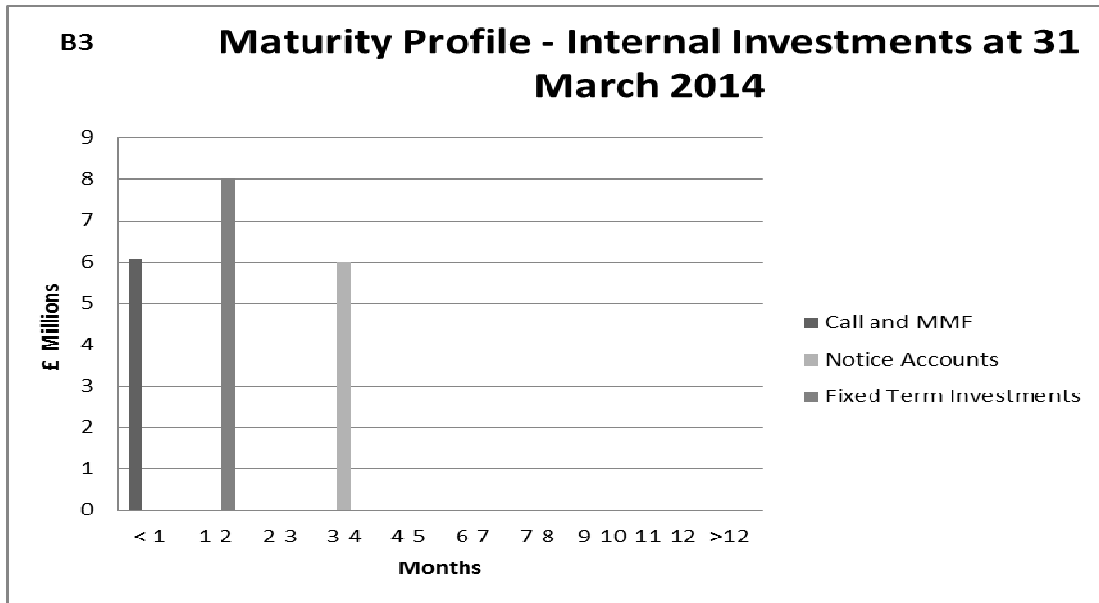


SECTION B: INVESTMENT INFORMATION



**B2**





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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 15 July 2014  
**Subject:** March 2014 – Capital Budget Monitoring Provisional  
Outturn Report ( Subject to Audit)  
**Report of:** Cllr Maurice Jones, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for  
Corporate Resources  
**Summary:** The report provides information on the provisional capital outturn  
position for 2013/14 as at March 2014. It excludes the Housing  
Revenue Account which is subject to a separate report.

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**Advising Officer:** Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer  
**Contact Officer:** Charles Warboys, Chief Finance Officer  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key Decision** Yes  
**Reason for urgency/  
exemption from call-in  
(if appropriate)** Not applicable

<b>CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS</b>
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<b>Council Priorities:</b>
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Sound financial management contributes to the Council's Value for Money and enables the Council to successfully deliver its priorities. The recommendations will contribute indirectly to all 5 Council priorities.
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<b>Financial:</b>
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- |  |
|--|
| 1. The financial implications are set out in the report. |
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<b>Legal:</b>
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- |          |
|----------|
| 2. None. |
|----------|

<b>Risk Management:</b>
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- |          |
|----------|
| 3. None. |
|----------|

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

4. Any staffing implications will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Managing Change Policy and in consultation with the Trades Unions.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

5. Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken prior to the allocation of the 2013/14 budgets and each Directorate was advised of significant equality implications relating to their budget proposals.

**Public Health:**

6. None.

**Community Safety:**

7. None.

**Sustainability:**

8. None.

**Procurement:**

9. None.

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

10. The provisional outturn Capital Budget Monitoring report will be considered by the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 July 2014.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Executive is asked to approve:**

1. **the provisional outturn position which is to spend £72.3m compared to the budget of £94.6m. A variance of £22.3m (24%) as a result of an overspend of £4.9m and proposed deferred spend to 2014/15 of £27.2m.**
2. **the deferred spend of £27.2m (Gross) £16.4m (Net) for capital schemes in progress from 2013/14 to 2014/15.**

*Reason for Recommendations: To complete schemes currently underway and facilitate effective financial management and planning.*

## Executive Summary

11. The report sets out the provisional capital outturn position for 2013/14 as at March 2014. Explanations for the variances are set out below. This report enables the Executive to review the overall capital position of the Council.

## 12. KEY HIGHLIGHTS

The capital budget for 2013/14 excluding HRA is £94.6m (£45.0m net). The main issues to note are:

- i) Provisional outturn is a spend of £72.3m, £27.2m proposed deferred spend to 2014/15 and an overspend of £4.9m (gross). This primarily relates to Section 278 schemes due to income timing differences and technical adjustments . The underspend is £3.5m (net).
- ii) £60.6m (64%) of the gross budget relates to the 20 top value schemes. £42.4m (59%) of the gross spend relates to these schemes.
- iii) Capital receipts outturned at £2.65m compared to budget of £6.7m.
- iv) A summary of the position is in the table below.

Directorate	Gross Budget £m	Gross Actual £m	Gross Variance £m	Net Budget £m	Net Actual £m	Net Variance £m
Children's Services	27.4	22.5	(4.9)	0.7	0.4	(0.3)
Community Services	37.4	32.6	(4.7)	24.3	11.4	(12.9)
Improvement & Corporate Improvement	14.4	10.8	(3.6)	14.4	10.6	(3.8)
Regeneration	5.1	1.0	(4.1)	2.7	1.0	(1.7)
SCHH	10.3	5.3	(4.9)	3.0	1.8	(1.2)
<b>Total Exc HRA</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>72.3</b>	<b>(22.3)</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>(19.9)</b>

## 13. DIRECTORATE COMMENTARY

### Social Care Health and Housing

- 13.1 The outturn position for capital is a net underspend of £1.237m. The shortfall relates to the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme £0.931m, the Empty Homes programme £0.205m and the redevelopment of the Timberlands gypsy and traveller site £0.079m.

13.2 The shortfall represents deferred capital expenditure of £0.401m (£0.2m DFGs, £0.1m Empty Homes, £0.079m Timberlands and £0.022m Renewals) and genuine underspend of £0.836m (£0.731m DFGs and £0.105m Empty Homes). Other 100% externally funded schemes are also requested to slip in full into futures years i.e. Campus Closure £3.073m, Adults Social Care ICT projects £0.3m and Review of Accommodation/Day Support £0.347m).

13.3 The following table summarises the position against the revised budget as at the end of March.

<u>Table 1 Capital programme summary</u>	Full Year Outturn and Variances 2013/14						
	Gross Expend Budget	Gross Income Budget	Net Total	Gross Expend Outturn	Gross Income Outturn	Net Total	Net Variance
<b>SCHH Directorate</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
NHS Campus Closure	5.297	(5.297)	0	2.224	(2.224)	0	0
Disabled Facilities Grants Scheme	3.000	(0.588)	2.412	2.162	(0.681)	1.481	(0.931)
Timberlands and Chiltern View Gypsy and Traveller Sites	0.914	(0.687)	0.227	0.590	(0.442)	0.148	(0.079)
Review of Accommodation/Day Support	0.347	(0.347)	0	0	0	0	0
Adult Social Care ICT Projects	0.300	(0.300)	0	0	0	0	0
Empty Homes	0.270	0	0.270	0.065	0	0.065	(0.205)
Renewal Assistance	0.150	(0.050)	0.100	0.290	(0.212)	0.078	(0.022)
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.278</b>	<b>(7.269)</b>	<b>3.009</b>	<b>5.331</b>	<b>(3.559)</b>	<b>1.772</b>	<b>(1.237)</b>

13.4 Disabled Facilities Grant

For the Disabled Facility Grants, the reduced outturn of £1.481m (net) is due to a more robust approach to assessments, with a higher proportion of recommendations for equipment and minor works than previously, resulting in a lower proportion of referrals for DFG. This more robust approach provides better value for money for the Council.

Client contributions of £0.078m and contributions from other services of £0.015m account for the additional income received to support the DFG programme.

Information on the types of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and the number completed are reported on a quarterly basis. The table below provides details up to March 2014. In the year 2013/14, 232 DFG cases were completed which resulted in 374 major adaptations.

<b>Type of adaptation</b>	<b>No completed</b>
Level access shower/wet room	167
Straight stair lift	32
Curved stair lift	24
Toilet alterations	20
Access ramps	25
Dropped kerb and hard standing	1
Wheelchair/step lift	0
Through floor lift	3
Major extension	15
Kitchen alterations	8
Access alterations (doors etc)	35
Heating improvements	5
Garage conversions/minor additions	9
Safety repairs/improvements	5
Other	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>374</b>

- 13.5 The grants provided to residents through the DFG programme assist some of the poorer and most vulnerable members of the community. Without these grants in many cases the properties involved would be unsuitable for the needs of the occupiers.
- 13.6 By providing such residents with the facilities required to enable them to remain in their current homes, the DFG programme is helping to enhance the quality of their lives. This also reduces pressure on health service resources and residential care, as without these improvements more residents would require emergency or longer term care solutions.
- 13.7 There is £2.5m value of work in progress, most of which will be completed in 2014/15. Given the context of the work currently in the system, it is proposed to slip £0.2m of the £0.931m underspend into 2014/15.

13.8 Renewals Assistance

The Renewals Assistance programme includes Safety Security Emergency Repair assistance and is an “emergency” type of assistance for the most vulnerable households, for example dangerous wiring, a condemned boiler, etc. In the year 2013/14, 70 renewals cases were completed and are broken down as follows:

<b>Type of Assistance</b>	<b>Number</b>
Safety Security Emergency Repair	19
Home Improvement Assistance	32
Affordable Warmth Assistance	12
Relocation assistance	2
Discounted DFG	5

13.9 The HRA Capital programme is now monitored as part of the HRA’s budget report.

Children’s Services

13.10 Children’s Services annual capital expenditure budget is £27.395m (including slippage from 2012/13). The income budget is £26.691m, a net expenditure capital budget of £704k.

13.11 The provisional expenditure outturn position for 2013/14 is £22.46m, £4.9m below the original budget, which is in line with previous forecasts.

13.12 All but two projects (£704k), Schools Access and Temporary Accommodation are funded wholly by grant receipts that have no expenditure deadline.

**Summary Table: Directorate Overall position**

	<b>Gross Expenditure Budget</b>	<b>Provisional Gross Expenditure Outturn</b>	<b>Gross Expenditure Variance</b>	<b>Slippage</b>	<b>(Under) / Over spend</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Children Services	27,195	22,399	(4,796)	(4,618)	(178)
Partnerships	200	61	(139)	(139)	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,395</b>	<b>22,460</b>	<b>(4,935)</b>	<b>(4,757)</b>	<b>(178)</b>

**13.13 New School Places/Basic Need**

This grant funding is to enable management of pressures related to population growth and capacity within our schools. The outline programme to commission new school places over the next five years will drive the expenditure of basic need grant and will also align S106 contributions that are being collected for major projects.

13.14 In December 2013 the Department for Education (DfE) announced the Basic Need allocations for 2014/15 to 2016/17 allocating £21.219m over the three years. The allocations for 2015/16 (£5.9m) and 2016/17 (£6.2m) are a reduction on the current year and 2014/15 (£9.1m) but the total over the 3 years is still significant (£21.2m for CBC vs £11.3m Luton and £9.9m Bedford over the same period).

13.15 The allocations for 2015/16 and 2016/17 are a change to the previous budget assumed for this period and reduce the amount of grant income to the programme. The New School Places Programme and the progress of projects within it are currently undergoing an annual review and refresh and the impact on the capital cashflow will be reported to Executive as part of the Council's capital programme in December 2014.

13.16 The New School Places Programme was originally forecast in 2013/14 to achieve expenditure of £13.285m but was reduced in year to achieve reduced expenditure of £12m as a result of a delay in commencement of the expansion of Church End Lower in Marston which started on site on 10 February 2014. The provisional outturn for the programme for 2013/14 is £12.6m.

**13.17 Schools Capital Maintenance**

This rolling programme is externally funded by DfE grant but does require schools to contribute to the cost of works, as set out in a formula contained within the Scheme for Financing Schools. These contributions are invoiced once planned works are complete.

13.18 The initial programme of £4.5m was subsequently reduced to £3.15m, following a much reduced DfE grant of £2.562m compared to previous years as a result of Academy capital held centrally by the Education Funding Agency. In addition there were savings as a result of works removed from the indicative programme following reassessment, schemes being re scoped following initial survey inspections and tendering. The provisional outturn for the programme for 2013/14 is £3.3m.

13.19 The DfE announced an allocation for schools capital maintenance in 2014/15 of £2.532m of grant funding. Uncommitted funds from 2013/14 will increase the available budget for new works to £3.5m. This gives a total value programme, including slippage from 2013/14, of £4.4m of works to complete in 2014/15.

- 13.20 The £3.5m 2014/15 indicative programme of works has been drafted and surveyors have visited each school identified with potential works to validate the data used to provide the indicative programme. Tender packages for works are now being developed.

Community Services

- 13.21 The Community Services capital programme in 2013/14 is made up of 43 schemes which includes large groupings of projects that relate to Environmental services, Libraries, Leisure and Transport.
- 13.22 The directorate spent £32.6m (gross), below budget by £4.7, and external income was higher than budget by £8.2m. This resulted in £12.9m (net) below budget.

Overall underspend was £12.9m, of which £10.7m is proposed to be deferred to 2014/15. The majority of this slippage is due to the BEaR project and leisure schemes.

Scheme Categories	Net Expenditure Budget	Net Actual Expenditure	Net Expenditure Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Environmental Services	6,058	1,033	(5,025)
Libraries	202	78	(124)
Leisure	4,379	2,541	(1,838)
Transport	13,625	7,713	(5,912)
<b>Community Services</b>	<b>24,264</b>	<b>11,366</b>	<b>(12,898)</b>

<b>Percentage of budget</b>		<b>46.8%</b>	<b>-53.2%</b>
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- 13.23 Highways and Transport

The following improvements were delivered in 2013/14.

- A total of 48.42km of roads and 12.058km of footways have been resurfaced. This included the deep insitu recycling of Poynters Road, Dunstable prior to the opening of the Luton Dunstable Busway. The target was 45.5km of roads and 12km of footways to be resurfaced.



- A total of 771 street lighting columns and 3,560 lanterns have been replaced. The target was 928 street lighting columns and 2,636 lanterns to be replaced.
- Stratton Street Railway Bridge, Biggleswade is being designed and track possessions are booked for Christmas 2015.
- 43 Integrated Transport schemes have been implemented.
- The A1 Longabout scheme has commenced on site.

A number of major schemes were either progressed or completed in 2013/14 including:

#### Luton Dunstable Guided Busway

- Construction of the Busway finished in July/August 2013 allowing driver training to take place during August and September ready for opening at the end of September 2013. All three local bus operators elected to use the system and provided their own additional vehicles, conversions and collaborated to provide a common training programme based on experience gained from the Cambridge busway project.
- All three operators have reported good take-up figures, a total of 685,664 journeys were made on Busway Routes up to 31 March 2014 (346,854 to December 2013; 338,810 January – March 2014). Arriva invested in new vehicles and operates the Houghton Regis, Dunstable town centre, Luton station/interchange and Luton London Airport route known as Service A.
- Centrebus opted for refurbished vehicles and operates the Dunstable – Downside, Dunstable town centre, Luton station/interchange route known as Service B and also Toddington, Houghton Regis, Luton Galaxy route known as Service E. Grant Palmer opted for refurbished vehicles on the Dunstable – Hillcroft, Dunstable town centre, Luton station/interchange route known as Service C.
- As part of the wider implementation of the busway upgrade works to on-street stops using the busway services have also been completed including installation of real time passenger information displays. These wider works have also addressed some of the access issues including junction improvements and local carriageway widening.

### A5-M1 Link Road

- The link road will be a two-lane dual carriageway running between the A5 north of Dunstable and the M1 at a new Junction 11a south of Chalton. The scheme will provide a number of benefits including improved strategic journey time reliability and safety by removing the need for long distance traffic to travel on the A5 through Dunstable. At the local level it will provide the much needed traffic relief to the local areas including Dunstable town centre with the reduction in through traffic reducing the environmental effects from pollution associated with vehicle traffic such as air and noise quality.
- While the scheme is promoted by the Highways Agency to address shortfalls in the trunk road network it will, with the Woodside Link also enable growth to the north of Houghton Regis and Dunstable. To allow the scheme to be brought forward to meet the local aspirations for development a contribution of £45m has been made by the developers and £5m of growth area funds by Central Bedfordshire Council. This will allow construction to begin late 2014.
- Central Bedfordshire Council contribution continues to fund detailed design and advanced work which has enabled a Section 274 agreement between Highways Agency, CBC and LIH (developers) to be signed and will enable pre-construction works in spring 2014.

### Woodside Link

- The Woodside Link will reduce traffic congestion and improve capacity by providing a more direct route for traffic between the primary road network (the M1 motorway and the A5) and the Woodside area of Dunstable / Houghton Regis, a major employment area in Bedfordshire. The scheme runs between a new M1 junction 11a (created as part of the Highways Agency A5-M1 Link) and the local road network - junction of Porz Avenue / Poynters Road / Park Road North.
- Due to the interaction with the national road network planning consent is through the Planning Inspectorate in the form of a Development Consent Order (DCO). An application was submitted by CBC on 14 May 2013 for examination under the Planning Act 2008. The Inspectorate accepted the application on the 11 June 2013 and the examination started on 8 October, which included a site visit on 20 January 2014 before closing on 4 April 2014. This will be followed by a period of 3 months for the Examining Authority to consider and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State.

- Progress continues on detailed design to finalise the alignment, address environmental constraints, take account of issues raised in the examination, plan for advanced works (underground and overhead 132kv electric cables) and prepare and compile contract documents ready for tendering of the works latter this year with a view to start construction early 2015 subject to a favourable decision by the Secretary of State.

#### 13.24 **Leisure**

The following improvements on Leisure facilities were progressed or delivered in 2013/14.

- Astral Park - Football pitches and community centre with car park was completed and handed over to Leighton Linlade Town Council.
- Leisure Strategy - The Leisure Strategy was adopted in March 2014, which comprises a suite of strategic, planning and technical guidance to inform the emerging development strategy and provides evidence and policy justification for provision of open space, outdoor and indoor sporting facilities in Central Bedfordshire. Design requirements have been agreed for Houghton Regis Leisure Centre on work to reopen the pool.
- Stock Condition - A number of essential works have been successfully completed, including new boilers, refurbishment of wetside and replacement of weights floor at Dunstable Leisure Centre. New pool pumps at Saxon Leisure Centre; new locks and new lights in the front of house at the Grove Theatre; replacement of tiles in the changing area at Flitwick Leisure Centre. Equipment was purchased at Sandy Sports Centre to ensure a wide range of fitness classes are available.
- Flitwick Leisure Centre Redevelopment - A robust feasibility study was completed for the Flitwick Leisure Centre development.
- Stotfold Football Centre - Design and Tender have been completed and the successful contractor appointed. Community pitches laid and the surrounding area has been prepared for seeding.
- Dunstable Creasey Park - Work was undertaken to ensure that the roof does not leak, currently monitoring the works before the retention is released.

- Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre refurbishment - First floor gym was completed and handed over. Dance studio completed, extension and reception area are near completion. The car park has been resurfaced.
- Flitwick Leisure Centre Football Facilities - Tenders were completed and successful contractors appointed for both pitches and pavilion. Football pitches were drained and prepared for seeding and ground works for the pavilion have been started.
- Saxon Leisure Centre - Design requirements changed a number of times but agreement was finally achieved. Tender was completed and the successful contractor appointed.

### 13.25 **Waste**

The following improvements on Waste handling/treatment were progressed or delivered in 2013/14.

- Waste Infrastructure Grant - Successful procurement and provision of a replacement glass collection vehicle for the South Collection Fleet.
- Sundon Landfill Restoration - Phase 1 and 2 of the restoration are near completion. Lease negotiated, renewed and continued access secured to the landfill site. The Gas infrastructure is progressing to plan. The Loop line for Network Rail is nearing the completion stage. Waste Services continues to have a good working relationship with the Environment Agency.
- There has also been work focussed on increasing the provision of Waste & Recycling Containers (Provision of Replacement Bins & Containers). Additional purchase of waste & recycling containers for new domestic properties and replacement waste & recycling containers, and installation of recycle on the go bins, litter bins and dog bins as required.

### 13.26 **Libraries**

The following outcomes in Libraries have been delivered:

- Made improvements to security at Ampthill Library.
- Undertook minor building works at Barton Library.
- Installed a new self service machine at Dunstable Library.
- Refurbished the meeting room and improved security at Flitwick Library.
- Installed a new self service machine at Leighton Buzzard Library and made improvements to security.

- Undertook minor building works at Potton Library.
- Refurbished Shefford Library working with Assets to refurbish the library following the repair of the floor - installing new shelving, creating a new meeting room, up-grading security and improving facilities for children and PC users.
- Undertook minor electrical works at Toddington library.

### 13.27 **Sustainable Transport**

The following outcomes on Sustainable Transport have been delivered:

- Improvements to National Cycle Route through Dunstable and Houghton Regis completed.
- Improvements to the south side of Poynters Road between Porz Avenue and Wilbury Drive completed in Dunstable.
- Provision of cycle link between Downs Road / Half Moon Lane and Apollo Close completed in south Dunstable.
- Improvements to provide cycle link between Apollo Close and Brive Road, Dunstable completed.
- 52 new cycle parking spaces created for businesses and associated measures to facilitate sustainable transport including showering facilities and Electric Vehicle charging point across the Leighton Buzzard, Dunstable and Houghton Regis project area.
- Cranfield cycle route - Phase I of the Cranfield Cycle Route has been completed, delivering an attractive off-road link between the village of Cranfield and the university and adjacent technology park. The agreed route extension works are now underway and are scheduled to be completed by the end of May 2014. These will extend the route into the university itself.

### Regeneration & Business Support

- 13.28 The Regeneration and Business support capital programme in 2013/14 is made up of 22 schemes which include large groupings of projects that were the result of developer funds to deliver planning requirements, associated with new developments.
- 13.29 The directorate spent £1.0m (gross), below budget by £4.1m. Net spend was below budget by £2.5m.

Overall underspend was £4.1m, of which £3.9m is proposed to be deferred to 2014/15. The majority of this relates to delays in Broadband and Dunstable town centre properties schemes which are due to external factors.

- 13.30 The table below shows the Directorate's budget and outturn for 2013/14.

Scheme Categories	Net Expenditure Budget	Net Actual Expenditure	Net Expenditure Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Regeneration	2,653	975	(1,678)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,653</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>(1,678)</b>
<b>Percentage of budget</b>			
		<b>36.8%</b>	<b>-63.2%</b>

- 13.31 Dunstable Town Centre Regeneration Phase 2 (Acquisition of Dorchester Close properties) - This budget is for the acquisition of the last 3 Dorchester Close properties; two were acquired in May and September 2013 and the final one is still being still negotiating. Four compensation claims have been settled with negotiations still progressing in respect of another 2 claims. There is a need to retain a budget to cover the outstanding acquisition and compensation as there is a 6 year time period for submission of claims.
- 13.32 Leighton Buzzard South Redevelopment - Central Bedfordshire Council acquired the second of two private dwellings in the centre of the land south of High Street site, the first having been acquired in the 2012-13 financial year. This, combined with the acquisition of the majority of the Cattle Market site and the former Co-Op car park towards the end of the 2013-14 financial year, means that the Council is now a major landowner on the site and this will help facilitate comprehensive regeneration on the site.
- 13.33 Broadband - Initial detailed survey works have now been completed by our project partner BT, and the first upgraded cabinets are expected to go live for service in early June 2014. The broadband project will support over 15,500 premises across Central Bedfordshire to receive superfast broadband services (speeds over 24 megabits per second). Deployment plans to approximately 90% of Central Bedfordshire Premises have been published at [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/broadband](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/broadband).

## Improvement & Corporate Services

- 13.34 The current capital programme for Improvement & Corporate Services is £14,403k. This includes £9,461k of funding for 2013/14 schemes and deferred expenditure of £4,942k from previous years. The total current approved budget for Assets projects is £8,753k. There is £3,139k of budget allocated to Information Assets (IA) projects with £2,511k for Other schemes. Some of the Other major schemes include SAP Optimisation (£373k), Your Space 2 (£1,256k) and Health & Safety Rolling Programme (£852k).
- 13.35 The overall outturn position for ICS Capital was spend of £10,644k with £3,784k proposed to be deferred into future financial years. Across all ICS schemes there was a £25k overspend.

	Full Year Budget	Year End Spend	Variance	Proposed Slippage to 14/15	Year End Over/(Under)
Service	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Assets	8,753	6,060	-2,693	2,493	-200
Info Assets	3,139	2,193	-946	964	18
Others	2,511	2,391	-120	327	207
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14,403</b>	<b>10,644</b>	<b>-3,759</b>	<b>3,784</b>	<b>25</b>

- 13.36 The 2013/14 net Capital budget for Assets schemes was £8,753k. The major projects were 2013/14 Corporate Property Rolling Programme (£2,357k), 2012/13 Corporate Property Rolling Programme (£1,373k), Ivel Medical Centre (£1.0m) & Acquisition of land south of High St Leighton Buzzard (£1.0m).
- 13.37 The outturn position on for Assets was a spend of £6,060k. £2,493k of this budget is proposed to be deferred to future financial years. This resulted in a net underspend of £200k.
- 13.38 Due to various timing changes to project delivery schedules and specifications there is spend of £2,493k proposed to be deferred into 2014/15. There was a delay on the start of the Ivel Medical Centre project awaiting agreement with the NHS & GP practice. We now have a way forward and Executive approval has been obtained and it is proposed to defer the remaining spend of £991k. The Corporate Property Rolling Programme 2013/14 is currently expected to defer expenditure of £632k into 2014/15 due to delays in the Watling House Replacement Windows project.

Leighton Buzzard Library re-furbishment (£323k) is also expected to be deferred to be spent in future years following delays in design and agreeing scope, work now scheduled to complete July 2014. Part of the land purchase on Acquisition of Cattle Market and Parkridge Land is now expected to be completed in 2014/15 rather than 2013/14 resulting in £638k which is proposed to be deferred to future years. There is also £232k expenditure on smaller projects that is expected to be deferred to future financial years.

13.39 There was an outturn underspend in Assets Capital of £200k. This mainly relates to the Beaches (-£150k) & Incuba (-£100k) parking projects which were cancelled. There were other small overspends on Assets schemes of £50k.

13.40 For Information Assets schemes there was a net outturn of £2,193k. There was also £946k of budget that has been proposed to be deferred to future financial years. This resulted in an overspend of £18k against IA projects.

13.41 The proposed deferred spend includes £304k for IA related to Applications Architecture due to delays in the commencement of the project, £254k on IA Infrastructure Rolling Programme due to Next Generation Network contract setup costs falling in 2014/15, £203k on Electronic Content Management (ECM) as a result of other urgent projects taking priority causing ECM activity to now be completed in 2014/15.

There was also £124k proposed deferred spend on Customer First due to supplier problems resulting in a pause in the project timetable and £79k on Data Centre Migration due to further infrastructure work required to support the replaced Storage Area Network.

13.42 There was a £24k pressure on the Public Service Network scheme as a result of Cabinet Office requirements changing during the life of the project. In order to meet the updated compliance targets more costs were incurred.

13.43 For other capital schemes budgeted at £2,511k, there was a net outturn of £2,391k. There was also £327k of budget that has been proposed to be deferred to future financial years. This resulted in an overspend of £207k against budget.

£203k of this overspend related to SAP Optimisation and was caused by higher than budgeted SAP Licence costs as a result of ESS/MSS implementation.

13.44 The proposed deferred spend for other projects predominantly related to £225k on Your Space 2, to complete the works for the moves and fund the final Contact Centre moves in the first half of 2014/15, and £89k on 2013/14 Health & Safety Rolling Programme due to a number of small projects needing to be completed in early 2014/15.



**14. CAPITAL RECEIPTS**

- 14.1 The commercial settlement in relation to a site leased from the Council in Houghton Regis has been confirmed as a capital receipt and therefore included in the March 2014 figures. The outturn level of receipts was £2.65m which is £3.9m behind budget.
- 14.2 Two major disposals for Stratton IV and Dunstable Courthouse, planned for 2013/14 with a combined anticipated value of £5m, have been moved to future years. There are challenges ahead with significantly less receipts in the sales pipeline than the MTFP target; however a proposal to bring forward sites currently not on the pipeline is being developed.

**Appendices :**

**Appendix A** - Proposed Deferred spend to 2014/15

**Appendix B** – Provisional Outturn by capital scheme

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## Appendix A – Proposed Capital Scheme Slippage to 2014/15

Directorate	Scheme Title	Slippage to 2014/15		
		Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure
		£'000	£'000	£'000
Children's Services	LPSA & LAA Grant payout	139	(139)	0
Children's Services	2 year old entitlement grant	282	(282)	0
Children's Services	Short Breaks (AHDC)	0	0	0
Children's Services	Schools Access Initiative	0	0	0
Children's Services	Schools Capital Maintenance	1,168	(1,168)	0
Children's Services	Temporary Accommodation	0	0	0
Children's Services	New School Places	3,248	(3,248)	0
Children's Services	Alternative Secondary Provision (Free School)	(80)	80	0
Children's Services	Schools Devolved Formula Capital	0	0	0
Children's Services	All Saints Academy	0	0	0
Children's Services	University Technology College	0	0	0
Community Services	Cemetaries Grant to Town & Parish Councils	32	0	32
Community Services	Leisure Strategy	0	0	0
Community Services	Libraries RFID Implementation	0	0	0
Community Services	Ridgmont Bypass Residual Costs	500	0	500
Community Services	Community Safety Partnership Grant	99	0	99
Community Services	BEaR Project	4,000	0	4,000
Community Services	Leisure Strategy Implementation	0	0	0
Community Services	Car Park Improvements & Ticket Machines	156	0	156
Community Services	Integrated Environmental Management System (Slippage only)	33	0	33
Community Services	Cranfield Cycle Route	40	(40)	0

## Appendix A – Proposed Capital Scheme Slippage to 2014/15

Directorate	Scheme Title	Slippage to 2014/15		
		Gross Expenditure £'000	External Funding £'000	Net Expenditure £'000
Community Services	Sundon / Bluewater Landfill Sites	542	(129)	413
Community Services	Waste & Recycling Containers - Provision of Replacement bins & containers.	(22)	0	(22)
Community Services	Waste Infrastructure Grant	0	0	0
Community Services	Dunstable Community Football Development Centre	0	0	0
Community Services	Leisure Centre Stock Condition/Asset Management Plan	0	0	0
Community Services	Astral Park Leighton Buzzard	0	0	0
Community Services	Stotfold Community Leisure and Football Development Centre Phase 1	100	0	100
Community Services	Flitwick Survey	0	0	0
Community Services	Leisure Strategy Implementation Invest to Save Project	722	0	722
Community Services	Libraries Remodelling	167	0	167
Community Services	Invest to Save - Tiddenfoot and Saxon Pool and Leisure Centre Extension	158	0	158
Community Services	Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre	(47)	0	(47)
Community Services	Leisure Strategy Implementation Flitwick Leisure centre Phase 1 - Football pitches	194	0	194
Community Services	Saxon Leisure Centre	1,437	(600)	837
Community Services	Flitwick Leisure Centre Development	(141)	0	(141)
Community Services	Highways Bridge Assessment and Maintenance	2	0	2
Community Services	Co-ordinated non-emergency repairs whilst undertaking emergency repairs on roads	0	0	0
Community Services	Co-ordinated replacement of street furniture as a result of vehicle damage	17	0	17
Community Services	Highways Fixed Cost Services (Lump Sums)	0	0	0
Community Services	Highways Flooding & Drainage	0	0	0
Community Services	Flood Damaged Roads	0	0	0
Community Services	Fleet replacement programme	117	0	117

## Appendix A – Proposed Capital Scheme Slippage to 2014/15

Directorate	Scheme Title	Slippage to 2014/15		
		Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure
		£'000	£'000	£'000
Community Services	Additional Local Highways Maintenance Funding	(46)	0	(46)
Community Services	Highways Holistic Infrastructure Projects	0	0	0
Community Services	Highways Integrated Schemes	(22)	0	(22)
Community Services	Integrated Transport Unit ICT System	114	0	114
Community Services	Highways Planned Maintenance	(24)	0	(24)
Community Services	Highways Structural Maintenance Block	(210)	0	(210)
Community Services	Playbuilder	0	0	0
Community Services	Highways Street Lighting (Efficiency)	(91)	0	(91)
Community Services	Highways Street Lighting Maintenance Backlog	0	0	0
Community Services	Stratton Street Railway Bridge	(60)	0	(60)
Community Services	Highways Improving Walking Routes to Schools	482	0	482
Community Services	Highways Structural Maintenance Additional Expenditure	0	0	0
Community Services	A1 South Roundabout (Biggleswade)	2,500	(300)	2,200
Community Services	Luton Dunstable Busway	(40)	0	(40)
Community Services	Luton Dunstable Busway - Downside	0	0	0
Community Services	Section 278 Schemes	0	0	0
Community Services	Woodside Link	(859)	1,628	769
Community Services	Dunstable A5/M1 Link Road Strategic Infrastructure	(62)	0	(62)
Community Services	Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF)	232	(233)	(1)

## Appendix A – Proposed Capital Scheme Slippage to 2014/15

Directorate	Scheme Title	Slippage to 2014/15		
		Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure
		£'000	£'000	£'000
Community Services	Rights of Way Network and Countryside and Heritage Sites – Structural Renewal and Improvement Works	3	0	3
Community Services	Swiss Garden Heritage Lottery Fund Project	0	0	0
Community Services	Outdoor Access and Greenspace Improvement Projects	99	0	99
Community Services	Poppyhills Lakes Bridge Langford (Bridleway Number 5) in the parish of Henlow.	0	0	0
Community Services	Cycle Route Luton - Harpenden	0	0	0
Community Services	Houghton Hall Urban Country Park	250	0	250
Community Services	Luton Dunstable Busway - Court Rd/ Transport Inra. Dev	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	CBC Corporate Property Rolling Programme 11/12	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	CBC Corporate Property Rolling Programme 12/13	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	CBC Corporate Property Rolling Programme 13/14	632	0	632
Improvement & Corporate Services	South of High Street Leighton Buzzard- Acquisition of Cattle Market and Parkridge Land.	638	0	638
Improvement & Corporate Services	LDF related costs for land in Arlesey, North of Houghton Regis, North of Luton and Stratton Park Biggleswade.	(114)	0	(114)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Arlesey East of High Street	(214)	0	(214)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Houghton Lodge	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	Ivel Medical Centre (Biggleswade)	991	0	991
Improvement & Corporate Services	DWP JCP CO-Locatin	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	Priory House - (Originally shown in the Corporate Property Block) including Car Parking at Priory House	150	0	150
Improvement & Corporate Services	Carbon Reduction Improvements	184	0	184
Improvement & Corporate Services	Integrated Asset Management System	157	0	157

## Appendix A – Proposed Capital Scheme Slippage to 2014/15

Directorate	Scheme Title	Slippage to 2014/15		
		Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure
		£'000	£'000	£'000
Improvement & Corporate Services	Libraries - (Originally shown in the Corporate Property Block)	65	0	65
Improvement & Corporate Services	Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre (Originally shown in the Corporate Property Block) - paths and car parking	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	Amphill Court House	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	Beeches Car Park Redevelopment	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	Replacement of ex Incuba car park and upgrade of Watling House Accommodation Plan	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	Clophill St Mary's Maintenance	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	Silsoe Horticultural Centre	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	Watling House Slippage from 2011-12 for replacement of boilers	4	0	4
Improvement & Corporate Services	Arlesey - (Originally shown in the Corporate Property Block)	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	IA Infrastructure Rolling Programme 13/14	254	0	254
Improvement & Corporate Services	Enterprise Content Management (KEY ECM) Implementation	203	0	203
Improvement & Corporate Services	Consolidation of Applications	304	0	304
Improvement & Corporate Services	Data Centre Migration - extension of SAN capacity	79	0	79
Improvement & Corporate Services	Public Services Network (PSN)	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	Childrens Case Management System	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	Customer First	124	0	124
Improvement & Corporate Services	Your Space 2	225	0	225
Improvement & Corporate Services	Health & Safety Rolling Programme 12/13	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	Health & Safety Rolling Programme 13/14	89	0	89
Improvement & Corporate Services	SAP Optimisation	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	Performance / Complaints Management System	13	0	13
Improvement & Corporate Services	ICS	0	0	0

## Appendix A – Proposed Capital Scheme Slippage to 2014/15

Directorate	Scheme Title	Slippage to 2014/15		
		Gross Expenditure £'000	External Funding £'000	Net Expenditure £'000
Regeneration	Dunstable Town Centre Regeneration Phase 2	684	0	684
Regeneration	Flitwick Land Purchase Further land assembly for the Town Centre Regeneration Scheme.	81	0	81
Regeneration	Land Drainage Work ( Non Highways)	112	0	112
Regeneration	Historic Building Grant Aid Scheme	20	0	20
Regeneration	Leighton Buzzard Western Bypass	0	0	0
Regeneration	Leighton Buzzard South Redevelopment	0	0	0
Regeneration	Local Broadband Infrastructure	2,574	(2,120)	454
Regeneration	Local Flood Defence Scheme	133	0	133
Regeneration	Cranfield Technology Park Acceleration	298	(300)	(2)
Regeneration	Stratton Business Park Phase 4	0	0	0
Regeneration	Biggleswade TC Masterplan	0	0	0
Social Care, Health & Housing	Social Care Single Capital Pot	0	0	0
Social Care, Health & Housing	NHS Campus Closure	3,073	(3,073)	0
Social Care, Health & Housing	Disabled Facilities Grants Scheme	200	0	200
Social Care, Health & Housing	Renewal Assistance	22	0	22
Social Care, Health & Housing	Empty Homes	100	0	100
Social Care, Health & Housing	Adult Social Care ICT Projects	300	(300)	0
Social Care, Health & Housing	Review of Accommodation/Day Support, "New Approaches to Outcome"	347	(347)	0
Social Care, Health & Housing	Timberlands and Chiltern View Gypsy and Traveller Sites	324	(245)	79
<b>Children's Services</b>		<b>4,757</b>	<b>(4,757)</b>	<b>0</b>
Environmental Services		5,160	(129)	5,031
Libraries		167	0	167
Leisure		2,455	(600)	1,855
Transport		2,590	1,055	3,645
<b>Community Services Total</b>		<b>10,372</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>10,698</b>
<b>Improvement &amp; Corporate Services</b>		<b>3,784</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,784</b>
<b>Regeneration</b>		<b>3,902</b>	<b>(2,420)</b>	<b>1,482</b>
<b>Social Care, Health &amp; Housing</b>		<b>4,366</b>	<b>(3,965)</b>	<b>401</b>
<b>Total 2013/14 Capital Programme</b>		<b>27,181</b>	<b>(10,816)</b>	<b>16,365</b>



## Appendix B Outturn by Capital Scheme 2013/14

Directorate	Scheme Title	Total 2013/14 Budget			2013/14 Actuals			Variance		
		Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Children's Services	LPSA & LAA Grant payout	200	(200)	0	61	(0)	61	(139)	200	61
Children's Services	2 year old entitlement grant	450	(450)	0	168	(167)	1	(282)	283	1
Children's Services	Short Breaks (AHDC)	197	(197)	0	394	(394)	0	197	(197)	0
Children's Services	Schools Access Initiative	254	0	254	75	0	75	(179)	0	(179)
Children's Services	Schools Capital Maintenance	4,515	(4,515)	0	3,347	(3,347)	(0)	(1,168)	1,168	(0)
Children's Services	Temporary Accommodation	352	0	352	131	0	131	(221)	0	(221)
Children's Services	New School Places	15,829	(15,776)	53	12,581	(12,526)	55	(3,248)	3,250	2
Children's Services	Alternative Secondary Provision (Free School)	3,522	(3,477)	45	3,605	(3,561)	44	83	(84)	(1)
Children's Services	Schools Devolved Formula Capital	1,380	(1,380)	0	1,508	(1,508)	0	128	(128)	0
Children's Services	All Saints Academy	557	(557)	0	578	(540)	38	21	17	38
Children's Services	University Technology College	139	(139)	0	12	(12)	0	(127)	127	0
Community Services	Cemetaries Grant to Town & Parish Councils	32	0	32	0	0	0	(32)	0	(32)
Community Services	Leisure Strategy	23	6	29	0	0	0	(23)	(6)	(29)
Community Services	Libraries RFID Implementation	(43)	0	(43)	0	0	0	43	0	43
Community Services	Ridgmont Bypass Residual Costs	598	0	598	0	0	0	(598)	0	(598)
Community Services	Community Safety Partnership Grant	100	0	100	24	(23)	1	(76)	(23)	(99)
Community Services	BEaR Project	4,000	0	4,000	0	0	0	(4,000)	0	(4,000)
Community Services	Leisure Strategy Implementation	143	0	143	0	0	0	(143)	0	(143)
Community Services	Car Park Improvements & Ticket Machines	165	0	165	9	0	9	(156)	0	(156)
Community Services	Integrated Environmental Management System (Slippage only)	37	0	37	4	0	4	(33)	0	(33)
Community Services	Cranfield Cycle Route	174	(174)	0	134	(134)	0	(40)	40	0

## Appendix B Outturn by Capital Scheme 2013/14

Directorate	Scheme Title	Total 2013/14 Budget			2013/14 Actuals			Variance		
		Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Community Services	Sundon / Bluewater Landfill Sites	715	(302)	413	173	(173)	0	(542)	129	(413)
Community Services	Waste & Recycling Containers - Provision of Replacement bins & containers.	250	(15)	235	265	(8)	257	15	7	22
Community Services	Waste Infrastructure Grant	100	(100)	0	129	(129)	0	29	(29)	0
Community Services	Dunstable Community Football Development Centre	37	0	37	65	0	65	28	0	28
Community Services	Leisure Centre Stock Condition/Asset Management Plan	422	0	422	458	(33)	425	36	(33)	3
Community Services	Astral Park Leighton Buzzard	1,092	(1,100)	(8)	1,029	(1,028)	1	(63)	72	9
Community Services	Stotfold Community Leisure and Football Development Centre Phase 1	314	(214)	100	143	(143)	0	(171)	71	(100)
Community Services	Flitwick Survey	30	0	30	179	0	179	149	0	149
Community Services	Leisure Strategy Implementation Invest to Save Project	830	0	830	108	0	108	(722)	0	(722)
Community Services	Libraries Remodelling	245	0	245	194	(116)	78	(51)	(116)	(167)
Community Services	Invest to Save - Tiddenfoot and Saxon Pool and Leisure Centre Extension	0	0	0	15	(173)	(158)	15	(173)	(158)
Community Services	Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre	1,306	0	1,306	1,353	0	1,353	47	0	47
Community Services	Leisure Strategy Implementation Flitwick Leisure centre Phase 1 - Football pitches	500	0	500	306	0	306	(194)	0	(194)
Community Services	Saxon Leisure Centre	1,558	(600)	958	121	0	121	(1,437)	600	(837)
Community Services	Flitwick Leisure Centre Development	0	0	0	141	0	141	141	0	141
Community Services	Highways Bridge Assessment and Maintenance	891	0	891	889	0	889	(2)	0	(2)
Community Services	Co-ordinated non-emergency repairs whilst undertaking emergency repairs on roads	800	0	800	661	0	661	(139)	0	(139)
Community Services	Co-ordinated replacement of street furniture as a result of vehicle damage	150	0	150	133	0	133	(17)	0	(17)
Community Services	Highways Fixed Cost Services (Lump Sums)	1,790	0	1,790	1,851	0	1,851	61	0	61
Community Services	Highways Flooding & Drainage	386	0	386	394	0	394	8	0	8
Community Services	Flood Damaged Roads	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Services	Fleet replacement programme	300	0	300	183	0	183	(117)	0	(117)

## Appendix B Outturn by Capital Scheme 2013/14

Directorate	Scheme Title	Total 2013/14 Budget			2013/14 Actuals			Variance		
		Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Community Services	Additional Local Highways Maintenance Funding	924	(724)	200	970	(724)	246	46	0	46
Community Services	Highways Holistic Infrastructure Projects	292	0	292	295	0	295	3	0	3
Community Services	Highways Integrated Schemes	1,960	(1,338)	622	2,395	(1,751)	644	435	(413)	22
Community Services	Integrated Transport Unit ICT System	139	0	139	25	0	25	(114)	0	(114)
Community Services	Highways Planned Maintenance	870	0	870	894	0	894	24	0	24
Community Services	Highways Structural Maintenance Block	4,004	(4,004)	0	4,446	(4,022)	424	442	(18)	424
Community Services	Playbuilder	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Services	Highways Street Lighting (Efficiency)	338	81	419	588	0	588	250	(81)	169
Community Services	Highways Street Lighting Maintenance Backlog	750	0	750	672	0	672	(78)	0	(78)
Community Services	Stratton Street Railway Bridge	0	0	0	60	0	60	60	0	60
Community Services	Highways Improving Walking Routes to Schools	487	0	487	5	0	5	(482)	0	(482)
Community Services	Highways Structural Maintenance Additional Expenditure	3,160	0	3,160	3,074	0	3,074	(86)	0	(86)
Community Services	A1 South Roundabout (Biggleswade)	3,700	(1,500)	2,200	1,200	(1,200)	0	(2,500)	300	(2,200)
Community Services	Luton Dunstable Busway	33	0	33	352	(279)	73	319	(279)	40
Community Services	Luton Dunstable Busway - Downside	(516)	443	(73)	22	0	22	538	(443)	95
Community Services	Section 278 Schemes	28	(1,206)	(1,178)	4,303	(7,729)	(3,426)	4,275	(6,523)	(2,248)
Community Services	Woodside Link	832	(63)	769	1,691	(1,691)	0	859	(1,628)	(769)
Community Services	Dunstable A5/M1 Link Road Strategic Infrastructure	1,073	(1,053)	20	1,135	(1,053)	82	62	0	62
Community Services	Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF)	1,015	(1,015)	0	783	(782)	1	(232)	233	1
Community Services	Rights of Way Network and Countryside and Heritage Sites - Structural Renewal and Improvement Works	290	11	301	298	0	298	8	(11)	(3)

## Appendix B Outturn by Capital Scheme 2013/14

Directorate	Scheme Title	Total 2013/14 Budget			2013/14 Actuals			Variance		
		Gross Expenditure £'000	External Funding £'000	Net Expenditure £'000	Gross Expenditure £'000	External Funding £'000	Net Expenditure £'000	Gross Expenditure £'000	External Funding £'000	Net Expenditure £'000
Community Services	Swiss Garden Heritage Lottery Fund Project	100	0	100	100	0	100	0	0	0
Community Services	Outdoor Access and Greenspace Improvement Projects	563	(216)	347	316	(68)	248	(247)	148	(99)
Community Services	Poppyhills Lakes Bridge Langford (Bridleway Number 5) in the parish of Henlow.	120	(10)	110	133	(17)	116	13	(7)	6
Community Services	Cycle Route Luton - Harpenden	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Services	Houghton Hall Urban Country Park	250	0	250	0	0	0	(250)	0	(250)
Community Services	Luton Dunstable Busway - Court Rd/ Transport Inra. Dev	0	0	0	(77)	0	(77)	(77)	0	(77)
Improvement & Corporate Services	CBC Corporate Property Rolling Programme 11/12	0	0	0	11	0	11	11	0	11
Improvement & Corporate Services	CBC Corporate Property Rolling Programme 12/13	1,373	0	1,373	1,769	0	1,769	396	0	396
Improvement & Corporate Services	CBC Corporate Property Rolling Programme 13/14	2,357	0	2,357	1,269	0	1,269	(1,088)	0	(1,088)
Improvement & Corporate Services	South of High Street Leighton Buzzard- Acquisition of Cattle Market and Parkridge Land.	1,000	0	1,000	362	0	362	(638)	0	(638)
Improvement & Corporate Services	LDF related costs for land in Arlesey, North of Houghton Regis, North of Luton and Stratton Park Biggleswade.	858	0	858	972	0	972	114	0	114
Improvement & Corporate Services	Arlesey East of High Street	0	0	0	214	0	214	214	0	214
Improvement & Corporate Services	Houghton Lodge	0	0	0	4	0	4	4	0	4
Improvement & Corporate Services	Ivel Medical Centre (Biggleswade)	1,000	0	1,000	9	0	9	(991)	0	(991)
Improvement & Corporate Services	DWP JCP CO-Location	0	0	0	24	0	24	24	0	24
Improvement & Corporate Services	Priory House - (Originally shown in the Corporate Property Block) including Car Parking at Priory House	436	0	436	304	0	304	(132)	0	(132)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Carbon Reduction Improvements	710	0	710	526	0	526	(184)	0	(184)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Integrated Asset Management System	233	0	233	76	0	76	(157)	0	(157)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Libraries - (Originally shown in the Corporate Property Block)	239	0	239	174	0	174	(65)	0	(65)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre (Originally shown in the Corporate Property Block) - paths and car parking	160	0	160	168	0	168	8	0	8

## Appendix B Outturn by Capital Scheme 2013/14

Directorate	Scheme Title	Total 2013/14 Budget			2013/14 Actuals			Variance		
		Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Improvement & Corporate Services	Amphill Court House	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Improvement & Corporate Services	Beeches Car Park Redevelopment	150	0	150	0	0	0	(150)	0	(150)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Replacement of ex Incuba car park and upgrade of Watling House Accomodation Plan	100	0	100	0	0	0	(100)	0	(100)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Clophill St Mary's Maintenance	63	0	63	63	0	63	0	0	0
Improvement & Corporate Services	Silsoe Horticultural Centre	54	0	54	108	0	108	54	0	54
Improvement & Corporate Services	Watling House Slippage from 2011-12 for replacement of boilers	10	0	10	6	0	6	(4)	0	(4)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Arlesey - (Originally shown in the Corporate Property Block)	10	0	10	0	0	0	(10)	0	(10)
Improvement & Corporate Services	IA Infrastructure Rolling Programme 13/14	1,158	0	1,158	904	0	904	(254)	0	(254)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Enterprise Content Management (KEY ECM) Implementation	237	0	237	34	0	34	(203)	0	(203)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Consolidation of Applications	338	0	338	34	0	34	(304)	0	(304)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Data Centre Migration - extension of SAN capacity	375	0	375	296	0	296	(79)	0	(79)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Public Services Network (PSN)	150	0	150	174	0	174	24	0	24
Improvement & Corporate Services	Childrens Case Management System	0	0	0	3	0	3	3	0	3
Improvement & Corporate Services	Customer First	881	0	881	757	0	757	(124)	0	(124)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Your Space 2	1,256	0	1,256	1,031	0	1,031	(225)	0	(225)
Improvement & Corporate Services	Health & Safety Rolling Programme 12/13	452	0	452	660	(204)	456	208	(204)	4
Improvement & Corporate Services	Health & Safety Rolling Programme 13/14	400	0	400	311	0	311	(89)	0	(89)
Improvement & Corporate Services	SAP Optimisation	373	0	373	576	0	576	203	0	203
Improvement & Corporate Services	Performance / Complaints Management System	30	0	30	17	0	17	(13)	0	(13)
Improvement & Corporate Services	ICS	0	0	0	(9)	0	(9)	(9)	0	(9)
Regeneration	Dunstable Town Centre Regeneration Phase 2	1,389	0	1,389	705	0	705	(684)	0	(684)
Regeneration	Flitwick Land Purchase Further land assembly for the Town Centre Regeneration Scheme.	81	0	81	32	(32)	0	(49)	(32)	(81)

## Appendix B Outturn by Capital Scheme 2013/14

Directorate	Scheme Title	Total 2013/14 Budget			2013/14 Actuals			Variance		
		Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	External Funding	Net Expenditure
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Regeneration	Land Drainage Work ( Non Highways)	120	0	120	8	0	8	(112)	0	(112)
Regeneration	Historic Building Grant Aid Scheme	76	0	76	2	0	2	(74)	0	(74)
Regeneration	Leighton Buzzard Western Bypass	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Regeneration	Leighton Buzzard South Redevelopment	377	0	377	241	0	241	(136)	0	(136)
Regeneration	Local Broadband Infrastructure	2,593	(2,120)	473	19	0	19	(2,574)	2,120	(454)
Regeneration	Local Flood Defence Scheme	133	0	133	0	0	0	(133)	0	(133)
Regeneration	Cranfield Technology Park Acceleration	298	(300)	(2)	0	0	0	(298)	300	2
Regeneration	Stratton Business Park Phase 4	26	0	26	0	0	0	(26)	0	(26)
Regeneration	Biggleswade TC Masterplan	55	(75)	(20)	0	0	0	(55)	75	20
Social Care, Health & Housing	Social Care Single Capital Pot	0	0	0	0	(0)	(0)	0	(0)	(0)
Social Care, Health & Housing	NHS Campus Closure	5,297	(5,297)	0	2,224	(2,224)	0	(3,073)	3,073	0
Social Care, Health & Housing	Disabled Facilities Grants Scheme	3,000	(588)	2,412	2,162	(681)	1,481	(838)	(93)	(931)
Social Care, Health & Housing	Renewal Assistance	150	(50)	100	290	(212)	78	140	(162)	(22)
Social Care, Health & Housing	Empty Homes	270	0	270	65	0	65	(205)	0	(205)
Social Care, Health & Housing	Adult Social Care ICT Projects	300	(300)	0	0	0	0	(300)	300	0
Social Care, Health & Housing	Review of Accommodation/Day Support, "New Approaches to Outcome"	347	(347)	0	0	0	0	(347)	347	0
Social Care, Health & Housing	Timberlands and Chiltern View Gypsy and Traveller Sites	914	(687)	227	590	(442)	148	(324)	245	(79)
<b>Children's Services</b>		<b>27,395</b>	<b>(26,691)</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>22,460</b>	<b>(22,056)</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>(4,935)</b>	<b>4,635</b>	<b>(300)</b>
Environmental Services		6,690	(632)	6,058	1,451	(418)	1,033	(5,239)	214	(5,025)
Libraries		202	0	202	194	(116)	78	(8)	(116)	(124)
Leisure		6,287	(1,908)	4,379	3,918	(1,377)	2,541	(2,369)	531	(1,838)
Transport		24,178	(10,553)	13,625	27,078	(19,365)	7,713	2,900	(8,812)	(5,912)
<b>Community Services Total</b>		<b>37,357</b>	<b>(13,093)</b>	<b>24,264</b>	<b>32,641</b>	<b>(21,275)</b>	<b>11,366</b>	<b>(4,716)</b>	<b>(8,182)</b>	<b>(12,898)</b>
<b>Improvement &amp; Corporate Services</b>		<b>14,403</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14,403</b>	<b>10,848</b>	<b>(204)</b>	<b>10,644</b>	<b>(3,555)</b>	<b>(204)</b>	<b>(3,759)</b>
<b>Regeneration</b>		<b>5,148</b>	<b>(2,495)</b>	<b>2,653</b>	<b>1,007</b>	<b>(32)</b>	<b>975</b>	<b>(4,141)</b>	<b>2,463</b>	<b>(1,678)</b>
<b>Social Care, Health &amp; Housing</b>		<b>10,278</b>	<b>(7,269)</b>	<b>3,009</b>	<b>5,331</b>	<b>(3,559)</b>	<b>1,772</b>	<b>(4,947)</b>	<b>3,710</b>	<b>(1,237)</b>
<b>Total 2013/14 Capital Programme</b>		<b>94,581</b>	<b>(49,548)</b>	<b>45,033</b>	<b>72,287</b>	<b>(47,126)</b>	<b>25,161</b>	<b>(22,294)</b>	<b>2,422</b>	<b>(19,872)</b>

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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 15 July 2014  
**Subject:** **March 2013/14 Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring Provisional Outturn Revenue and Capital Report ( Subject to Audit)**  
**Report of:** **Cllr Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing and Cllr Maurice Jones, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources**  
**Summary:** The report provides information on the 2013/14 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) provisional outturn revenue and capital position as at March 2014.

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**Advising Officer:** Julie Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing  
**Contact Officer:** Nick Murley, Assistant Director Business & Performance  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key Decision** Yes  
**Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in (if appropriate)** Not applicable

#### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Council Priorities:**

Sound financial management contributes to the Council's Value for Money and enables the Council to successfully deliver its priorities. The recommendations will contribute indirectly to all 5 Council priorities.

##### **Financial:**

1. The financial implications are set out in the report.

##### **Legal:**

2. None.

**Risk Management:**

3. None.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

4. Any staffing reductions will be carried out in accordance with the Council's Managing Change Policy and in consultation with the Trades Unions.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

5. Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken prior to the allocation of the 2013/14 budgets and each Directorate was advised of significant equality implications relating to their budget proposals.

**Public Health:**

6. None.

**Community Safety:**

7. None.

**Sustainability:**

8. None.

**Procurement:**

9. None.

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

10. The March 2013/14 provisional outturn Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue and capital report will be considered by the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 July 2014.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Executive is asked to :-**

- (1) approve the Revenue outturn which is a balanced budget with a contribution to HRA Reserves of £6.958m, thus strengthening the Council's ability to invest and improve its stock of Council Houses;**
- (2) approve the Capital outturn which is £0.103m lower than the revised position approved by Council in February and the deferred capital spend of £2.503m into 2014/15;**
- (3) note that Right to Buy sales increased significantly as a result of changes to discounts, resulting in a year end balance of unapplied capital receipts of £2.346m; and**



**(4) note that the net increase in reserves is £5.336m, so that , at the year end, the HRA has £20.710m of reserves available, of which £2.0m is identified as a minimum level of HRA Balances.**

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

11. The report presents the 2013/14 provisional outturn for the HRA financial position. It sets out spend for the year against the original revenue and capital budgets, and against the revised position presented to February Council as part of the HRA budget report. The report also provides explanations for any variations, and enables Executive to consider the overall financial position of the HRA.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

12. The 2014/15 HRA budget report and Housing Service Business Plan was approved by Full Council on 20 February 2014 and presented a revised position for the 2013/14 budget. Whilst the commentary below focuses on the changes to that revised position, it is worth noting that there is an improvement of £2.152m in the contribution to reserves against the 2013/14 original budget of £4.806m. This was due to savings within operational budgets, increased rental income, lower interest costs from self financing debt and a reduction in direct revenue financing of the capital programme. The table under paragraph 22 sets out these variances.
13. The provisional outturn suggests a transfer to reserves of £6.958m, an adverse variance of £0.154m against the revised forecast position.
14. This position results from adverse variances in Corporate recharges (£0.197m), lower than anticipated interest income from the General Fund and marginally higher Direct Revenue Financing of the Capital Programme.
15. The adverse variances are offset by lower than anticipated expenditure in Housing Management (£0.161m) and increased income in Asset Management from the recharge of officer time to the traveller sites (£0.048m).
16. Due to the changes in Right to Buy discounts, the Council achieved a higher level of capital receipts (£1.889m against a revised budget of £1.500m), which has enabled a year end balance of unapplied capital receipts of £2.346m.
17. The provisional outturn for the Capital programme is £7.597m (original budget £10.895m), a minor positive variance against the revised budget of £7.700m, primarily due to spend at Priory View in March being less than anticipated (£0.178m).
18. The provisional outturn indicates a year end balance in reserves of £20.710m. HRA Balances will remain at a contingency level of £2.000m, with the Extra Care Development Reserve increasing to £12.116m, the Strategic reserve will increase to £6.394m, and the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) is reduced to £0.200m.

## HRA REVENUE ACCOUNT

19. The original HRA annual expenditure budget was £22.572m and income budget was £27.378m, which allowed a contribution of £4.806m to reserves to present a net budget of zero. A subjective breakdown of budget, revised position and provisional outturn is shown below.
20. As described above, the key variances against the revised position in February relate to higher corporate recharges, reduced expenditure in Housing Management, a slight reduction from the forecast rental income and a marginal increase in Direct Revenue Financing of the capital programme.
21. A recharge for the use of corporate resources is made from the General Fund to the HRA. The calculation is made at the year end so that the true service cost can be applied to the recharge calculation. The proportion chargeable to the HRA has increased, which has resulted in an adverse variance from the revised budget of £0.197m.

22.

	2013/14 Original Budget	2013/14 Revised Position (February Council)	2013/14 Provisional Outturn	Variance Provisional Outturn to Original Budget	Variance Provisional Outturn to Revised Budget Position
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(27.378)</b>	<b>(27.825)</b>	<b>(27.722)</b>	<b>(0.344)</b>	<b>0.103</b>
Housing Management	4.152	4.130	3.969	(0.183)	(0.161)
Financial Inclusion	0.200	0.160	0.161	(0.039)	0.001
Asset Management	0.965	0.961	0.913	(0.052)	(0.048)
Corporate Resources	1.320	1.410	1.607	0.287	0.197
Maintenance	4.528	4.418	4.413	(0.115)	(0.005)
Debt related costs	0.119	0.156	0.148	0.029	(0.008)
Direct Revenue Financing	6.570	5.700	5.775	(0.795)	0.075
Efficiency Programme	(0.190)	(0.190)	(0.190)	0	0
Interest repayment	4.908	3.968	3.968	(0.940)	0
Principal repayment	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL Expenditure</b>	<b>22.572</b>	<b>20.713</b>	<b>20.764</b>	<b>(1.808)</b>	<b>0.051</b>
Surplus	(4.806)	(7.112)	(6.958)	(2.152)	0.154
Contribution to / (from) reserves	4.806	7.112	6.958	2.152	(0.154)
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

23. Reduced expenditure in Housing Management has resulted in savings of £0.161m against the February position. The savings are primarily due to lower than anticipated spend on the ECM (Electronic Content management) project and lower recharge from the MANOP (Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Older People) team for time spent on HRA related work.

24. Income from rents is marginally lower than anticipated in the revised position in February. The increased income was £0.344m as opposed to £0.447m, a difference of £0.103m on a budget of £27.378m. The slight variation is due to reduced interest income from the General Fund and other minor variances.
25. The outturn in Asset Management indicates a positive variance of £0.048m compared to the February position due to increased recharges to the traveller sites for officer time.

#### **HRA EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME**

26. Since 2010 the Housing service has been using Housemark to provide a benchmarking service. The analysis provided has assisted in identifying the areas where HRA budgets are higher relative to other stock retained authorities.
27. As part of the 2013/14 budget build the HRA revenue budget was reduced by £0.190m as part of the Council's efficiency programme. Despite adverse pressures from welfare reform and a significant increase in void properties, the efficiencies have been exceeded through a reduction in spend on financial inclusion (£0.039m), external decorations (£0.037m), communal central heating maintenance (£0.048m) and a reduction in void repair costs (£0.088m).

#### **HRA ARREARS**

28. Total current and former tenant arrears were £0.950m at the year end (£0.907m in 2012/13). Current arrears are £0.565m or 1.97% of the annual rent debit of £28.703m (£0.544m or 1.99% in 2012/13). The figure of 1.97% is a 0.03% positive variance against a target of 2.00%.
29. Performance on former tenant arrears is 1.34% of the annual rent debit, against a target of 1.00%, leaving a balance of £0.384m (1.33% with a balance of £0.363m in 2012/13). A total of £0.064m of tenant arrears were written off in 2013/14 (£0.128m in 2012/13).
30. In light of welfare reform housing management have implemented a pro-active approach to managing the impact on rent arrears. This includes early intervention, downsizing where necessary, increased contact with our residents, supporting tenants in making the right decisions regarding payment of rent and strong enforcement action when all other options have been exhausted.
31. The outturn position for arrears represents a significant achievement when considered in the context of the welfare reform measures which took effect from 1 April 2013. This reflects both the strategic approach described above and the commitment of staff within Housing Management.
32. The outturn position for non tenant arrears is £0.174m (£0.146m 2012/13), which comprises the following: rents at shops owned by the HRA, service charges and ground rent relating to leaseholders who purchased flats via the Right to Buy scheme, and property damage relating to existing and former tenants.

Debt Analysis - Tenant Arrears Year End 2013/14							
Description of debt	0-4 weeks	4-8 weeks	8-13 weeks	13-52 weeks	Over 1 yr	TOTAL	
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	
Current Tenant	0.141	0.144	0.107	0.173	0.000	0.565	
Former Tenant						0.385	
						<b>0.950</b>	
Debt Analysis - Other Arrears							
Description of debt	From 15 to 30 days	From 31 to 60 days	From 61 to 90 days	From 91 to 365 days	Over 1 yr but not over 2 yrs	Over 2 yrs	TOTAL
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Shops	0.025	0.005	0.001	0.002	0.003	0.026	0.062
Leaseholders	0.016	(0.012)	(0.001)	0.012	0.009	0.028	0.052
Void recoveries	0.002	0	0.005	0.016	0.020	0.016	0.059
Misc recoveries	0.001	(0.003)	0.003	(0.003)	0.005	(0.002)	0.001
	<b>0.044</b>	<b>(0.010)</b>	<b>0.008</b>	<b>0.027</b>	<b>0.037</b>	<b>0.068</b>	<b>0.174</b>

## HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME

33. The provisional outturn for the HRA's Capital programme indicates expenditure of £7.597m against a revised budget of £7.700m, and an original budget of £10.895m.
34. The variance in outturn position for the year end, against the revised position at February, reflects the lower than anticipated spend at Priory View during March.
35. The overall position for the year reflects the implementation of HAMS (Housing Asset Management Strategy), which incorporated a greater element of repairs led programmes as opposed to pre-planned improvements. This resulted in significantly reduced expenditure on General Enhancements, Garage Refurbishment, Roof Replacement, Central Heating, Communal Central Heating, Aids and Adaptations and Drainage and Water.
36. The end of year capitalisation of Kitchens and Bathrooms from Void properties has resulted in an increase of £0.075m from the revised position in February. This is primarily due to the significant increase in the number of voids and voids requiring replacement kitchens and bathrooms.
37. The outturn position for Central Heating varies from the February position by an increased spend of £0.050m. This is primarily due to the increased number of KFB (Kitchen Friendly Boiler) failures.
38. The above increases were partially offset by £0.060m as a result of fewer completions in the Aids and Adaptations programme than anticipated in the February budget report.
39. As agreed by Council the programme will be financed by the use of the HRA's Major Repairs Reserve (£6.569m), Direct Revenue Financing (£0.828m), and capital receipts (£0.200m).

Scheme Title	Existing 2013/14 Capital Budget	2013/14 Revised Position (february Council)	2013/14 Provisional Outturn	Variance	Slippage to 2014/15
	Net Expenditure	Net Expenditure	Net Expenditure		Net Expenditure
	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000
General Enhancements	255	15	21	6	0
Garage Refurbishment	51	0	0	0	0
Paths & Fences siteworks	61	60	60	0	0
Estate Improvements	255	260	264	4	0
Energy Conservation	255	400	399	(1)	0
Roof Replacement	248	50	51	1	0
Central Heating Installation	1,071	861	911	50	0
Rewiring	347	465	462	(3)	0
Kitchens and Bathrooms	1,122	1,194	1,269	75	0
Central Heating communal	180	40	32	(8)	0
Secure door entry	357	335	330	(5)	0
Structural repairs	153	192	213	21	0
Aids and adaptations	887	500	440	(60)	0
Capitalised Salaries	350	350	332	(18)	0
Asbestos management	131	220	221	1	0
Stock Remodelling	458	500	507	7	0
Drainage & Water Supply	181	50	54	4	0
Plasticisation	408	408	409	1	0
Sheltered Housing Reprovision	4,125	1,800	1,622	(178)	(2,503)
<b>HRA</b>	<b>10,895</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>7,597</b>	<b>(103)</b>	<b>(2,503)</b>

## HRA CAPITAL RECEIPTS

40. New Right to Buy (RtB) discounts and proposals for re-investing the capital receipts came into effect from April 2012, which increase the maximum discount available to tenants from £0.034m to £0.075m.
41. As of the 1 April 2013 there was a bought forward balance of £0.657m in HRA Useable Capital Receipts, of which £0.290m was reserved for investment in new build.
42. During the financial year 2013/14, 30 properties have been sold compared to 19 in 2012/13, resulting in retained capital receipts of £1.889m.
43. £0.183m of this income relates to receipts modelled in the business plan calculations, and will contribute to the financing of the HRA Capital programme. This leaves £1.706m of receipts received as a result of the higher level of sales achieved following the changes to RtB discounts.
44. The sum of £1.706m includes £0.039m of transaction cost. £0.879m is a compensation for the debt attributable to the extra properties sold, and reflects the loss to the HRA of disposing of these properties. Whilst this amount is calculated as a proportion of self-financing debt there is no requirement to make debt repayment from it.
45. The remainder of £0.788m represents the proportion that is reserved for investment in new build. The Council has entered into an agreement with the Secretary of State to invest these receipts in new build.

46. When added to the amount brought forward from 2012/13, there is a total of £1.078m retained for new build. The retained receipt can represent no more than 30% of the cost of the replacement properties, so the Council is committed to spend at least £3.593m on new build by 31 March 2017.
47. The use of these receipts is restricted to schemes that do not receive Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) funding. The Priory View project has been awarded £1.703m from the HCA, therefore the retained receipts from RtB sales reserved for new build cannot be used on this scheme.
48. The HRA's Budget proposals for the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) propose significant investment in new build (in excess of £4.0m by 31 March 2017 excluding spend on Priory View).
49. The net total of retained receipts for the year referred to in the paragraphs above result in a balance of £2.546m. £0.200m is earmarked to fund part of the 2013/14 capital programme, leaving a balance carried forward of £2.346m. These funds will further enhance the resources available for the HRA's capital programme.
50. Current projections suggest RtB sales will not have a negative impact on the Business Plan, particularly if the number of new build properties exceeds the properties sold. However if annual RtB sales were to make up a significant percentage of the Housing Stock, such that it diminished by 10% (equivalent to approximately 500 properties) or more over the period to 31 March 2017, then this would pose a threat to the surpluses predicted both in the medium and longer term.
51. If additional sales continue to represent a small percentage of the Council's stock, there is a significant benefit as retained receipts will provide the Council with additional funds for reinvestment.

## **RESERVES**

52. The total reserves available as at April 2013 were £15.374m, comprising £2.0m in HRA Balances and £8.653m in the Extra Care Development Reserve, £1.284m in the Strategic Reserve and £3.437m in the Major Repairs Reserve.
53. The provisional outturn indicates a year end balance in reserves of £20.710m. HRA Balances will remain at a contingency level of £2.000m, with the Extra Care Development Reserve increasing to £12.116m, the Strategic reserve will increase to £6.394m, and the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) is reduced to £0.200m.
54. The opening balance in the MRR comprised £0.2m contingency and an amount of £3.237m equivalent to depreciation in 2012/13. Due to the use of the Negative Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) to finance the capital programme in that year, the amount of £3.237m was retained in the MRR (and not used to finance capital spend).
55. The year end outturn position indicates that this additional amount will contribute to the funding of the capital programme, reducing direct revenue financing by an equivalent amount. This allows an additional contribution to the Strategic Reserve, so that in total an amount of £5.110m is forecast to be transferred.

56. In total this equates to a contribution to reserves for the year of £6.958m, offset by spend from reserves of £1.622m to enable a net increase of £5.336m.
57. An investment strategy is currently being formulated, that will set out proposals for the use of the reserves that are forecast to materialise in the short to medium term. This strategy was referred to in the HRA Budget Report that was approved by Council in February 2014.

<b>Reserves</b>					
<b>Year End 2013/14</b>					
<b>Description</b>	<b>Opening Balance 2013/14</b>	<b>Spend against reserves</b>	<b>Release of reserves</b>	<b>Proposed transfer to Reserves</b>	<b>Proposed Closing Balance 2013/14</b>
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
HRA Balances	2,000				2,000
Extra Care Development Reserve	8,653	(1,622)		5,085	12,116
Strategic Reserve	1,284			5,110	6,394
Major Repairs (HRA)	3,437	(3,237)		-	200
	<b>15,374</b>	<b>(4,859)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,195</b>	<b>20,710</b>

**Appendices :**

**Appendix A1 - Net Revenue Position Full Analysis**



Appendix A1 – Net Revenue Position Full Analysis

Year End 2013/14	Year				
Director	Approved Budget	Provisional Outturn	Variance	Transfers to/(from) reserves	Variance after use of earmarked reserves.
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Assistant Director Housing Service	(7.380)	(17.307)	(9.927)	10.195	0.268
Housing Management (HRA)	1.600	1.671	0.071	-	0.071
Asset Management (HRA)	5.378	5.211	(0.167)	-	(0.167)
Prevention, Options & Inclusion	0.402	0.230	(0.172)	-	(0.172)
<b>Total</b>	0.000	(10.195)	(10.195)	10.195	0.000

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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 15 July 2014  
**Subject:** Customer Strategy  
**Report of:** Cllr Maurice Jones, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources  
**Summary:** The purpose of this report is to seek Executive agreement to the Customer Strategy of Central Bedfordshire Council.

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**Advising Officer:** Deb Clarke, Director of Improvement and Corporate Services  
**Contact Officer:** Deb Clarke, Director of Improvement and Corporate Services  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key Decision** Yes  
**Reason for urgency/  
exemption from call-in  
(if appropriate)** N/A

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

1. The Council's Customer Strategy is relevant to everything the Council does - and is essential for the delivery of all of the priorities within the Medium Term Plan and will help to ensure that we understand and keep in touch with our customers and communities to ensure their needs can be met.

### **Financial:**

2. That part of the strategy which is most relevant financially is the part which refers to channel shift and optimisation, and fuller details of this are set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy of the Council which details the capital investment and revenue savings which are related to the Customer First programme, which falls within this strategy.
3. If the Strategy is agreed, each workstream will involve a full assessment of current and planned projects and the associated costs and future savings so these can be reflected in the forthcoming 2015/16 budget proposals to inform the development of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
4. The revenue and capital implications associated with new activities will then be detailed in business cases for approval.

**Legal:**

5. None identified.

**Risk Management:**

6. If the Customer Strategy is not approved this could negatively affect the Council's performance against the Medium Term Plan and the Equalities Framework as failure to:
- implement a Customer Strategy may impede our ability to effectively manage customer contact and so present a risk to sustaining and improving our service performance and satisfaction levels; and
  - join up services for and with customers and partner organisations may mean that inefficient, insufficient and or duplicated services exist and fail to meet our customers' needs.
7. The risks associated with affordability will be managed through the presentation of business cases where needed. Communications and engagement plans for each workstream will be put in place.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

8. A commitment to cultural change and the quality of Customer Service will be driven from the top of the organisation through performance monitoring, challenge and strategic direction.
9. We will work to ensure that an ethos of good service is part of everything we do for customers and colleagues. We will deliver services based on the needs of customers, not the organisation and work to ensure customers feel as if they're dealing with one organisation by designing services around customers' needs and preferences. Services will take an active role in customer engagement through existing and new channels.
10. As this will impact on all employees and a full range of consultation activities will be put in place to explain the strategy. Good customer service is core behaviour expected of all staff and will be considered as part of a future Performance Review and Development framework and underpinned by the Council's training offer. Where specific work programme activities affect the terms and conditions of specific groups of employees, those employees and their representatives will be appropriately consulted.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

11. The aim of the Strategy is to enhance customer experience and communications and engagement will be at the heart of planning and delivery of the Strategy. The Strategy will provide focus for delivering our Equalities and Diversity commitments through its commitment to:
  - resident profiling;
  - delivering an extended offer for vulnerable residents through coordinated front-line support; and
  - analysing our performance in a structured way and acting upon the outcomes to narrow the satisfaction gap of BME residents.
12. EIAs will be prepared for individual workstreams if the Strategy is agreed. An equal opportunities assessment will also be carried out for significant changes to existing services. This will be when there are changes to frontline services or there are potential changes that affect specific areas of the population.

**Public Health:**

13. Implementation may have a positive impact on public health and wellbeing particularly as a result of increased accessibility and integration of service provision.

**Community Safety:**

13. Implementation may have a positive impact on crime and disorder, particularly as a result of increased accessibility and integration of service provision.

**Sustainability:**

14. The Strategy implementation will have a positive impact as a result of the move to more self service and integration of service provision. Business cases will detail where activities can reduce carbon emissions and these will be quantified at the end of the programme

**Procurement:**

15. Not applicable.

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

16. Overview and Scrutiny were provided with the opportunity to comment on the key deliverables of the emerging strategy at their meetings on 8 April 2014, where the draft strategy was supported, and on 24 June 2014 where there was feedback that the revised draft should be made more succinct. The strategy appended to this report has been amended to reflect this feedback.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Executive is asked to:**

1. **approve the Customer Strategy, as set out at Appendix A, and require officers to make arrangements for its implementation.**

<i>Reason for Recommendation:</i>	<i>It is intended that the Customer Strategy will be implemented by a governance structure overseen by the Chief Executive and involving cross directorate work. The Customer Strategy is primarily an internal document, intended to inform the workstream plans, service plans and other Council documents and procedures.</i>
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## **BACKGROUND**

17. Our purpose is to create an excellent experience of the Council for all our residents by putting the customer at the heart of everything we do and to be 'best in class' on customer focus.
18. As customers' expectations of the quality, reliability and accessibility of Council services continue to increase, an authority such as Central Bedfordshire Council must work hard and across all customer access methods (or 'channels') to meet and exceed customer expectations.
19. Key drivers for change also include:
  - The developing 'community leadership' role of the Council which requires that we use all means available to engage with and inform residents.
  - Ensuring customers can make contact with the Council easily and access services through a range of channels that are convenient for them including face to face, telephone, the web and other mobile technologies.
  - Ensuring that our customers have a positive experience and consistently report that their experiences of customer care are excellent, due to ease of access, high levels of resolution at first point of contact and professional, polite and knowledgeable employees.
  - Getting things right first time, which means by understanding and tackling the reasons our customers have to re-contact the Council because something has not been done first time - processes, systems and training needs to improve, with technology embraced.
  - Reducing the costs of what we do through investing in technology and promoting 'channel shift', so more people contact the Council through 'cheaper' access channels such as the web, and through embedding and encouraging self-service throughout all our access channels.
  - Streamlining systems and re-engineering processes so that customer needs and expectations are at the heart of design and delivery.
  - Ensuring that all Council employees and those delivering services on our behalf know they are collectively responsible for delivering excellent service first time round, and are empowered to make improvements for customers on a daily basis and proactively act as ambassadors for the Council.
  - Ensuring that equalities are considered planned for and delivered effectively.

- Implementing effective engagement and customer feedback activities and systems, so we use the intelligence we are already gathering, and gather subsequently, to substantially improve what we do and plan for the service provision our customers are likely to need in the future.
- Implementing a strong communications and marketing programme that 'drives the business' and build relationships of trust with customers through informing them about how to access services, the standards of service they should receive and what's on offer from the Council and our delivery partners.

## **CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE'S CUSTOMER STRATEGY**

20. To respond to these drivers and ensure we are working collectively to achieve the Council's vision, the Council needs to put in place a clear strategy for change and take action to ensure that it is implemented. This is the case whether services are delivered directly, commissioned or delivered in partnership with others, as the Council's local leadership role means that it needs to clearly articulate what customers can expect.
21. Benchmarking shows that organisations which take customer service seriously achieve success through stronger satisfaction ratings and an enhanced reputation.
22. Putting in place key customer service building blocks will bring our performance into line with the expectations that people have of transactional relationships with organisations they make contact and do business with on a daily basis e.g. Amazon, their bank.
23. However, this is only one aspect of the journey we need to go on with respect to customers. As a Council, with a leadership role to improve the areas' wellbeing, health economic prospects, we also need to ensure that this Strategy helps us to build strong bonds of loyalty and trust so all our employees and those living, visiting and working promote the Central Bedfordshire in a positive way as a great place to work, invest, visit and live.
24. How the Council does business needs to change to achieve this. We should be thinking about customers as partners, rather than as 'end users'. Customers need to be at the heart of our organisational culture so they know that we are anticipating their needs, doing the best that we can with their money, and, most importantly, supporting them and Central Bedfordshire to be the best it can be.
25. The whole organisation needs to act in a way that reinforces this message on a daily basis so that customers feel our values and behaviours are aligned with theirs, particularly with respect to their strength of feeling and pride.
26. The development of the Customer Strategy has been shaped and informed by the Executive Member and Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources, Cllr Maurice Jones and Cllr Richard Wenham; the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Council's Corporate Management Team and Senior Management Group.

27. This Strategy outlines what Central Bedfordshire Council will do over the period 2014 – 16 to meet and exceed customers' expectations, find efficiencies, improve services and introduce new access channels, whilst improving and modernising others, and shows the priority outcomes as well as the ways we will measure their impact.

### **STRATEGY WORKSTREAMS AND PRIORITY OUTCOMES**

28. The proposed Strategy sets out four workstreams;
- Knowledge and Insight
  - Culture and Capability
  - Channel Optimisation and Shift
  - Incentivising Behavioural Change.

### **CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

29. Where more detailed programmes of activity are already underway to deliver aspects of the Strategy these will continue, for example the Channel Optimisation and Shift workstream will encompass the Customer First programme. Phase 2 of this programme of activity is in development and delivery which involves improving technology and changing how we work 'behind the scenes' so that customers can do more online.
30. The Strategy document alone will not ensure that the vision and its intentions are delivered; its effectiveness depends on the determined and sustained efforts at the levels of the organisation. It has to be enlivened by Executive, all Members, Directors, Service Heads and Managers, who must visibly show their commitment and determination to create a customer-focused organisation. This can only be achieved via the transmission of a clear, frequent and consistent message throughout the organisation. Heads of Service and managers will have specific responsibility for promoting customer care initiatives and leading by example.
31. In view of the breadth and depth of this Strategy it will also be appropriate to establish a Customer Strategy Board comprising CMT to ensure there is buy in from across the organisation.
32. This Board will oversee and monitor the delivery plans for each of the four workstreams of the Strategy which are being produced. Each workstream plan will support the organisation to change its approach to customers in specific areas of work and these plans will include timelines for delivery, prioritisation, investment (if required) and benefits and those activities and programmes which will be assessed on an individual basis before implementation.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – Customer Strategy

**Background Papers:** (open to public inspection)



## I. Introduction

This strategy is intended as a guidance document for the council, setting out the roadmap and key work streams that we need to address if we are to become truly customer focussed. It is not intended as a customer facing document but rather is for internal use.

The council has a vision to make Central Bedfordshire a great place to live and work. Critical to us achieving that vision is our ability to deliver value, choice and excellence in services to our residents. We know that our residents are increasingly expecting to get services online and expect to receive similar levels of service from the council as they do from the multitude of other providers that they deal with.

That expectation suits our purposes as well – customers who are able to use unmediated channels to self serve are also accessing services in the most cost effective and efficient way, enabling scarce resources to be diverted to meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable residents. However, we also know that it is some of our most vulnerable residents who are also the most ‘digitally deprived’ and we are absolute in our commitment that customers should receive a great service, no matter which channel they access services through.

We are increasingly aware that simply transacting online is only step in the value that we can create for our customers – we want also to be able to create value by proposing services or information that they may need, or by joining up with other providers. For example if a customer registers a birth on line, they should also be given details of library books and services for infants, and booked in for the first vaccination with the NHS.

Finally, we know that truly customer focussed organisations learn from their mistakes in a self critical, transparent and systemic way and that process is also described in this strategy.



Cllr Maurice Jones  
Deputy Leader of the Council  
Executive Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources

## II. Setting the scene

The focus in our early years of this Council has been to create a stable organisation, get the basics right and turn around poor performance. We are now entering the second phase of our development where our focus will be to continue to make Central Bedfordshire a great place to live and work.

Over the last four years, customer satisfaction increased from 32% to 72% (Sept 2013) and this strategy is designed to ensure that we continue to improve resident satisfaction with the council through delivering an excellent customer experience. To make this a reality we need to have a holistic understanding of our customers' needs and preferences, to be obsessed with their experience regardless of which Council services they are using and to focus on improvement.

We recognise that the day to day interactions our customers have with the Council and its services, whether that is the image we project face-to-face, over the telephone or in letters, how we speak to our customers, or the way services are accessed, will be critical to their perception of us as an organisation. Through this strategy, which builds on our values, we seeking to demonstrate our commitment to provide our customers with the best and most cost effective experience possible and one which meets their needs and is easily accessible.

We looked at some of the 'best in class' organisations for customer services. First Direct – although belonging to one of the most unpopular industries – banking – regularly beats John Lewis and others to be top rated for customer satisfaction and listens well to customers.

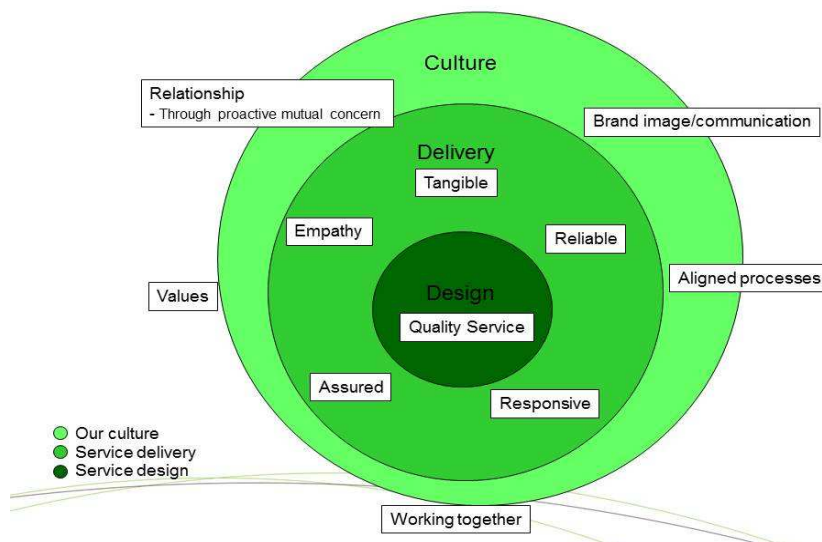


Source: First Direct; Alan Hughes, former CEO, First Direct

### III. Being “best in class” on customer focus

We know that to achieve great customer service we need to design great services, and then deliver them in excellent ways, and on top of that have an organisational culture that supports excellent customer service – only when all these are aligned and delivered will we be succeeding.

This diagram shows how these three rings of customer satisfaction interact and support each other



Our aim is

*To create an excellent experience of the Council for all our residents by putting the customer at the heart of everything we do.*

To deliver on that aim, in implementing this strategy we will:

- Be evidence led – our services will be informed by customer insight.
- Be joined up in our approach – anticipating customer needs across the Council and the wider public sector.
- Be inclusive – nobody will be disadvantaged if they cannot or choose not to use digital services.
- Enhance all our channels - so they are easy and a pleasure to use.

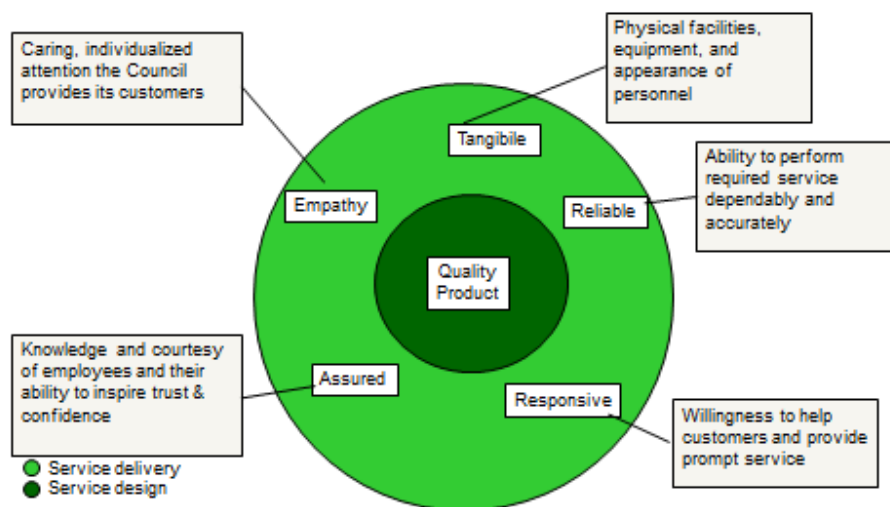
- Innovate – exploiting technology creatively and in line with customer preferences (e.g. mobile ready and interactive).
- Keep it simple – creating processes that avoid unnecessary or duplicated effort on the part of customers and of staff.
- Empower our staff – to take ownership and make decisions
- Be proactive with our customers – keeping them informed and engaged through their journey of contact with us.

The ways in which we design and then deliver our services is going to become increasingly important as we implement this strategy.

The ‘product’ or service that we deliver will need to be increasingly tailored to meet individual customer requirements, but it is not enough to simply have a good quality product – the WAY in which we deliver our services is of equal importance, and that includes both the environment in which the service is delivered and the capability of our staff to attend to customer needs.

This diagram shows the elements that we need to address;

We particularly need to focus on improving service design and the ways in which we deliver our services



## IV. Workstreams

We have set four workstreams for ourselves in the pursuit of this strategy. They are:

- a) Knowledge and Insight
- b) Channel Optimisation and Shift
- c) Culture and Capability
- d) Incentivising Behavioural Change

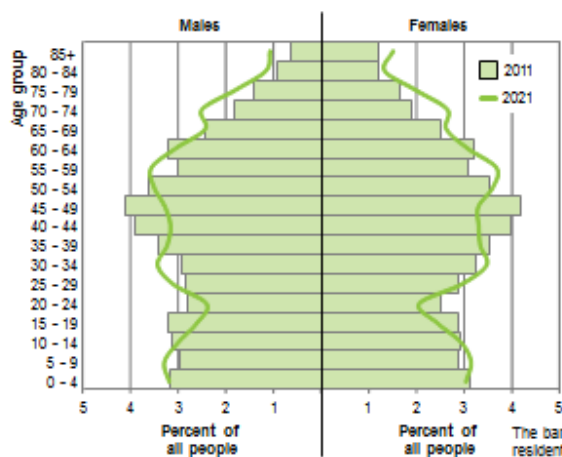
Further detail on the content of each workstream follows;

### A. Knowledge and Insight

If Central Bedfordshire Council is to become truly customer focused we need to understand:

- The nature of the population – the social economic and demographic profile of our residents, for example our growing elderly population:.

## By 2021 more of our residents will be in older age groups



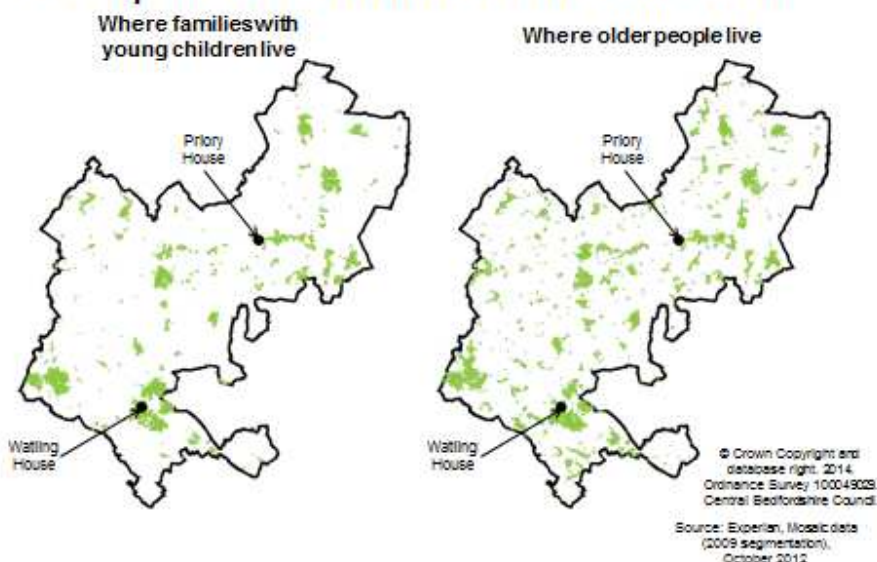
- By 2021 a bigger proportion of our residents will be elderly
- The proportion of older working age residents will also increase, while the proportion of young people will decrease.
- This creates challenges for service delivery and we will need to adapt our communication channels to reflect the changing needs of our residents.

The bars in this chart show the age profile of our residents in 2011, while the lines show how this will change by 2021

Sources: 2011 from Office for National Statistics, Mid Year Estimates; 2021 from Central Bedfordshire Council, POPGROUP population forecasting model 2011

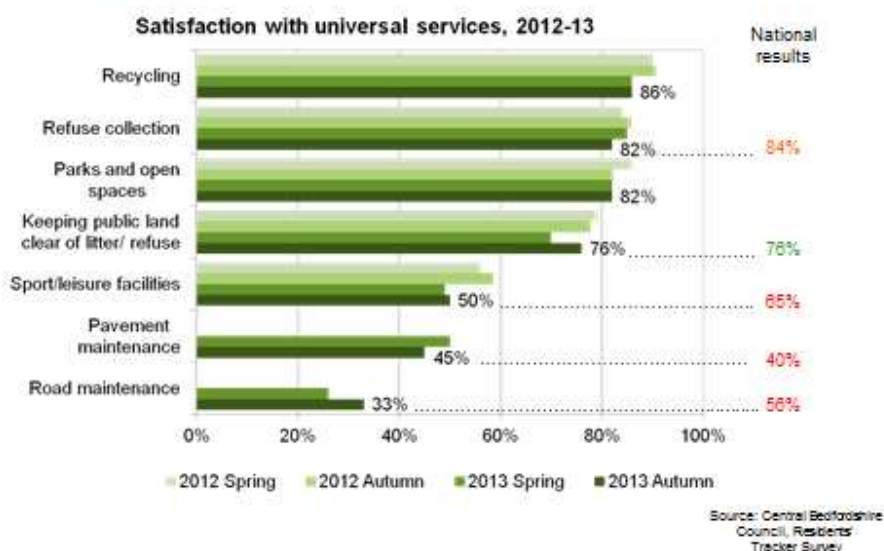
- Where and how people live across Central Bedfordshire, for example the distribution of different household types;

## More older people live in villages compared to families with children...



- Their perceptions of individual council

## We may need to do more to improve satisfaction in some areas



services;

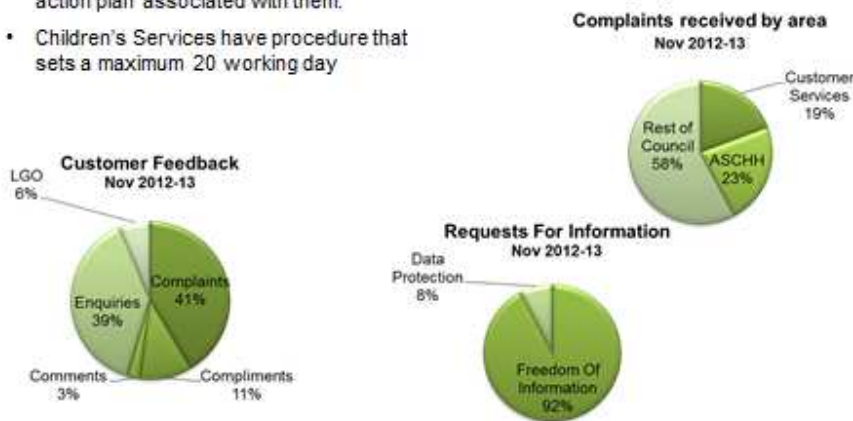
- Their perceptions and experience of accessing the council (channels).

### 1. Complaints and compliments

Complaints and compliments are the life blood of customer feedback and understanding the customer experience. At the moment we can sometimes treat them as a bit of a pain, a process to be completed. And we have no overview of them because different directorates deal with them in different ways – we have to find a system for containing, categorising and dealing with complaints so that they do not repeat.

## How we deal with customer feedback at the moment

- Only one directorate – Adult Social Care, Health and Housing has a process for ensuring that all complaints have an action plan associated with them.
- Children’s Services have procedure that sets a maximum 20 working day timescale for dealing with complaints
- 66% of complaints overall are being dealt with in 20 working days or less



We also don’t tend to focus on compliments and positives, which are equally important to us.

In fact we should publicise both complaints and compliments – complaints on a ‘You’ve said, we’ve done’ basis and compliments to showcase to the public the great work that our teams our doing.

The channels available to our customers to complain or compliment can be clunky and paper based – it would be helpful to have an online channel. A confident organisation might even allow customers to give feedback anonymously.

In addition the current feedback loop is incomplete in some cases – where a service failure has been identified we do not have a consistently applied methodology to identify, contain, analyse and correct the root cause so that it does not happen again – see the section on reducing rework.

It is fundamentally important that the quality and timeliness of response to complaints and compliments is good. We need to have clear standards for teaching us all how to respond to customers who have taken the time and trouble to complain to us or to compliment us and a programme to ensure that these standards are taught and adhered to.

A complaint or a compliment allows us a moment of reflection and of checking back on how we are doing – in that sense it is a precious gift and we should see it as such. The systems and technology we might put in place to deal with complaints will enable us to put time and effort in the best place, automating key parts of the process.

This should allow us to put our efforts into the value added parts of the process ensuring that those responding are given time to establish the full picture and not losing sight of the value of a face to face discussion with the customer or others affected.

Staff awards create powerful opportunities to highlight compliments and good work, and so a corporate approach to these, building on the directorate approach will be worthy of consideration.

## **2. Other sources of insight**

It is not only compliments and complaints that give us ways of learning from our customers – we have multiple examples of individual services getting great insight – for example the Great Library Debate has given us a wealth of feedback – and there are many more examples. The customers who gave us feedback on libraries are the same people who pay their council tax, have children in our schools, elderly parents, and have their bins collected and so on. We need to widen our approach to the feedback we receive from our customers so we are seeing much more of the whole picture as individual residents experience it.

Customers have told the Housing Service they like the idea of short films being used, to explain how to do things, like applying for council housing. We are producing ten YouTube style videos, involving our customers in the making those films, so our tenants are talking to other customers about what to do.

## **B. Channel Optimisation and Shift**

The Council's customer base is large and diverse. All residents and businesses are served by the Council, as are the people who travel through the area. In the past we may have tended to segment services, with individual areas devising their own access channels such as helpdesks or helplines.

We are seeking to change this one service/one channel approach in recognition of the fact that:

- Many customers use multiple services and seek to do so easily and efficiently



- Expectations are changing. The range and quality of on line services, offering information and transactions on a 24/7 basis, leads consumers of public services to expect similar service value from their council.

### 1. Understanding channels

Our channels are the methods by which customers access services and information from us.

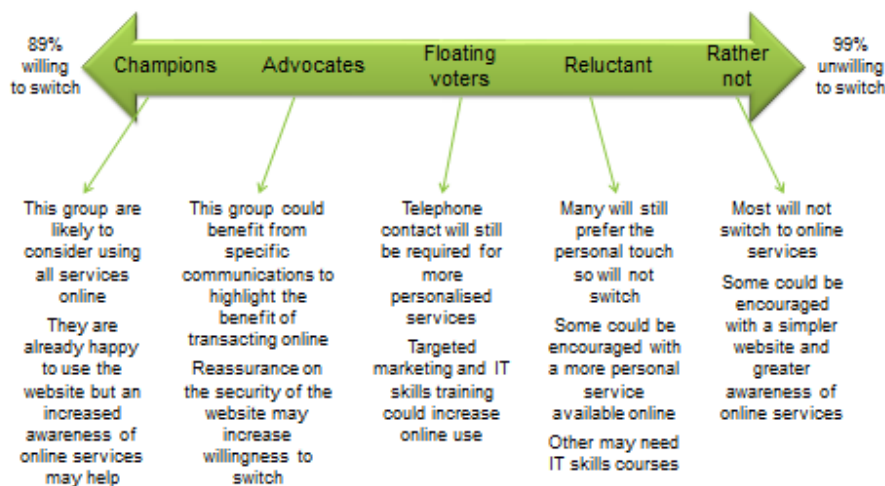
They are currently

- face to face (in our Customer Contact Centres),
- telephone (through the call centre),
- video (through our Customer Access Points),
- email (to the call centre),
- Social media (principally Facebook and Twitter),
- Our App (for reporting street scene issues),
- Our website (mostly for information but also for reporting and booking appointments),
- Other websites such as Directgov,
- Our other service centres such as libraries,
- direct to the back office – planning for example
- Face to face in the customers home – principally but not exclusively in relation to social care

At the moment we have a tendency to have a ‘one service, one channel’ approach – this does not give customers choice in how they access services or information and means that channel shift potential is limited. We need to map in more detail the ways in which customers use our current channels, and what their preferences and experiences are. We have some data on this and we could make better use of it in thinking about how to optimise the channels we have.

## Willingness to change varies by each of the customer groups...

- However, the willingness to change varies greatly depending on the customer group, and the level of support needed for each group is different:



When we have this clearer insight we should be able to prioritise customers so that we deal with the most 'in need' customers in the quickest and fullest way, with perhaps say those customers who merely need to be signposted to a service being directed to a low cost channel in order to give more time and attention to customers with complex and/or sensitive needs.

We have not previously used texting as a channel but it clearly could have huge potential for us in quickly and simply contacting customers with information or confirmation of for example appointments. Similarly the social media channels have value that will continue to grow and which we need to exploit better.

We will clarify the channels that are available to customers and give some better understanding of which are most suitable for which type of transactions, and give clear information about this in a consistent way. We probably need to end the 'golden numbers' as intelligence shows that not many customers understand them.

We will ensure that we are where possible driving channel shift, so that customers where possible are accessing services in the most cost effective and efficient way.

Where possible, channels need to be optimised in order to signpost customers onto further services – for example a web search on cycle routes might lead us signpost to Travel choices, or Bikeability or even local cycling clubs.

When we understand our channels and how customers use them better, we should be able to optimise the resource allocated to various channels and multi-skill staff so that services are available across multiple channels.

*Example: People who apply for council housing will soon be able to self assess whether they qualify for housing, online. The self assessment will tell them what their priority is and register them on the Housing Waiting List if they are likely to be offered a home. If not, advice will be provided about their alternative options and what they should do next.*

## **2. Reducing rework**

Key to optimising channels is reducing rework. Rework is unnecessary work that we do because we didn't get it right first time, it includes things like customers reporting a missed bin collection, or customers chasing a service such as housing benefits. We don't currently collect information on how much of what comes through the call centre is rework, but we suspect it is a high proportion.

Key to us avoiding rework is us understanding what information we could and should be publishing on our website to avoid customers having to ring us to ask. And of course along side having the right information, we also need to put time into optimising our web search facility. This means we need to redirect resource from dealing with customer enquiries and to creating

better information. Key to achieving this is using language and taxonomy that customers recognise – not ‘local government speak’ such as ‘Environmental Services’.

In places, the information on our website does not actually match what happens ‘on the ground’ for example the information on rules for our household waste recycling centres is not being implemented consistently on the ground.

We need to ‘crowd source’ from our employees where the experience of living in Central Bedfordshire and using our services does not match up with what we tell customers on our website, and eliminate the anomalies. This will mean re-engaging with the web content managers.

In order to avoid rework we need much better insight into how our customers are experiencing our services to pinpoint where rework is happening. This will mean the implementation of customer feedback loops rather like the star rating system we get on Amazon or other websites, as well as the creation of discussion forums using social media

Capturing the ‘voice of the customer’ in this way will enable us to reengineer our processes.

### **3. Self service**

We will also want to help customers to help themselves rather than refer back to us – part of this is access to information as described above but we also need to give customers the tools they need to work out how to fix what has gone wrong. Our customers are looking at video sites such as YouTube for instructions on pretty much everything – there is no reason why we cannot give video guides to some of our services.

### **4. Customer contacts**

We know that, for some of our customers, being in contact with us is a valuable source of human contact in what would otherwise be a lonely time. Reducing rework will also involve giving those customers another source to which they can turn to have a chat or be in contact, one that is more appropriate and can put them in touch with the resources they need to help them be less lonely. This might include Silverline – a new national phone line for lonely people.

### **5. The business community**

We are acutely conscious that the business community in Central Bedfordshire is made of customers who can often find it frustrating and time consuming to understand what services are on offer and what rules they need to comply with. We have made a start with our ‘Business Survey’ but this aspect has not received the attention it deserves and it will be a key action in the plan to reduce rework.

## **C. Culture and Capability**

The plans associated with this strategy address a range of technical and operational issues. And it *is* vital that our systems support change. However, unless the people within the Council have the commitment and skills to increase our customer focus, we may fail to deliver sustainable change.

These people include:

- Our Members – elected to represent and serve their communities
- Our staff – employed to design and deliver services to the public
- Our third party suppliers – contracted to provide services to our customers on our behalf.

Specifically we will:

- Build customer focus into recruitment, induction and development processes.
- Ensure customer focus is built into team meeting agendas so that all managers are working with their colleagues on reviewing performance against their customer standards.
- Develop a back to the floor programme for leaders across the organisation so that they experience first hand customer service in action.
- Explore staff awards and other mechanisms through which we can highlight good work and celebrate excellence in service to our customers.

### **1. Developing our culture**

A key attribute and asset of Central Bedfordshire is that our employees, and indeed the political and managerial leadership of the council, are passionately committed to achieving great customer service.

What we need to do is continue to support that positive culture and empower our staff so that they can go beyond organisational boundaries to really meet customer needs.

Empowering staff is not only about culture – it is also about us

- designing systems and processes which support staff to do their jobs better,
- helping staff to understand where they can have the flexibility, and
- giving staff the right tools and right environment for success

...creating a virtuous circle where staff are more able to meet customer needs, we are a high performing council, and staff have high morale as a result.

In this context, our values are very important – we need to do more to reinforce these and bring them alive, because everyone in the organisation will need to commit to them to bring them alive in dealing with customers. In the context of our values, a fundamental mind shift for some will be the change to becoming more outcome focussed – thinking of the issue from the customer’s perspective rather than perhaps a narrower professional view, and considering how to ‘make it happen’. We sometimes hear responses which are more negative than that, and the officers giving those responses will need to be supported to consider the impact that that has.

It will be important for us to confront the mistakes that we sometimes make in a positive way – learning from them and seeking feedback and insight into how we can make things better in the future. In the truly customer focussed organisation that we aspire to be, our employees should not fear the consequences of making a mistake or saying ‘sorry’ as long as the mistake was caused by a genuine desire to do the best for the customer – this will encourage staff to ‘go the extra mile’ where necessary without fearing repercussions.

Giving front line staff the power, tools and skills they need to work on the work they are doing, to improve it through understanding performance data and through listening to the voice of the customer will be a critically important contributor to securing buy in and commitment.

*Example: As part of a new approach to co- regulation the Council is continuing to work with tenants on the recently established scrutiny panel. Tenants have already investigated how we can do better to resolve anti social behaviour problems. By working with staff, mystery shopping and talking to customers the tenants have produced 20 recommendations to improve the service.*

## **2. Developing our capability**

Building skills and capability around customer services starts at recruitment and through induction, describing the skills (including letter writing and literacy) and capabilities (addressing the point, saying sorry) in person specifications and testing for them in recruitment through to being explicit about what is expected in induction processes.

For managers, it is particularly important that expectations and standards are established right from the start. Managers get measured against a standard which is customer focus and they need to be clear what this means.

Uniquely in local government, professionalism can get in the way of good customer responsiveness – employees may feel that maintaining professional standards and not admitting to mistakes (and therefore liability) is a way of defending the council and their profession – this is usually wrong and we need to say so.

Customer service should be a standard item on team meetings – we will be reviewing the standard we achieve and the level of complaints and compliments as a matter of course.

For leaders in the organisation, nothing beats the value of going ‘back to the floor’ and seeing the customer experience first hand. A programme of visiting the call centre or our face to face centres and listening in will be established, along with encouragement of ‘back to the floor’ visits. We could consider learning from call recordings in our learning.

What are the key customer services skills?

- Ability to succinctly convey messages and information
- Tailoring messages to audiences
- Presentation skills
- Communication skills

- Communication with customers to try to avoid complaints in the first instance
- Soft skills – need to be considered
- Listening
- Process improvement
- Not forgetting the face to face interaction options when surrounded by technology
- Communications training
- Encouraging skills development – e.g. skills development within teams, rotation of the chair role
- Building confidence
- Learning – from call recordings

To equip our teams to give better customer services we need to develop our approach to 'knowledge' so that there is a repository of the information needed to deliver right first time, including all of our customer services policies and procedures being readily available to employees.

Finally our Customer Charter has been refreshed and is appended to this report, it will be socialised within the authority and kept live within the organisation.

### **3. Making third party suppliers comply with our strategy**

We are an organisation with a large supplier base, many of whom are also directly delivering services to our customers – we need to do more to demand and ensure excellent customer service from our suppliers. Central Bedfordshire Council commissions over £180m per year via third party suppliers, who deliver a range of services such as care homes, refuse, recycling, highways, ground maintenance, repairs and leisure services on behalf of the council.

It is important the customer experience is consistent and seamless end to end. This requires our partners to work hand in glove with the council, demonstrating the same level of commitment for delivering our customer strategy, and demonstrating behaviours which underpin a customer centric organisation.

The council will require our 3<sup>rd</sup> party suppliers to adopt the same vision and values when delivering services to Central Bedfordshire Council's citizens and customers including how and when customers access service.

As part of the Council's drive to continually improve the customer experience from our 3<sup>rd</sup> Party suppliers, we have introduced the supplier engagement review programme. This programme will comprise of a contract review requirement with each of our suppliers. By looking at, for example, communication, customer satisfaction, delivery the council will monitor and enhance the delivery to the customer, including key elements such as environment, equalities, improvements to service, innovation, price and quality standards, better service and value.

This review will not only focus on achievements made in these areas over the last year, but also ideas and proposals for the future years.

In this way, customers can rely on the council to delivering excellent services because we will apply our standards throughout the supply chain.

#### **D. Incentivising behavioural change**

Many of our objectives require change within the Council, either to systems, processes or culture.

However, the Council also has goals that require our customers to change.

Such changes might relate to personal behaviours: in public health, the Council has objectives to improve health outcomes in relation to smoking related diseases, obesity and teenage pregnancy.

We also seek to encourage and incentivize resident behaviour in relation to environmental and financial objectives (e.g. recycling, use of sustainable transport and payment by direct debit). Increasingly we aim to influence the way in which customers consider and chose services for themselves.

For example, the Care Act places increased responsibility on the council to inform and advise all residents in relation to care services, and we seek to influence customers' use of access channels so that, in line with their needs, they are directed to the channels which will serve them best and cost the council the least.

## Our refreshed Customer Charter

### We promise to:

- Resolve enquiries promptly and the first time you contact us. Where this is not possible, we will keep you informed on when you can expect a response.
- Listen to you, ask for your views and act on your feedback to improve our services.
- Be open and honest and explain our decisions.
- Apologise when we make a mistake and put things right.
- Accept your right to complain and guarantee a considered response.
- Treat you and your property with respect.
- If we can't help, we will make every effort to direct you to someone who can.
- Develop channels that are easy to use and make more services available on-line to give you quick and easy access at your convenience.
- Improve our services and processes so that you don't have to make any unnecessary calls or visits.
- Use plain English, avoiding jargon and explain things clearly.

### We would like you to:

- Visit our website at the first instance. The website contains the most up to date information and most enquiries can be resolved at [centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://centralbedfordshire.gov.uk).
- Contact our Customer Service Centre if you need to speak to one of our advisors to resolve your enquiry.
- Give us the information we need to help you.
- Treat our employees appropriately and with respect.
- Help us to improve by giving us your views and suggestions

## E. Our Customer Standards

### By accessing our web site you will be able to:

- **Report** missed bin collections, noise nuisance, fraud and more.
- **Pay** for council tax, housing rent, planning applications and more.
- **Request** a bulky waste collection, removal of an unwanted vehicle and more.
- **Apply** for services such as blue badges, jobs and school admissions.
- **Access** information on council services and your local community.
- **Ask** for help to use our website including easy navigation.

### If you contact us by telephone we will aim to:

- Answer your call within 20 seconds.
- Tell you our name when we answer.



- Our staff will guide and assist you to resolve your enquiries through our website where appropriate.
- Resolve your query at the first point of contact.
- Where this is not possible, we will explain why and let you know when you can expect a response.

**If you contact us by email, we will aim to:**

- Acknowledge receipt of your enquiry within one working day.
- Provide a full response to your enquiry within five working days or, advise you if your enquiry relates to statutory timescales, or may take longer if it involves consultation with partners.
- Reply using plain, jargon free language.

**If you contact us by letter or fax we will aim to:**

- Acknowledge receipt within 3 working days.
- Provide a full response to your enquiry within ten working days or, advise you if your enquiry relates to statutory timescales, or may take longer if it involves consultation with partners.
- Reply using plain, jargon free language.

**If you visit us in person:**

- Greet you within five minutes of your arrival.
- Ensure you are seen by a member of staff, who can deal with your enquiry, within 15 minutes of your arrival, where you do not have an appointment.
- Arrange for a private interview room if necessary.
- Accommodate any additional needs you may have.

**Our visits to your home:**

We appreciate that it is sometimes necessary for us to visit you and we will:

- Provide you, where appropriate, in advance with the name and contact details of the person visiting you.
- Agree an appointment time, where appropriate, with you and will keep you informed if a delay occurs.
- Show identification cards, with our names and photograph, on arrival and give you the opportunity to check our identity (please do not let anyone into your home unless you know them or have checked their identity).

## **F. Feedback and information**

**Access to information:**

There are three main pieces of information access legislation that you can use for gaining access to different types of information, these are as follows:

- Personal data access requests should be made under Data Protection Act 1998. Response timescales are 40 calendar days from the point of identification for requests for personal information.
- Environmental information should be requested under the Environmental Information Regulations 2005. Response timescales are 20 working days for freedom of information and environmental information requests.
- All other information holdings of the Council are subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Response timescales are 20 working days for freedom of information and environmental information requests.

**Customer Feedback:**

- You are welcome to make comments on how we deliver your services and we will facilitate that.
- Compliments - have we more than met your expectations? We like to know when we do, so we can do it more often.
- Complaints – when something goes wrong, we need to know about it so we can try to put it right, we have a clear process for complaining. We will adhere to timescales set out in the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure.



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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 15 July 2014  
**Subject:** Discretionary Housing Payment Policy  
**Report of:** Cllr Maurice Jones, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources  
**Summary:** The report summarises the Council's Discretionary Housing Payment Policy and the results of the public consultation on the Policy.

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**Advising Officer:** Charles Warboys, Chief Financial Officer  
**Contact Officer:** Gary Muskett, Head of Revenues & Benefits  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key Decision** Yes  
**Reason for urgency/  
exemption from call-in  
(if appropriate)** N/A

#### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Council Priorities:**

By protecting vulnerable people as well as providing incentives to work, the proposed Discretionary Housing Payment Policy is designed to support the Council's Medium Term Plan priorities of :

- Promoting health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable.
- Improved educational attainment.

##### **Financial:**

1. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provides local authorities with ring-fenced grant funding for the purpose of making Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and any grant funding not spent at the end of a financial year is normally required to be returned to the DWP. Historically the funding provided to the Council by DWP has proved sufficient to meet demand for DHP, however, regulations do allow local authorities to supplement the funding from their own resources should the need arise and resources be available.
2. In 2013/14 Central Bedfordshire Council received a grant of £280,944. This grant was topped up by an additional £54,200 following a successful bid to the DWP for additional funds, making a total grant of £335,144.

3. In 2013/14 656 DHP awards were made totalling £332,554.
4. The 2014/15 grant has been increased by 2.58% to £288,193.

**Legal:**

5. The Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 (as amended) set out the legal framework empowering the Council to make discretionary awards to assist residents with their housing costs. The main regulatory requirements are that:
  - payments are discretionary - an applicant does not have a statutory right to a payment;
  - an application has to be made for payments, they cannot be awarded automatically by the Council;
  - the total amount of expenditure by a local authority in any financial year may not exceed the amount determined by the Department for Work and Pensions for that authority;
  - the administration of the scheme is for the Council to determine;
  - a minimum weekly amount of £0.50 in Housing Benefit **1** must be in payment in any week for which a DHP is awarded;
  - the amount of a Discretionary Housing Payment, calculated as a weekly sum, shall not exceed the net weekly rental liability; and
  - Discretionary Housing Payment can be made as lump sums for certain other housing needs such as deposits.
6. Council Tax Benefit was abolished from 1 April 2013 and Discretionary Housing Payments can no longer be used to assist households with meeting the cost of their Council Tax liability. In addition the law does not allow awards to be made for:
  - services or support charges which would not be eligible for Housing Benefit;
  - increases in rent to cover rent arrears;
  - reductions in Housing Benefit due to sanctions or overpayments;
  - for any week where there is no award of Housing Benefit; or
  - claims where Housing Benefit has been suspended.

**Risk Management:**

7. The funding available for DHP is limited and there is a risk that awards may exceed the allocated resources, or that awards may be made inconsistently and fail to benefit those residents most in need of assistance. Agreeing a Policy for the award of DHP will ensure that awards are made in a fair, consistent and transparent manner thereby mitigating the risk that awards will be made inappropriately or inconsistently or that awards will exceed the resources available.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

8. The introduction of the Spare Room Subsidy has led to a significant increase in the number of customers who contacted the Council to make a DHP application. These contacts have been managed by the Revenues and Benefits teams and Customer Services.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

9. 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. The impact of the new policy has undergone careful consideration throughout the drafting stage.
10. A thorough consultation and engagement process has been undertaken. A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been prepared to identify the potential impact on different groups and to support the decision on the proposed Policy. The EIA concludes that;

National and local research indicates that the welfare reforms are affecting a large number of Central Bedfordshire residents such as

- loan parents on low income;
- families living in social housing;
- families living in private rented housing; and
- disabled residents of working age and families with disabled children living in their household.

11. Many of these residents are low-income working families. For some residents, a small change in their circumstances is having a big impact on family life and their ability to cope without additional support.
12. Discretionary Housing Payment provides an important mechanism to support people through these changes. The Council's DHP policy criteria are considered to be broad and inclusive. Data analysis and consultation findings indicate that a significant number of residents experiencing a wide variety of circumstances will be supported through the application of this policy.

**Public Health:**

13. None.

**Community Safety:**

14. Not applicable.

**Sustainability:**

15. Not applicable.

**Procurement:**

16. Not applicable.

### Overview and Scrutiny:

17. This matter was considered by the Social Care Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 June 2014 and the Committee recommended that the report and Policy on Discretionary Housing Payment be fully supported. The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the matter on 24 June 2014 and also recommended that the new Discretionary Housing Payment Policy be fully supported by the Committee to the Executive.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

#### The Executive is asked to:

1. **approve the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy; and**
2. **delegate authority to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources, to make minor amendments to the Policy where considered necessary.**

*Reason for Recommendations: To ensure that the Council has a clearly understood policy framework in place for the award of Discretionary Housing Payments; and to ensure awards are determined in a fair and transparent manner.*

*To ensure funding allocated to support vulnerable low-income households is utilised in the manner that is effective in providing support to those households.*

### Executive Summary

18. The Council receives annual grant funding from the Department for Work and Pensions for the purposes of awarding Discretionary Housing Payments to residents in need of additional assistance with meeting their housing costs. This report requests the Executive to approve a Policy for the Award of Discretionary Housing Payments, taking into account the outcome of public consultation, in order to ensure that awards are made in a fair and consistent manner and that the cost of the Discretionary Housing Payments scheme remains financially sustainable to the Council.

### Background

19. The Council has a discretionary power, conferred by the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001, to make discretionary financial awards known as Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to assist residents with their housing costs.



20. The awards are administered by the Council's Revenues and Benefits service and there are established procedures in place to ensure that awards are only made where applications meet the legal requirements, that the merits of the applications are evaluated in an objective and consistent manner, and that awards are only made to those residents in need of financial assistance (in addition to Housing Benefit) to meet the cost of renting a home.
21. In recent years the procedures have been successful in ensuring that the grant funding received has been passed onto deserving households in the form of DHP awards.
22. The Council receives a grant from the Department for Work and Pensions annually to be used for the purpose of the award of DHP and normally the Council is required to repay any unused grant at the end of the financial year.
23. Regulations also allow the Council to supplement the DHP funding from its own resources by up to 250%, however, no provision has been made in the Council's agreed budget for 2014/15 for expenditure above the amount of direct grant funding provided for this purpose.
24. There is no specific grant funding for the cost of administering DHP, therefore, the cost of administration is absorbed as part of the base budget cost of benefits administration.
25. The Government's Welfare Reform programme introduced significant changes to Housing Benefit for persons of working age from 2013/14 onwards including;
  - Limiting the amount of Housing Benefit paid to tenants of social housing with spare bedrooms.
  - Imposing a cap on the total amount of benefits received by a household to £500 per week for a family and £350 per week for a single person.
  - Replacing Housing Benefit with a housing element contained within awards for Universal Credit.
26. These reforms have reduced the amount of financial assistance with the cost of rent received by many households in Central Bedfordshire. The Government has also recognised that these changes will affect the ability of some low-income households to meet the cost of renting a property, describing the DHP scheme as a key 'safety net' in the current process of Welfare Reform, and allocating additional funding to the DHP funding stream as funding has been withdrawn from mainstream Housing Benefit.
27. The grant funding for Central Bedfordshire Council in 2013/14 was £280,944 which represents a significant increase in comparison to the grant of £76,880 received in 2012/13.
28. The Government has indicated that the additional allocation in respect of the social housing sector restrictions is aimed specifically at two groups a) disabled people living in significantly adapted accommodation (including any adaptations made for disabled children); and b) foster carers, whose Housing Benefit is reduced because of a bedroom being used by, or kept free for, foster children. The expectation is that this additional funding will be prioritised for these groups.

29. The Department for Work and Pensions published a Discretionary Housing Payments Guidance Manual in April 2014 in view of the changes taking place to housing related benefits (<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/discretionary-housing-payments-guide.pdf>).  
The proposed Policy takes into consideration the contents of this guidance.
30. In view of the considerable changes to Housing Benefit and the increase in DHP funding it is considered appropriate at this time to review the Council's arrangements for the award of DHP. Whilst the amount of funding has increased it remains limited and the funding available is not sufficient to assist all households experiencing a shortfall between Housing Benefit entitlement and rent liability. Therefore, it is considered to be essential that the funding available is awarded in a manner that benefits as many residents as possible whilst giving priority to those most in need of assistance with housing costs and that expenditure is controlled within the available funding. Establishing a formal Policy for awards is widely recognised to be good practice and will assist in these aims.

### **Public Consultation**

31. In order to ensure that the Council's final Policy for the Award of Discretionary Housing Payments properly reflects the needs of local residents and that the Council complies with its statutory equality duty a 12 week public consultation process was undertaken including consultation with organisations representing persons from groups with protected equality characteristics.
32. A consultation questionnaire was sent to all recipients of a DHP in 2013/14, as well as being sent to a number of stakeholders and major landlords including the Child Poverty Task Force Group, our Equalities Forum, Aragon Housing Association and our own Housing Services team.
33. The consultation ran from 22 January 2014 to 16 April 2014. The results of the consultation can be seen in full at Appendix C. There were 67 responses from residents, 42 of whom classed themselves as disabled.
34. Feed back from the consultation was generally very positive. In particular Aragon Housing Association either agreed or strongly agreed with the majority of the draft Policy and the Central Bedfordshire Council Housing team, on the whole, agreed strongly with the draft Policy.
35. We have received specific feedback from the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group asking us to ensure that our Policy identifies and supports applicants with mental health disabilities as well as those with physical disabilities. Such considerations are made in the draft Policy but we will ensure our application form and decision making matrix completed by officers are developed to highlight the specific issue of mental health disability.
36. It is worth noting that following proactive work by our Housing Teams in 2013/14, 45 of our Council tenants affected by the under occupancy benefit reduction have vacated their properties, with 24 transfers to other properties and 14 mutual exchanges. These moves have all helped to reduce the strain on our DHP expenditure.

37. The draft DHP Policy can be found at Appendix A.
38. A breakdown of the DHP awards made in 2013/14 by tenure type and the reason for the award can be found at Appendix B.

**Appendices:**

- Appendix A – Draft DHP Policy
- Appendix B – 2013/14 awards of DHP
- Appendix C – DHP Consultation response
- Appendix D – Additional Information about DHP's

**Background Papers:** (open to public inspection)

1. DWP Discretionary Housing Payments - Good Practice Guide (2011) – at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/dhpguide.pdf>
  2. DWP Discretionary Housing Payments - draft Good Practice Guide (2013) for consultation – at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/discretionary-housing-paymentsguide-draft.pdf>
  3. The Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 (as amended) – at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/a8-2405.pdf>
  4. Equality Impact Assessment of the draft Discretionary Housing Payment Policy
- ❶ All references to Housing Benefit throughout this document also includes people in receipt of any rent housing element of Universal Credit.

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**Central Bedfordshire Council's  
Draft Discretionary Housing Payment  
Policy**

**Revenues & Benefits Service**

The logo for Central Bedfordshire Council, featuring a green circle with the text "Central Bedfordshire" inside. The word "Central" is in white and "Bedfordshire" is in dark blue. A large, faint, grey watermark of the word "DRAFT" is visible across the page, with the letters "D", "R", and "A" partially overlapping the logo.

**Central  
Bedfordshire**

**Approved by Executive:**

Version 2 301013

## **Discretionary Housing Payment Policy of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC)**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 On 2 July 2001 a new scheme was introduced which granted all Local Authorities new powers to make a discretionary award to top up the Housing Benefit statutory scheme. This is called Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP).
- 1.2 The legislation governing DHP's can be found in the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 (S1 001 / 1167).
- 1.3 The scheme provides further financial assistance for housing costs for those entitled to Housing Benefit or a rent housing element of Universal Credit, where payments under the statutory scheme are insufficient.
- 1.4 Broadly speaking housing costs means rent, rent deposits, rent in advance and other lump sums associated with housing need such as removal costs.
- 1.5 From April 2013 Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced with a Local Council Tax Support Scheme. Therefore help with Council Tax is no longer available through DHP as it will be included in the Local Council Tax Support Scheme.
- 1.6 From April 2013 there have been significant changes to Housing Benefit as part of welfare reform and this policy has been changed to account for this.

In particular changes have been made to the length of a DHP award from a fixed period to an indefinite period for disabled people in certain circumstances (see criteria at 8.4 a), b), and c), who are significantly affected by the welfare reform changes.

### **2. Budget**

- 2.1 Every year Councils receive a cash fund from the Government, which can only be used for DHP awards. The Council is permitted to spend up to two and half times this amount.
- 2.2 From April 2013 the Government increased funding to help Councils manage the impact of the Housing Benefit reforms and the increased demand for DHP.

### **3. Purpose of policy**

- 3.1 The purpose of the policy is to set out how Central Bedfordshire Council will operate the scheme and to indicate some of the

factors that will be considered when deciding if a DHP can be made.

- 3.2 It explains how we prioritise applications at a time of increased demand in a manner that is affordable for the Council and which allows us to assist residents considered to be in most need.
- 3.3 Each case will be treated strictly on its merits.
- 3.4 All claimants will be treated equally and fairly.
- 3.5 The Council is committed to working with the local voluntary sector, social landlords and other interested parties to maximise entitlement to all available state benefits and this will be reflected in the administration of the DHP scheme. Where the evidence provided in support of a DHP indicates that the customer is not claiming another state benefit they may be entitled to, the Council will advise them to make such a claim and provide details of other agencies who may be able to help with such a claim.

#### 4. **Objectives for award**

- 4.1
  - Alleviate poverty;
  - Encourage Central Bedfordshire residents to obtain and sustain employment;
  - Prevent homelessness and promote tenancy sustainment;
  - Safeguard Central Bedfordshire residents in their homes;
  - Help those who are trying to help themselves;
  - Keep families together;
  - Support domestic violence victims who are trying to move to a place of safety;
  - Promote good educational outcomes for children and young people;
  - Support the vulnerable or the elderly in Central Bedfordshire;
  - Support vulnerable young people in the transition to adult life;
  - Help families who are part of the Supporting Families Programme;
  - Help customers through personal crises and difficult events;
  - Alleviate short term crisis;
  - Support disabled people remain in their home;
  - Support the work of foster carers;
  - In accordance with Government expectations and the increased funding from April 2013, help manage the impact of Housing Benefit reform – reductions in Local Housing Allowance, under-occupancy in social housing and the Benefit Cap.

- 4.2 The Council considers that generally the DHP scheme should be seen as a short term emergency fund.
- 4.3 The council considers that disabled people who are awarded DHP because they meet the criteria stated in either 8.4 a), b) or c) may be awarded DHP for an indefinite period. By disabled we mean under the Equality Act 2010 – if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a “substantial” and “long-term” negative affect on your ability to do normal daily activities.
5. **Features of scheme**
- 5.1 DHP payments are discretionary.
- 5.2 Claimants do not have a statutory right to payment.
- 5.3 Payments are made from a cash-limited fund.
- 5.4 The scheme is administered by the Customer Accounts Department.
- 5.5 DHPs are not a payment of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.
- 5.6 Housing Benefit or a rent housing element of Universal Credit must be in payment in the benefit week that a DHP is awarded for.
6. **What DHPs can be paid for**
- 6.1 A shortfall between the contractual rent and the Housing Benefit or a rent housing element of Universal Credit, apart from rent or charges excluded under the scheme.
- This may be due to:
- The rent is more than the Local Housing Allowance, Local Reference Rent, Shared Room Rate or maximum housing element of Universal Credit;
  - Income tapers;
  - Non-dependant deductions;
  - Reductions in Housing Benefit entitlement following changes to Local Housing Allowance rates from April 2011;
  - Reductions in Housing Benefit entitlement following changes from April 2013 in social housing, where the home has too many bedrooms, or there is a Benefit Cap.
- 6.2 Rent deposits, rent in advance, unavoidable over-lap of rent on two homes and lump sum costs associated with a housing need, such as removal costs, providing you receive Housing Benefit from Central Bedfordshire Council for your present home, or a



rent housing element of Universal Credit at a property within Central Bedfordshire: The rent deposit etc does not need to be in respect of a property within Central Bedfordshire Council, however there should be a valid reason for moving and the new tenancy affordable. We will normally make rent deposits and rent in advance payments to the new landlord.

**7. What DHPs cannot cover**

- 7.1 Ineligible service charges.
- 7.2 Increases in rent due to outstanding rent arrears.
- 7.3 Reductions in Housing Benefit or Universal Credit due to sanctions or overpayments.
- 7.4 Claims where Housing Benefit or Universal Credit has been suspended.

**8. Awarding a DHP**

- 8.1 The Customer Accounts Department (Revenues & Benefits) will decide whether or not to award a DHP and how much any award might be.
- 8.2 When making this decision the Customer Accounts Department will take into account:
  - The shortfall between Housing Benefit or maximum housing element of Universal Credit and the contractual rent;
  - Any steps taken by the customer to reduce a rental liability or move to a smaller home;
  - The financial and medical circumstances (including ill health) of the customer, their partner and any other members of their household including dependants and any other occupants of the customer's home;
  - If the customer, their partner and any other members of their household, including dependants and any other occupants of the customer's home, is disabled. (By disabled we mean under the Equality Act 2010 – if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a “substantial” and “long-term” negative affect on your ability to do normal daily activities.)
  - Any income disregarded in the Housing Benefit or Universal Credit calculation, which is not committed for the provision of care etc. (Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Armed Forces Independent Payment, Attendance Allowance and Mobility Allowances are for the provision of care or extra costs for the disability and therefore will be ignored as income);
  - Any savings or capital that might be held by the customer

- or their family;
- Unavoidable high costs such as fares to work or for therapeutic costs;
- The level of indebtedness of the customer and their family (loans and finance agreements, credit and store card repayments, bank charges, financial commitments etc);
- The nature of the customer and their family's circumstances, bearing in mind there is no need to show that the circumstances are exceptional before awarding a DHP;
- The possible impact on the Council of not making such an award, e.g. the pressure on priority homeless accommodation;
- Where there are special circumstances which prevent the customer moving to cheaper or smaller accommodation;
- The amount available in the DHP budget at the time of the application.

This list is not exhaustive and any other relevant factors or special circumstances will be taken into account.

8.3 To help us prioritise who we can make payments to, we have two Priority Groups. Those in Priority Group 1 will have priority over those in Priority Group 2.

8.4 Claimants are in Priority Group 1 where:

- They or a member of their household is disabled, they have more bedrooms than the Housing Benefit/ Universal Credit rules allow and
  - a) Their home has been adapted for their disablement needs or
  - b) Due to the nature of their disability they cannot share a bedroom with their partner or
  - c) There is an issue related to their disability which makes it difficult to move to a smaller or cheaper property;

(By disabled we mean under the Equality Act 2010 – if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a “substantial” and “long-term” negative affect on your ability to do normal daily activities.)

- They or their partner is a foster carer, they have more bedrooms than the Housing Benefit rules allow and they need a bedroom for each foster child. (This includes the need for bedrooms for up to 52 weeks in-between placements and up to 52 weeks for newly approved foster carers awaiting their first placements);

- They are fleeing domestic violence.

8.5 All other claimants are in Priority 2. Those we want to assist are:

- Families with children at a critical point in their education;
- Young people leaving local authority care;
- Staying Put Carers with children in care and care leavers respectively;
- Families with kinship care arrangements;
- Families with a child in temporary care who is expected to return home;
- Families with a social service intervention or are part of a Supporting Families Programme;
- Where some one in the household is expecting a baby/to adopt a child and this future change will increase the level of bedrooms Housing Benefit or Universal Credit allows;
- Ex-homeless people being supported to settle in the community;
- People threatened with homelessness;
- People with health or medical problems, particularly where they need to access medical services or support not available elsewhere;
- People with medical conditions who receive informal care which would not be available in a new area;
- Single people under 35 who cannot live in shared accommodation due to an illness or other issue such as HIV;
- Elderly and frail people who have lived in their home for a long time and would find it difficult to establish support networks in a new area;
- People who live near their jobs because they work unsocial hours/split shifts/inadequate public transport;
- People who as a consequence of a move have additional travel to work costs;
- People who need to move to cheaper/smaller accommodation and need help with a rent deposit/ rent in advance for their new home or lump sum costs associated with the move i.e. removals;
- People who are affected by reductions in Housing Benefit entitlement following changes to Local Housing Allowance rates from April 2011 and need additional time to find cheaper accommodation;
- People who are affected by reductions in Housing Benefit following the April 2013 under-occupancy rules in social housing properties and are actively working with their housing provider to find a smaller home or need additional time to adjust to the change;
- People affected by the Benefit Cap that cannot immediately move into work because of complex

- challenges such as child protection etc;
- People, who are not in the aforementioned, however have special circumstances that are such that warrants DHP.

- 8.6 The Customer Accounts Department will decide how much to award based on all of the circumstances. This may be an amount equal to or below the difference between the contractual rent and the payment of Housing Benefit or rent element of Universal Credit.
- 8.7 An award of a DHP does not guarantee that a further award will be made at a later date even if the customer's circumstances have not changed.

9. **Period of award**

- 9.1 In all cases, the Customer Accounts Department will decide the length of time for which a DHP will be awarded on the basis of the evidence supplied, the facts known and the level of funds available.
- 9.2 The start date of an award will normally be the Monday after the request for a DHP is received by the Customer Accounts Department; or the date on which entitlement to Housing Benefit or Universal Credit commenced (providing the application for DHP is received within one calendar month of the claim for Housing Benefit or Universal Credit being decided) whichever is the earlier, or the most appropriate.
- 9.3 The DHP will normally be paid for a minimum of one week.
- 9.4 The length of award may vary i.e. 4, 13, 26 or 52 weeks. The maximum length of award will usually not exceed 52 weeks; however this does not prevent a further application and award being made.
- 9.5 Disabled people awarded DHP because they meet the criteria stated in 8.4 a), b) or c) may be awarded DHP for an indefinite period. (By disabled we mean under the Equality Act 2010 – if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a “substantial” and “long-term” negative affect on your ability to do normal daily activities.)
- 9.6 Any reasonable request for backdating an award of a DHP will be considered but such consideration will usually be limited to the current financial year. A DHP cannot be awarded for any period outside an existing Housing Benefit or Universal Credit benefit period granted under the statutory schemes.

10. **Changes of circumstances**

- 10.1 The Customer Accounts Department may revise an award of a DHP where the customer's circumstances have materially changed.
- 10.2 A claimant is required to notify the Customer Accounts Department in writing of any changes of circumstances relevant to the continuation of DHP.

11. **Claiming a DHP**

- 11.1 A claim for a DHP must be made in writing. On request or in appropriate circumstances the Customer Accounts or Customer Services Team will issue a DHP application form.
- 11.2 A claim from some one acting on behalf of the claimant, such as an appointee, will be accepted where we consider it reasonable to do so.
- 11.3 The Customer Accounts Department may request any reasonable evidence in support of an application for DHP.
- 11.4 If evidence is not provided or is unavailable, the Customer Accounts Department will still consider the application and will in any event take into account any other available evidence including that held on the Benefit records.
- 11.5 The Customer Accounts Department reserves the right to verify any information or evidence provided in appropriate circumstances.

12. **Decision making**

- 12.1 Decisions will be made by a Customer Accounts Team Leader or a Senior Customer Accounts Officer.
- 12.2 In the case of rent deposits or rent in advance payments the decision will be made in conjunction with a Housing Options Officer to ensure all options, services and advice Central Bedfordshire Council can provide are explored.

13. **Method of Payment**

- 13.1 The Customer Accounts Department will decide the most appropriate person to pay based upon the circumstances of each case.
- 13.2 This may include:
- The claimant

- Their partner
- An appointee
- The landlord (or agent of the landlord)
- Any third party to whom it might be most appropriate to make payment

13.3 The Customer Accounts Department will pay an award of DHP by the most appropriate means in each case.

13.4 This could include payment:

- To a bank account
- Crediting the claimant's rent account

13.5 Payment frequency will be in line with how Housing Benefit or Universal Credit is paid.

#### 14. **Notifying decisions on DHP**

14.1 The Customer Accounts Department will inform the claimant in writing of the outcome of their application within 14 days of receipt or as soon as possible after that.

14.2 The notification will set out the reasons for the decision and explain how to disagree.

14.3 The notification will advise, where appropriate:

- The amount of DHP;
- When it will be paid;
- The period of award;
- How and to whom it will be paid;
- The requirement to report a change in circumstances;
- Information on who to contact for further help or advice.

#### 15. **Disputes procedure**

15.1 DHPs are not payments of benefit and are therefore not subject to the statutory appeals process.

15.2 A claimant can disagree with the DHP decision. This may be made in writing or electronically.

15.3 Disagreements will be dealt with by the Quality and Appeals Manager, who will give full written reasons of their decision and what they can do if they are still dissatisfied.

15.4 Where a claimant is still dissatisfied they can request a further review of the decision. This may be made in writing or electronically. The decision will be reviewed by the Customer Accounts Manager. Their decision will be final and binding and

may only be challenged via the judicial review process or by complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman (in case of alleged maladministration).

16. **Monitoring**

16.1 The Customer Accounts Quality and Appeals Manager will sample check 10% of decisions to ensure they are fair and consistent.

17. **Overpayments**

17.1 The Customer Accounts Department will seek to recover any overpaid DHP.

17.2 An invoice will be sent to the claimant or person to whom the award was paid.

17.3 Overpayments of DHP cannot be recovered from ongoing entitlement of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

17.4 A letter will be sent to the person due to repay the invoice detailing the overpayment, why it occurred and what to do if they disagree.

18. **Fraud**

18.1 The Council is committed to the fight against fraud in all its forms. A claimant who tries to fraudulently claim a DHP by falsely declaring their circumstances, providing a false statement or evidence in support of their application, may have committed an offence under the Theft Act 1968 or the Fraud Act.

18.2 Where the Council suspects that such a fraud may have occurred, the matter will be investigated as appropriate and this may lead to criminal proceedings being instigated.

19. **Publicity**

19.1 The Council will publicise the scheme and will work with all interested parties to achieve this. A copy of this policy statement will be made available for inspection and will be posted on the Council's web site. Information about the amount spent will not normally be made available except at the end of the financial year.

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**Appendix B** Discretionary Housing Payment Activity 2013/14

	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Totals
No. Discretionary housing payments (DHP) claims made	78	68	60	85	56	68	62	49	50	58	71	140	845
No. DHP claims awarded in month	45	60	53	47	78	52	54	57	43	61	41	102	693
No. DHP claims refused in month	10	15	22	16	21	18	17	18	16	26	14	26	219
DHP spent/committed (cumulative)	£25,407	£44,012	£56,227	£83,715	£134,295	£155,809	£182,611	£209,945	£223,067	£245,399	£255,753	£332,554	
DHP future in year commitment	£335,228.40	£295,358.00	£244,629.60	£238,577.40	£210,542	£194,456	£156,076	£125,140	£92,917	£66,614	£48,421	£0	
% of Government contribution spent/committed	9.04%	15.67%	20.01%	29.80%	47.80%	55.46%	65.00%	74.73%	79.40%	87.35%	76.31%	99.23%	
DHP applications backlog	212	203	188	210	167	165	158	132	123	97	99	127	
<b>Claimant group of DHP claim awarded:</b>													
Council Tenants	3	22	18	14	27	19	14	17	10	18	12	20	194
Housing association tenants	34	29	30	28	40	27	33	33	26	33	24	57	394
Private tenants	8	9	5	5	11	6	7	7	7	10	5	25	105
<b>Reason for DHP claim</b>													
Benefit Cap	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	4
Combination	2	3	6	7	6	5	15	14	8	12	10	25	113
Deposit	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Income	2	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	8
LHA	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4
Removal Costs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Short award	4	5	5	3	6	7	7	6	7	10	3	21	84
Under 35	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Under Occupation	34	48	42	34	59	40	31	36	28	39	26	51	468

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## Appendix C

- **Discretionary Housing Payments final results**
- **Based on 67 responses**
- **The consultation ran from 22nd January 2014 to 16th April 2014.**
- **The Council is updating its policy on Discretionary Housing Payment in order to reflect new guidance from central Government and the increased demand. The draft policy outlines how we will prioritise the money available for Discretionary Housing Payment.**

Feed back from Child Poverty Task Group Meeting 10 December 2013

One member of group felt the policy went against the Child Poverty Strategy; given these groups were mainly in Priority Group 2 and that in essence we were fettering our decision making process. Myself and Claire Harding explained that any claim from some one in Group 2 would have a decision based on the merit of that claim. Priority would only be relevant at any point where there were budget pressures and a choice had to be made which claims to pay where all had merit.

Feed back from Equality Forum Meeting 9 January 2014

Feed back was positive. They felt that the wording at section 1.6 needed amending to make our intentions clearer about which disabled people were in the priority group 1. Likewise again at section 8.5 we needed to add to "where some one is expecting a baby etc" the word "child" to cover circumstances where a child was being adopted.

The draft policy document was amended accordingly before the consultation was launched.

Feedback from Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group 14 April 2014

Although they did not have sight of the proposed policy they wanted to make sure that it identifies and supported applicants with mental health disabilities in the same way as applicants with physical disabilities.

Feed back from Aragon Housing Association 2 May 2014

Aragon either agreed or strongly agreed with the majority of the proposed policy. In terms of 6.a and 6.s (I specifically noted agreement and they understood the reasons why they had been identified).

However in terms of Priority Group 1 they felt that some others should be in this group – namely 6.b - Young People leaving Local Authority Care – and 6.c – Staying Put Carers with children in care and care leavers. Basically this was on basis that Council had a legal duty to these groups.

In terms of other groups not listed they referred to those who cannot move because they are on a sex offender's register and ex-prisoners where a move would result in difficulties with support provision. They agreed that these should not be identified as a specific group and should therefore come under the group of other special circumstances.

Feed back from Housing 6 May 2014

On the whole strongly agreed with the proposed policy, particularly regarding the priority groups and long term awards for disabled in certain circumstances.

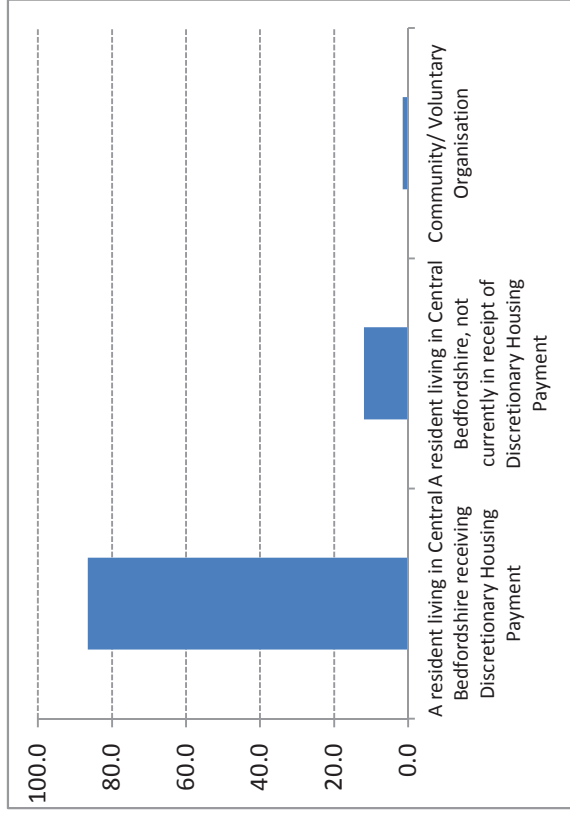
In terms of questions 6.a – agreed and 6.s neither agree or disagree.

The residue again either agreed or neither agreed or disagreed.

I asked if they had other groups they specifically wanted adding and they said no – understood any circumstances not covered specifically were covered by question 7.

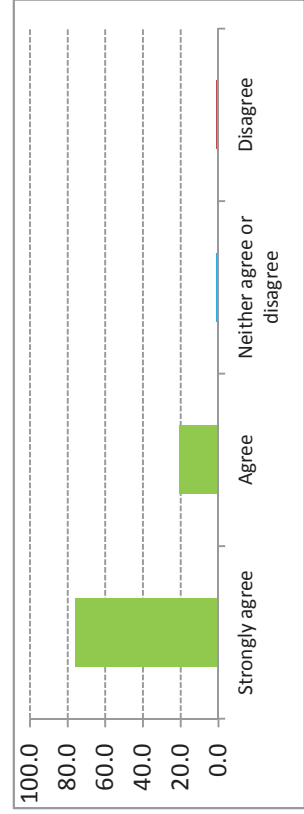
**Q1 - Are you responding as:**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			
A resident living in Central Bedfordshire receiving Discretionary Housing Payment	58	86.6	86.6
A resident living in Central Bedfordshire, not currently in receipt of Discretionary Housing Payment	8	11.9	11.9
Community/ Voluntary Organisation	1	1.5	1.5
Total	67	100.0	100.0



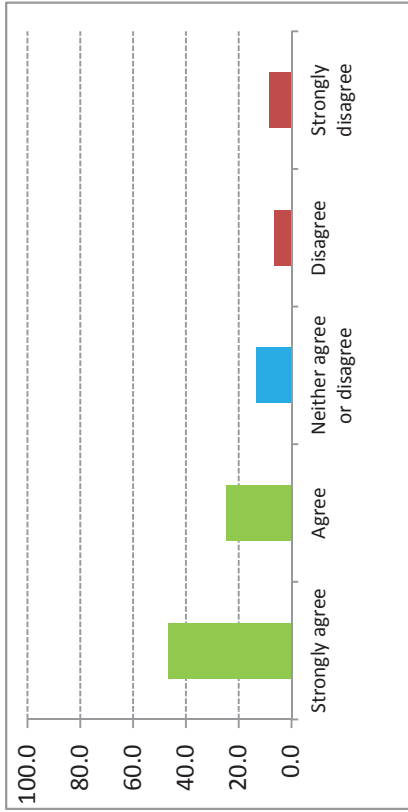
**Q2.a - Disabled people who meet specific criteria**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			
Strongly agree	51	76.1	76.1
Agree	14	20.9	20.9
Neither agree or disagree	1	1.5	1.5
Disagree	1	1.5	1.5
Total	67	100.0	100.0



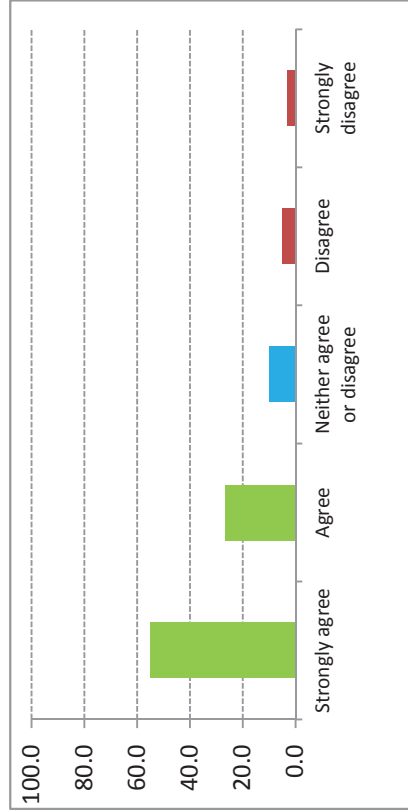
**Q2.b - People who provide foster care**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Strongly agree	28	41.8	46.7
Agree	15	22.4	25.0
Neither agree or disagree	8	11.9	13.3
Disagree	4	6.0	6.7
Strongly disagree	5	7.5	8.3
Total	60	89.6	100.0
Missing	7	10.4	
Total	67	100.0	



**Q2.c - People fleeing domestic violence**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Strongly agree	33	49.3	55.0
Agree	16	23.9	26.7
Neither agree or disagree	6	9.0	10.0
Disagree	3	4.5	5.0
Strongly disagree	2	3.0	3.3
Total	60	89.6	100.0
Missing	7	10.4	
Total	67	100.0	

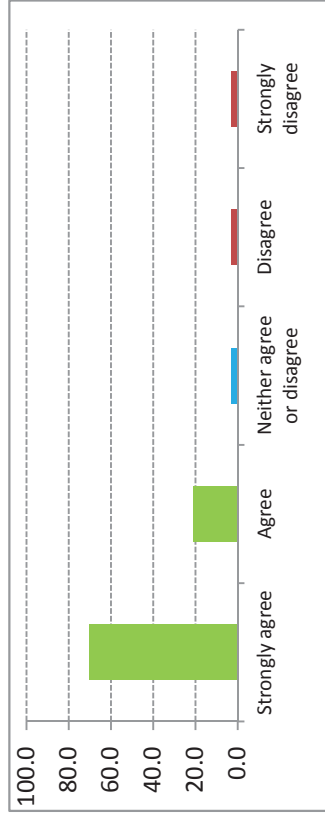


**Q3 - If you have any specific comments about this proposal, please provide them here**

	Frequency
Valid	6
Those with disabilities should receive DHP Priority given to those whose circumstances are not through choice	3

**Q4 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to provide indefinite Discretionary Housing Payment to disabled people who meet specific criteria**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	47	70.1	91.04
Strongly agree	14	20.9	
Agree	2	3.0	
Neither agree or disagree	2	3.0	
Disagree	2	3.0	
Strongly disagree	2	3.0	
Total	67	100.0	100.0

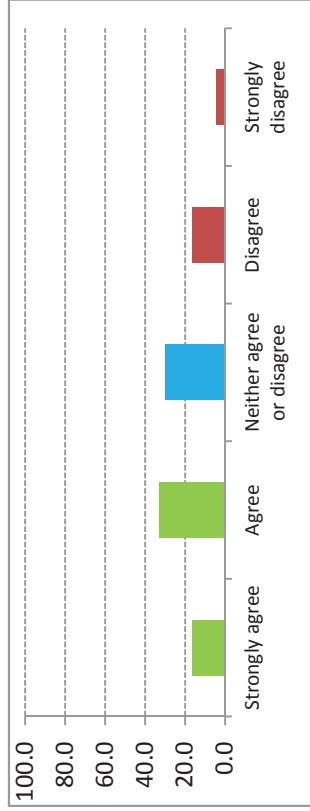


**Q5 - If you have any specific comments about this proposal please provide them here**

	Frequency
Valid	10
Support the disabled consider expense of moving disabled needing adaptations Payments to the needy	5
	2

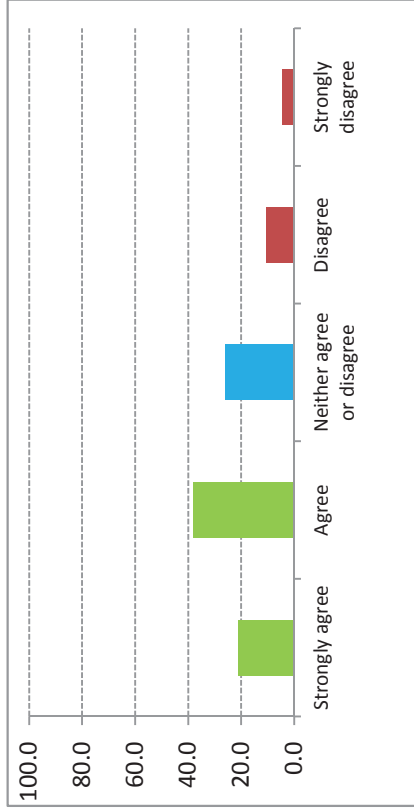
**Q6.a - Families with children at a critical point in their education**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				49.25
Strongly agree	11	16.4	16.4	
Agree	22	32.8	32.8	
Neither agree or Disagree	20	29.9	29.9	
Strongly disagree	11	16.4	16.4	
Total	3	4.5	4.5	
	67	100.0	100.0	



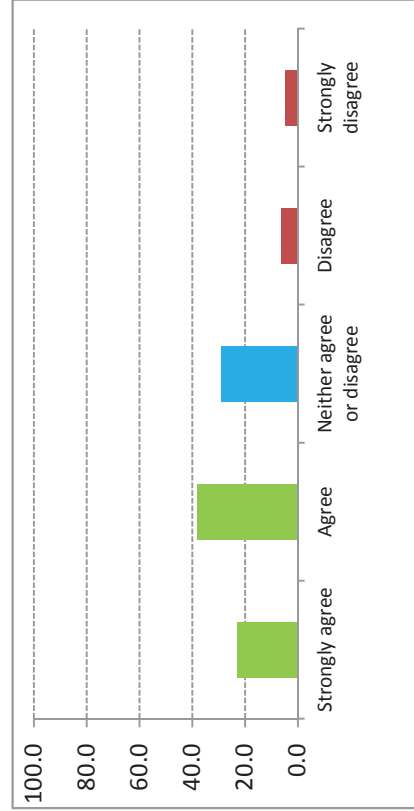
**Q6.b - Young people leaving Local Authority care**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				
Strongly agree	14	20.9	21.2	59.09
Agree	25	37.3	37.9	
Neither agree or disagree	17	25.4	25.8	
Disagree	7	10.4	10.6	
Strongly disagree	3	4.5	4.5	
Total	66	98.5	100.0	
Missing	1	1.5		
Total	67	100.0		



**Q6.c - Staying Put Carers with children in care and care leavers**

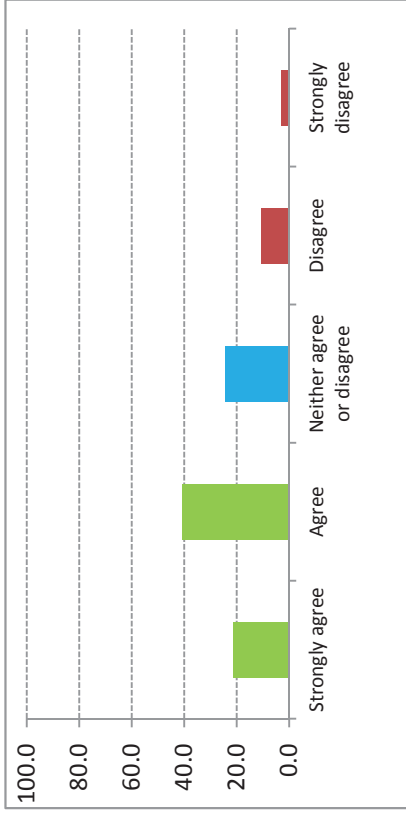
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				
Strongly agree	15	22.4	22.7	60.61
Agree	25	37.3	37.9	
Neither agree or disagree	19	28.4	28.8	
Disagree	4	6.0	6.1	
Strongly disagree	3	4.5	4.5	
Total	66	98.5	100.0	
Missing	1	1.5		
Total	67	100.0		





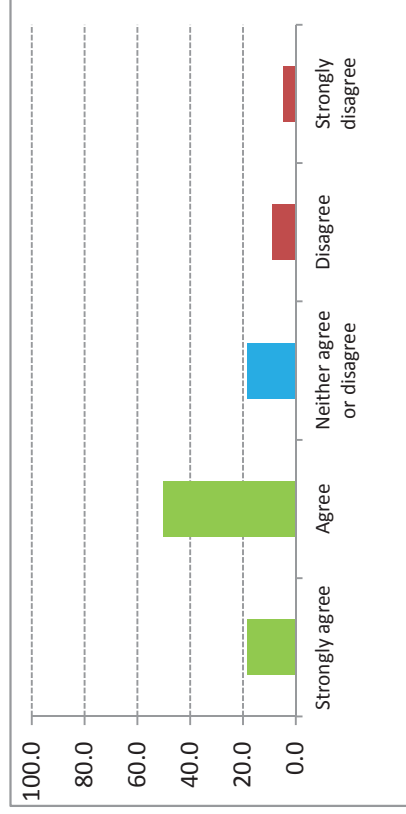
**Q6.d - Families with kinship care arrangements**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				
Strongly agree	14	20.9	21.2	62.12
Agree	27	40.3	40.9	
Neither agree or disagree	16	23.9	24.2	
Disagree	7	10.4	10.6	
Strongly disagree	2	3.0	3.0	
Total	66	98.5	100.0	
Missing	1	1.5		
Total	67	100.0		



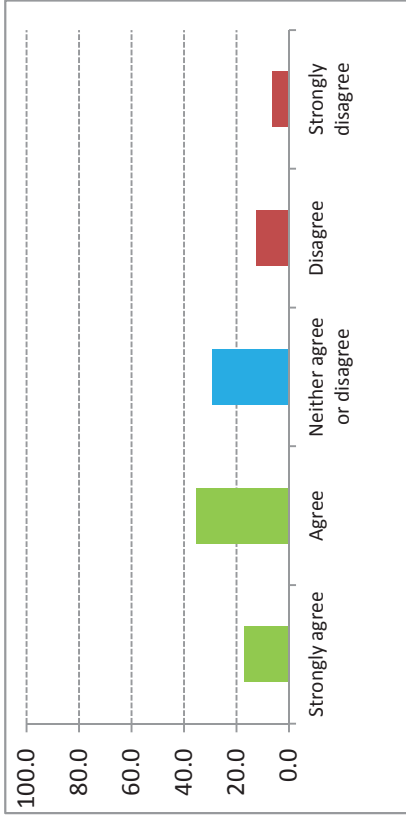
**Q6.e - Families with a child in temporary care who is expected to return home**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				
Strongly agree	12	17.9	18.2	68.18
Agree	33	49.3	50.0	
Neither agree or disagree	12	17.9	18.2	
Disagree	6	9.0	9.1	
Strongly disagree	3	4.5	4.5	
Total	66	98.5	100.0	
Missing	1	1.5		
Total	67	100.0		



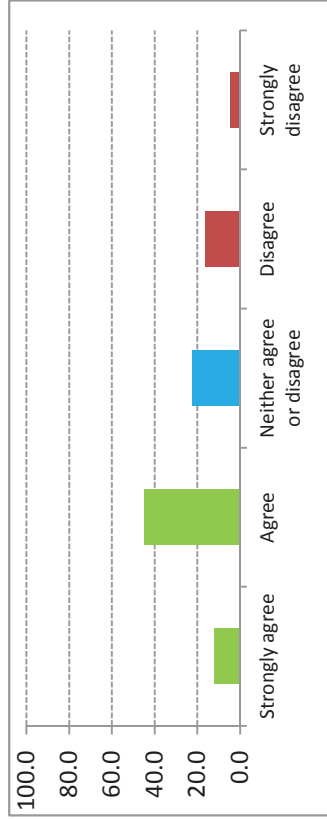
**Q6.f - Families working with Social Services or our Troubled Family Programme**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				
Strongly agree	11	16.4	16.9	52.31
Agree	23	34.3	35.4	
Neither agree or disagree	19	28.4	29.2	
Disagree	8	11.9	12.3	
Strongly disagree	4	6.0	6.2	
Total	65	97.0	100.0	
Missing	2	3.0		
Total	67	100.0		



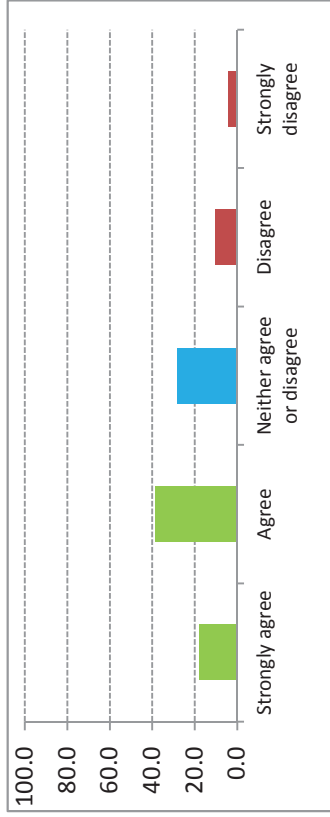
**Q6.g - Someone in the household is expecting a baby and this will increase the number of bedrooms Housing Benefit or Universal Credit allows**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				
Strongly agree	8	11.9	11.9	56.72
Agree	30	44.8	44.8	
Neither agree or disagree	15	22.4	22.4	
Disagree	11	16.4	16.4	
Strongly disagree	3	4.5	4.5	
Total	67	100.0	100.0	



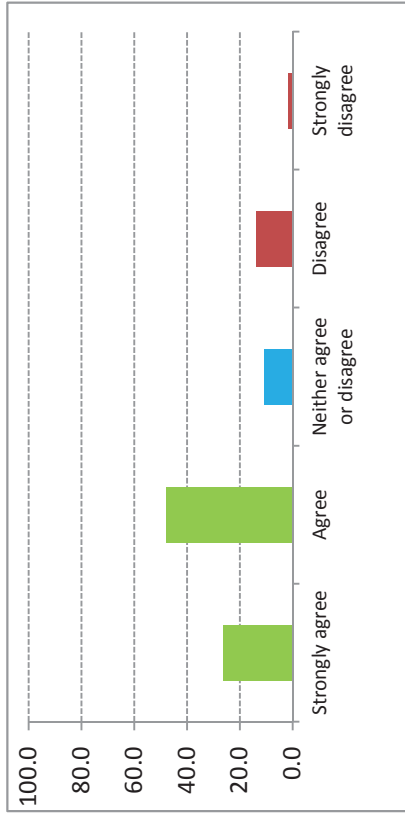
**Q6.h - Ex-homeless people being supported to settle in the community**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				56.72
Strongly agree	12	17.9	17.9	
Agree	26	38.8	38.8	
Neither agree or disagree	19	28.4	28.4	
Disagree	7	10.4	10.4	
Strongly disagree	3	4.5	4.5	
Total	67	100.0	100.0	



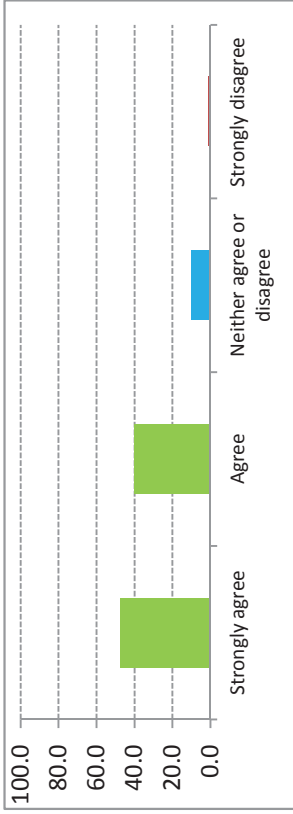
**Q6.i - People threatened with homelessness**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				73.85
Strongly agree	17	25.4	26.2	
Agree	31	46.3	47.7	
Neither agree or disagree	7	10.4	10.8	
Disagree	9	13.4	13.8	
Strongly disagree	1	1.5	1.5	
Total	65	97.0	100.0	
Missing	2	3.0		
Total	67	100.0		



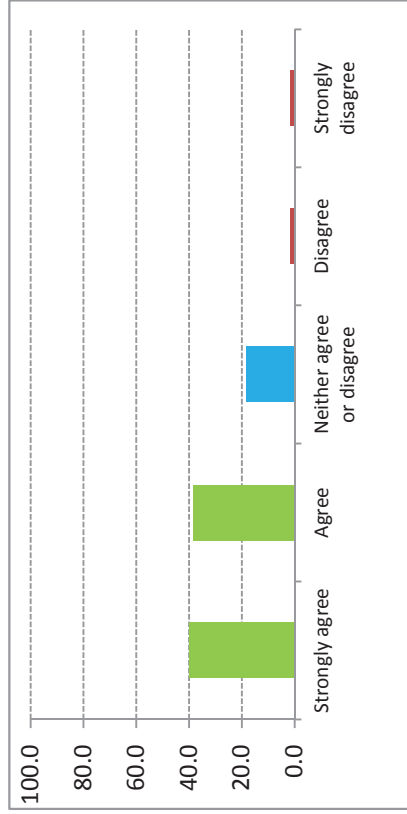
**Q6.j - People with health or medical problems, who need to access medical services or support not available elsewhere**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				
Strongly agree	32	47.8	47.8	88.06
Agree	27	40.3	40.3	
Neither agree or disagree	7	10.4	10.4	
Strongly disagree	1	1.5	1.5	
Total	67	100.0	100.0	



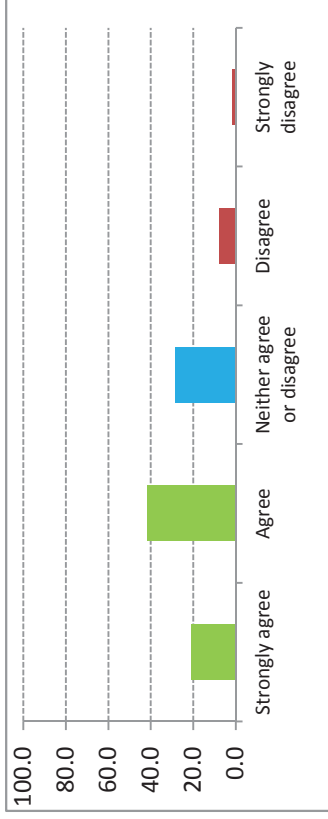
**Q6.k - People with medical conditions who receive informal care not be available in a new area**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				
Strongly agree	26	38.8	40.0	78.46
Agree	25	37.3	38.5	
Neither agree or disagree	12	17.9	18.5	
Disagree	1	1.5	1.5	
Strongly disagree	1	1.5	1.5	
Missing Total	65	97.0	100.0	
	2	3.0		
	67	100.0		



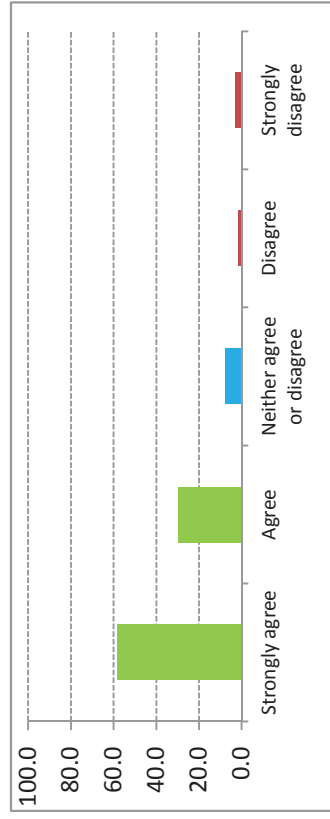
**Q6.l - Single people under 35 who cannot live in shared accommodation due to an illness or other issue**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Strongly agree	14	20.9	20.9	62.69
Agree	28	41.8	41.8	
Neither agree or disagree	19	28.4	28.4	
Disagree	5	7.5	7.5	
Strongly disagree	1	1.5	1.5	
Total	67	100.0	100.0	



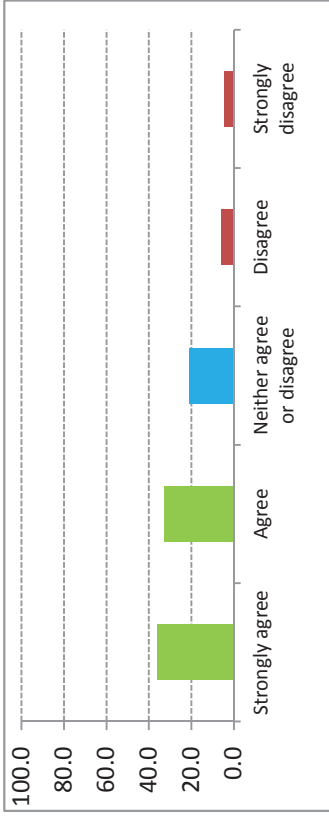
**Q6.m - Elderly and frail people who have lived in their home for a long time and would find it difficult to establish support networks in a new area**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Strongly agree	39	58.2	58.2	88.06
Agree	20	29.9	29.9	
Neither agree or disagree	5	7.5	7.5	
Disagree	1	1.5	1.5	
Strongly disagree	2	3.0	3.0	
Total	67	100.0	100.0	



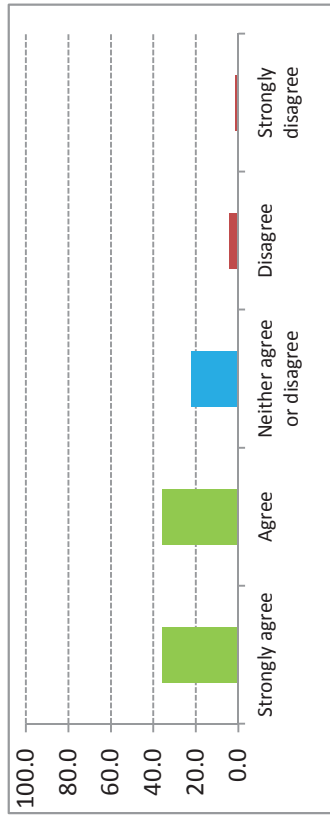
**Q6.n - People affected by reductions in Housing Benefit following changes to Local Housing Allowance rates and need more time to find cheaper accommodation**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				68.66
Strongly agree	24	35.8	35.8	
Agree	22	32.8	32.8	
Neither agree or disagree	14	20.9	20.9	
Disagree	4	6.0	6.0	
Strongly disagree	3	4.5	4.5	
Total	67	100.0	100.0	



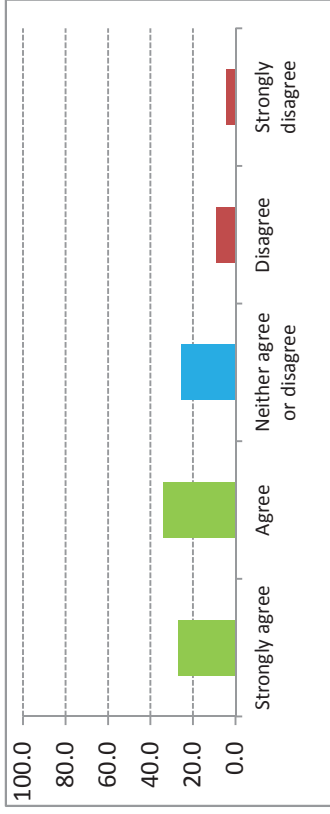
**Q6.o - People affected by reductions in Housing Benefit under-occupancy rules in social housing properties and are actively working with their housing provider to find a smaller home or need more time to adjust to the change**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				71.64
Strongly agree	24	35.8	35.8	
Agree	24	35.8	35.8	
Neither agree or disagree	15	22.4	22.4	
Disagree	3	4.5	4.5	
Strongly disagree	1	1.5	1.5	
Total	67	100.0	100.0	



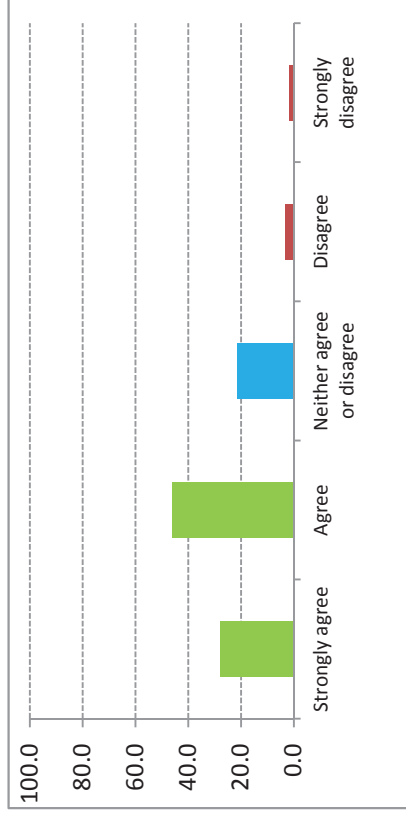
**Q6.p - People affected by the Benefit Cap that cannot immediately move into work because of complex challenges**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				61.19
Strongly agree	18	26.9	26.9	
Agree	23	34.3	34.3	
Neither agree or disagree	17	25.4	25.4	
Disagree	6	9.0	9.0	
Strongly disagree	3	4.5	4.5	
Total	67	100.0	100.0	



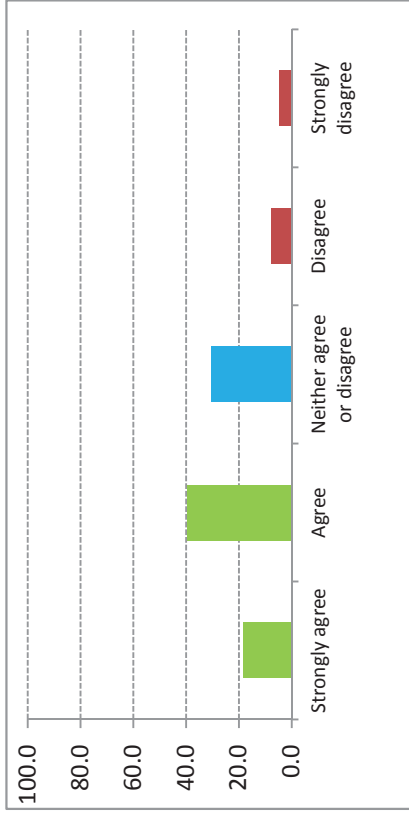
**Q6.q - People who need to move to cheaper/ smaller accommodation and need help with rent deposit/rent in advance or costs associated with move**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				73.85
Strongly agree	18	26.9	27.7	
Agree	30	44.8	46.2	
Neither agree or disagree	14	20.9	21.5	
Disagree	2	3.0	3.1	
Strongly disagree	1	1.5	1.5	
Total	65	97.0	100.0	
Missing	2	3.0		
Total	67	100.0		



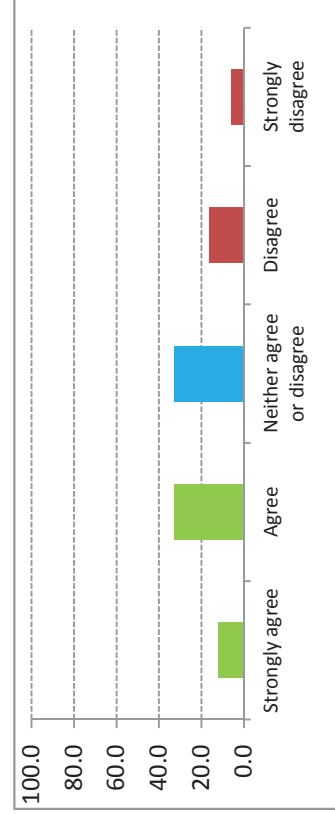
**Q6.r - People who live near their jobs because they work unsocial hours/ split shifts/ inadequate public transport**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				
Strongly agree	12	17.9	18.2	57.58
Agree	26	38.8	39.4	
Neither agree or disagree	20	29.9	30.3	
Disagree	5	7.5	7.6	
Strongly disagree	3	4.5	4.5	
Total	66	98.5	100.0	
Missing	1	1.5		
Total	67	100.0		



**Q6.s - People who as a consequence of a move have additional travel to work costs**

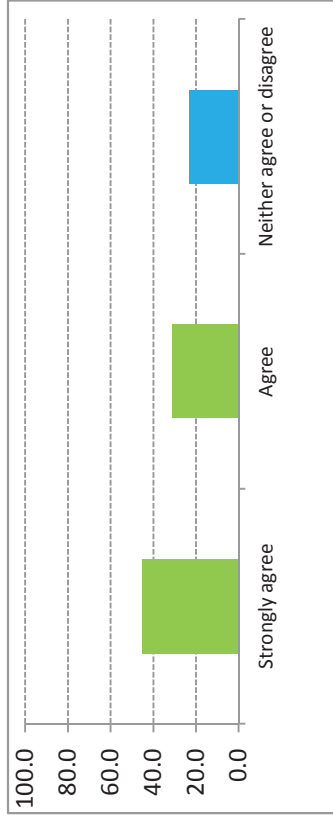
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				
Strongly agree	8	11.9	11.9	44.78
Agree	22	32.8	32.8	
Neither agree or disagree	22	32.8	32.8	
Disagree	11	16.4	16.4	
Strongly disagree	4	6.0	6.0	
Total	67	100.0	100.0	





**Q7 - To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Council should also consider any other special circumstances?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Strongly Agree/Agree Valid Percent
Valid				
Strongly agree	29	43.3	45.3	76.56
Agree	20	29.9	31.3	
Neither agree or disagree	15	22.4	23.4	
Total	64	95.5	100.0	
Missing	3	4.5		
Total	67	100.0		

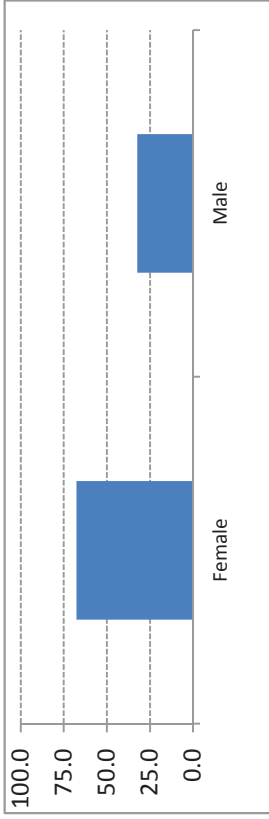


**Q8 - If you have any specific comments about these proposals please provide them here, including any other special circumstances that you think the council should consider providing Discretionary Housing Payment for**

	Frequency
Valid	
Considerations on the wider picture for residents	6
Assessments on an individual basis	3
ESA	2

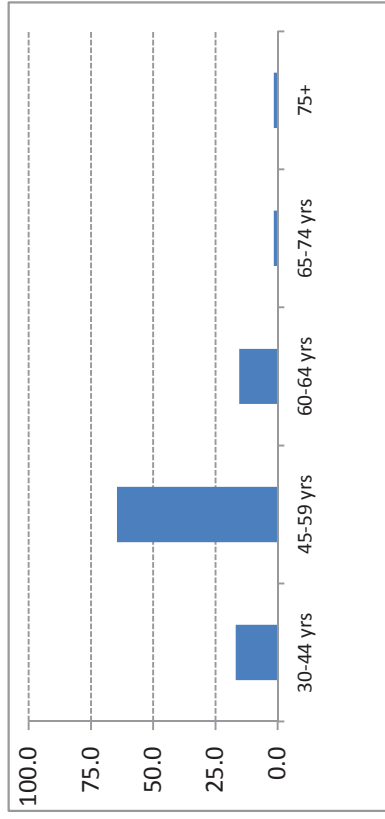
Q11 - Are you:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Female	44	65.7	67.7
Male	21	31.3	32.3
Total	65	97.0	100.0
Missing	2	3.0	
Total	67	100.0	



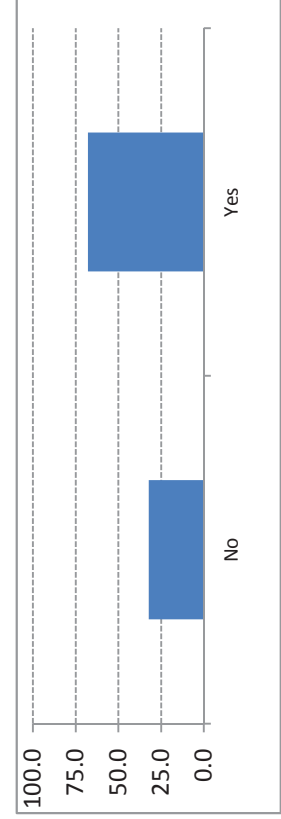
Q12 - What is your age?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid 30-44 yrs	11	16.4	16.9
45-59 yrs	42	62.7	64.6
60-64 yrs	10	14.9	15.4
65-74 yrs	1	1.5	1.5
75+	1	1.5	1.5
Total	65	97.0	100.0
Missing	2	3.0	
Total	67	100.0	



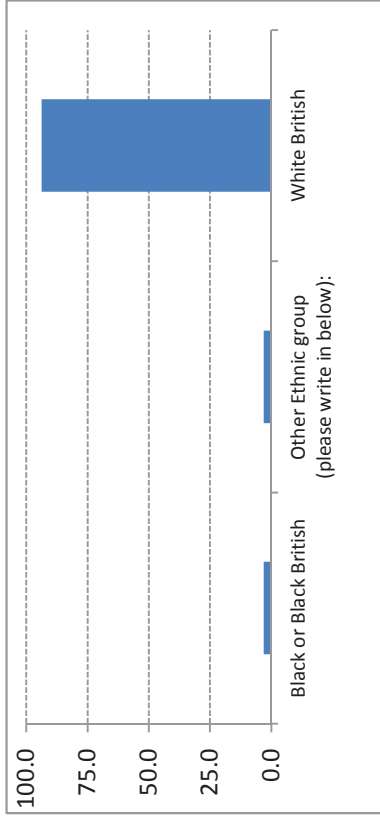
Q13 - Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid No	20	29.9	32.3
Yes	42	62.7	67.7
Total	62	92.5	100.0
Missing	5	7.5	
Total	67	100.0	



**Q14 - To which of these groups do you consider you belong?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			
Black or Black British	2	3.0	3.1
Other Ethnic group (please write in below):	2	3.0	3.1
White British	60	89.6	93.8
Total	64	95.5	100.0
Missing	3	4.5	
Total	67	100.0	



**Q14.a - Other**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			
Other white	1	1.5	50.0
WHITE AMERICAN	1	1.5	50.0
Total	2	3.0	100.0
Missing	65	97.0	
Total	67	100.0	

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## Appendix D

### Additional Information: Discretionary Housing Payments Policy 2014/15

The Discretionary Housing Payment scheme provides a small amount of funding to deal with anomalies and hardship in situations where normal Housing Benefit does not cover all the rent.

To qualify for some consideration for assistance under this scheme the customer must already qualify for some Housing Benefit.

Since its inception, the Council has used Discretionary Housing Payment funding primarily to make short term awards to ease transitions and to give claimants time to seek resolution of their difficulties. From April 2013 the government is providing substantial extra funding to ease the introduction of the household benefit cap but also to meet *continuing* and unavoidable needs resulting from the application of size criteria in the social rented sector rather than catering for these in the Housing Benefit scheme itself.

Many people have difficulty paying their rent. Among these are

- those whose benefit is restricted because their rent is considered too high;
- those whose benefit is restricted because their home is considered too large under the government's size criteria
- those whose benefit is reduced by deductions for non-dependants who may not contribute adequately to cover those deductions;
- those whose benefit is reduced by the taper for excess income;
- those who for all sorts of reasons have other calls on their income (additional expenses or outstanding debts) which they prioritise ahead of rent;
- those who have general difficulty managing the income they have, including those subject to the household benefit cap;
- those who are returning to work after a long period of unemployment who have difficulty in managing finances during the transition from benefit to a stable in-work income when the continuing level of net earnings is known and any Working Tax Credit entitlement is secured; and
- those who are in affordable housing but at risk of becoming homeless due to difficulty in meeting their full rent liability because of severe financial difficulties resulting from the effects of the current economic climate or their attempts to take up paid employment.

Awards of Discretionary Housing Payments should focus on enabling people to secure or retain and pay for appropriate and sustainable accommodation through temporary difficulties or in anomalous circumstances not addressed by the benefit system. This is in order to reduce the risk of homelessness and support the stability of families and communities.

Discretionary Housing Payments should not seek to undermine the purpose and nature of the Housing Benefit scheme, nor support irresponsible behaviour, nor should they assist in situations so common that a consistent approach to such payments would involve expenditure above the maximum permissible.

The Council therefore expects payments to be made in unusual or extreme circumstances where additional help with current rent will have a significant effect in alleviating hardship, reducing the risk of homelessness or alleviating difficulties that may be experienced in the transition from long term benefit dependence into work, for example:

- Circumstances unusual/exceptional among customers in that tenure;
- Costs that are beyond their control and do not arise through the actions or failures of others;
- Housing choices which are forced on or required by the customer because of urgency, care needs or significant health requirements;
- Extreme and temporary situations which make it difficult to move in the short term or where decisions had to be made in an emergency;
- Imminent loss of the home where meeting some or all of the current shortfall between the benefit and eligible rent will prevent the customer from becoming homeless. However in considering awards under this provision the Council will have regard to:
  - the reasons that the debts arose.
  - the involvement of other advisory services engaged in providing assistance to the customer to manage debt in order that any arrangement to accommodate agreements for re-payment of debt might be realistically obtained and sustained.
  - whether any proposed Discretionary Housing Payment award will have the desired effect of preventing the customer from becoming homeless.
  - the consequences of any potential increased demand on the fund in the event that the award was not made (such as having to move from affordable accommodation into highly priced private sector accommodation with reduced security of tenure).
  - temporary hardship and difficulties which may arise during the transition for those who are coming off long term benefits into work.

In addition, in the context of national welfare reforms that are reducing levels of Housing Benefit, the Council expects to make payments to mitigate or delay the effects of those changes in cases of particular difficulty to ease the transition. In particular, the Council expects to make payments to mitigate the most severe effects of the household benefit cap where other solutions are not practical in the short term.

The Council may also provide temporary assistance in the early months of a tenancy where a claimant has moved from homelessness provision and additional help is likely to increase the chances that the claimant will sustain a stable and secure home

## Awards

Awards are expected to be made to meet current needs rather than past debts. No significant degree of payment for past periods is anticipated as requests for payment should be made promptly within the benefit period of the main benefit to which they relate and within a reasonable time of knowing the outcome of a claim for the main benefit. However, retrospective payments may be appropriate to reduce rent arrears to avert eviction where there are grounds for confidence that this will enable the claimant to deal effectively with their remaining arrears in the longer term.

Awards are expected to last for a fixed period, of between four weeks and typically 26 weeks and exceptionally up to 52 weeks depending on the individual circumstances.

Awards may take into account the need to allow the claimant a short future period to adjust or to take into account milestones in the family's life like significant exams or the end of a period of convalescence. Given the limited scope of the scheme and the funding available, awards are expected to be at a modest level other than for very short periods in extreme circumstances. Awards to claimants with high rents will usually be below the maximum possible so that the claimant makes some contribution to the shortfall.

The Council recognises that a small proportion of awards will need to continue for longer periods, particularly where the current home has been significantly adapted to meet the needs of a family member with substantial and continuing disability.

Decisions on the level and duration of awards will also take account of what is affordable within the agreed budget, bearing in mind that the level of grant available is decided nationally by DWP rather than on the basis of any local assessment of need.

The Council expects to give higher priority to assisting people (and particularly families with children of school age given the importance of stability in their education) to retain an established home and to relieving temporary difficulties where the arrangement is likely to be sustainable longer term; and low priority to assisting people who take on housing costs which because of the nature, location or price of the property, are unaffordable and unsustainable from the start.

The Council recognises that some social sector tenants affected by the size criteria after April 2013 will live in properties that have been substantially adapted structurally to meet needs arising from severe and persisting disability or because of such disability will depend on the care and support of relatives and friends in the immediate vicinity. If it is unreasonable to expect the claimant to move in the short to medium term, awards of Discretionary Housing Payment, if appropriate, may be of much longer duration than usually expected.

In addition, where resources allow, the Council may also assist other social sector tenants affected by the size criteria if it would be beneficial for them to stay in the property because of the care and support they provide in, or other recognised contribution to, the immediate community.

Also, some social sector tenants will see a reduction in their Housing Benefit because of the size criteria because those criteria take no account of the accommodation needs of children they foster. The Council recognises that it may need to help with awards of Discretionary Housing Payment for a continuing period.

This could also be the case while a person approved to provide foster care is waiting for a child to be placed with them.

The Council recognises the difficulties faced by absent parents who regularly look after children normally living with the other parent or who hope to make such arrangements. The benefit system does not provide for this situation. It is a common situation. The Council will therefore only rarely be able to assist with discretionary payments, mainly where existing arrangements are threatened by difficulties that are likely to be short-lived.

The Council recognises that welfare reform changes greatly increase the number of claimants who face a reduction of Housing Benefit that will be of relatively short duration such that it is unreasonable to expect them to move. This will most commonly be

- Where a social sector tenant is affected by the size criteria but will shortly reach the age for state Pension Credit and so become exempt from the restriction
- Where at the start of a size restriction, an imminent birthday of a family member will increase the room requirement under the size criteria
- Where a single woman or couple expecting their first child live in two-bedroom accommodation suitable for their new family while still assessed on the one bedroom or shared accommodation rate. (This would apply where the family were already in social sector accommodation but newly affected by the size criteria or where private tenants move to larger accommodation relatively late in the pregnancy.)
- Where a single private tenant in one-bedroom accommodation is restricted to the shared room rate of Local Housing Allowance but will shortly be 35 and thus exempt from it.

The Council recognises that sharp increases in the level of non-dependant deductions are likely to cause difficulties for some claimants but reaffirms its view that it should normally only make discretionary payments where the non-dependant deduction is anomalous or unreasonable and not where the non-dependant is unwilling to pay or to cooperate in assessing a lower contribution.



In making decisions on discretionary payments, the Council expects also to be mindful of incentives to responsible behaviour, for example in the choice of a home or engagement in activities to address worklessness, debt or problematic behaviour.

Where a request for payments has been refused, it is not expected that repeated requests will be considered unless the customer can demonstrate that the situation has worsened significantly or a substantial period of time has elapsed.

Discretionary Housing Payments are normally expected to be credited to rent accounts or paid with a private tenant's rent allowance.

The Council recognises that there will be circumstances in which Discretionary Housing Payments may be made other than as set out above

### **Exclusions**

Regulations provide that the Council can not make an award of Discretionary Housing Payment if the customer is not in receipt of an award of Housing Benefit.

A Discretionary Housing Payment can not be made to accommodate the cost of any services which are not eligible for help under the Housing Benefit scheme such as ineligible service charges, water & sewerage, fuel and heating charges.

It is not normally expected that Discretionary Housing Payment payments will be made because of

- significant overcharging by a landlord;
- the ordinary impact of rent restriction either resulting from a Rent Officer decision or the use of Local Housing Allowance rates;
- the effect of the Rent Officer's local reference rents and Local Housing Allowance rates putting accommodation in parts of the city beyond the means of many customers;
- the preference for a size or type of accommodation or location which is not strictly necessary for pressing reasons;
- the failure of non-dependants to make up the deduction attributable to them when they have the means to do so;
- the inadequacy of benefits for disability to cover the costs of disability towards which they are paid;
- the unwillingness of the customer to use other available resources or to apply for other more appropriate forms of assistance; or
- a move from social sector accommodation to unaffordable private accommodation, other than for the most compelling of reasons
- a move to private rented accommodation where it should be clear to the claimant that the property is too large or unaffordable

The Council is aware of calls for discretionary funding to cover the cost of deposits and advance rent to assist a person to move to affordable accommodation.

Given the limited nature of the funding available and the risk of landlords levying such costs where they may presently waive them, the Council would not normally expect to help with items of this sort.

It is also possible to use Discretionary Housing Payments to help with removal costs and other expenses associated with moving. The limited funding available makes it unlikely that the Council can afford to help in this way given its priority of assisting people to remain in existing homes where appropriate but will keep this under review in the context of awards and expenditure, particularly for situations where it would release larger social sector accommodation.

### **Universal Credit**

When Universal Credit replaces Housing Benefit, the Council will continue to have powers to make Discretionary Housing Payments to help with housing costs and expects to receive government funding for this. Payments can only be made towards housing costs but it is not clear whether awards would be limited by reference to the amount of housing costs covered by Universal Credit.

The Council does not expect to use Discretionary Housing Payments as a general supplement to the level of Universal Credit paid but would make payments in line with its present policy where the Universal Credit housing element was restricted below a claimant's actual rent on the basis of Local Housing Allowance rates or size criteria or where Universal Credit including a housing element was restricted by the household benefit cap.

### **Reporting and reviewing process**

Discretionary Housing Payment expenditure and associated grant income are recorded in distinct cost elements in a separate cost centre within the cost centre group for benefit expenditure and thus subject to routine budget monitoring.

The Chief Finance Officer, in compliance with the Council's delegated responsibilities, shall review this document periodically, and with the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources, amend it as appropriate.

Any recommendations for amendment must have due regard for any

- Changes in legislation;
- Changes to Discretionary Housing Payment funding; and
- Alignment with the Council's strategies and priorities.

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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 15 July 2014  
**Subject:** A Review of the Impact on Children Living with Domestic Abuse: Report of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee February 2014  
**Report of:** Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services  
**Summary:** The report reviews the actions taken in Children's Services following the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny meeting on Domestic Abuse.

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**Advising Officer:** Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services  
**Contact Officer:** Sue Tyler, Head of Child Poverty and Early Intervention  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key Decision** No  
**Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in (if appropriate)** N/A

#### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

**Council Priorities:**

- Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable.
- Improve educational attainment.

**Financial:**

1. There are no financial implications from the review process.

**Legal:**

2. There are no legal implications for the review process.

**Risk Management:**

3. There are no risk implications from the review process.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

4. Not applicable.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

5. Not applicable within the review process.

**Public Health**

6. Not applicable within the review process.

**Community Safety:**

7. Not applicable within the review process.

**Sustainability**

8. Not applicable within the review process.

**Procurement:**

9. Not applicable within the review process.

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

10. This matter has been considered by Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 25 February 2014.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Executive is asked to:**

1. **welcome the work of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and consider the report from their meeting held on 25 February 2014, as set out at Appendix A; and**
2. **agree that the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be considered as part of the wider corporate review.**

**Background**

11. In the period since December 2013 there has been an on-going corporate review of domestic abuse activity across the Council which has been carried out by the Head of Community Safety. This will be complete by October 2014.
12. On 25 February 2014, the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held a detailed discussion regarding the impact of living in circumstances of domestic abuse/domestic violence on children.
13. The purpose of the meeting was:-
  - to increase the understanding of Members in relation to the prevalence of incidents;
  - to consider how best to support a multi-agency partnership approach to deal with the issue; and
  - to agree some outcome focused recommendations on how to enhance the offer to children in this situation.

The full report of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting is attached at Appendix A.

14. The Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) has a priority in the current year of "*Ensuring the effectiveness of safeguarding support for children living with domestic abuse, adult mental health problems and/or substance misuse*". This will involve partners implementing the actions from the previous year's review of the support for children and families living with domestic abuse and reviewing support for children where mental health and substance misuse in the family creates an additional risk factor.

**Action being taken on Domestic Abuse in Children's Services following recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Report - February 2014 (Appendix A)**

15. **Relay Project**

At the Overview and Scrutiny meeting the function of the Relay Officers was explained; namely that information is received from the police each morning regarding any callouts from the previous evening where there are school aged children in the family. The Relay Officer will then contact the school that the child/ren attend so that they are aware that there has been an incident which may impact on the child's attendance, state of emotional wellbeing, completion of homework, and other linked issues. This had been operating in certain areas of Central Bedfordshire, but was expanded in the first instance in April and a full roll-out to all schools took place in early June once an additional Relay Officer was employed.

Feedback from schools is very positive.

*"The service is excellent and has really helped us to understand many of our families better – particularly when the children seem very subdued on a Monday morning. The information you provide starts conversations that would not normally take place; it is very difficult for families to come and tell me they have a problem, but they respond far better if I tell them I know about an incident and they then open up and often disclose more than was realised."*

Recommendation 1

16. **Transformation Funding**

At the end of March 2014 the Council received a grant from the government Transformation Fund to work with neighbouring authorities on issues around Domestic Abuse. Luton Borough Council has contributed further to the project. A consultant with expertise on Domestic Abuse has been employed to work on a number of strands. These include:

- developing a pathway for Children where Domestic Abuse is a family issue, to ensure that we are intervening early enough;
- identifying additional early intervention programmes to offer for people caught in a cycle of Domestic Abuse and to prevent the intergenerational cycle of Domestic Abuse; and

- carrying out research of available material on why many women become involved in serial abusive relationships.

Recommendation 1(pathway development) and 9.

17. **Co-ordinator for Children impacted by Domestic Abuse**

A post within the Early Intervention Service has been developed to:

- co-ordinate and further develop training and awareness raising;
- working closely with schools and other professionals in identifying and supporting families with Domestic Abuse;
- manage the Relay Project and develop it further;
- ensure suitable and adequate programmes such as ‘Freedom’, ‘Healthy Relationships’ and similar programmes are accessible for all those who need them; and
- ensure that Early Help Assessments are constantly reviewed in order to support commissioning decisions in the Domestic Abuse area.

Recommendations 1, 6, 7, 8, will form part of the work of this post holder.

18. **Work with Partners**

- Early Intervention staff have taken part in training new police recruits for the first time in May 2014, around aspects of Domestic Abuse. The feedback was very positive, and the police service has expressed an interest that not only will this continue for new recruits, but some additional training will be provided for serving officers. The Co-ordinator for Children impacted by Domestic Abuse will lead on co-ordinating further training to a range of front-line professionals.
- The LSCB has made Domestic Abuse one of its 4 priorities in the year ahead.

Recommendation 3 and (i).

19. **Healthy Relationships**

Further courses of the “Healthy Relationship” programme are being rolled out and work will be undertaken with schools to recognise the value of this and similar early intervention programmes.

Recommendation 5

**Conclusions**

20.
  - The Executive is asked to welcome the work of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny and consider the report of the meeting held 25 February 2014.
  - Agree that the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be considered as part of the wider corporate review.

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# Impact on children of living in family circumstances of domestic violence and abuse

Outcomes of the Children's Services OSC meeting on 25 February 2014

# Background

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) is the Council's committee with responsibility for scrutinising issues relating to children in Central Bedfordshire. The OSC agreed to arrange a detailed discussion regarding the impact of living in circumstances of domestic abuse/domestic on children.

The purpose of the meeting was:-

1. To increase the understanding of Members in relation to the prevalence of incidents
2. To consider how best to support a multi-agency partnership approach to deal with the issue.
3. To agree some outcome focused recommendations on how to enhance the offer to children in this situation.

## Visit to Hawthorn Park Community Lower School

To support this meeting Members visited Hawthorn Park Community Lower School to meet the Headteacher and officers responsible for delivering the Freedom Programme (a programme of support for female victims of domestic abuse/domestic violence) in order to discuss the prevalence of issues in Central Bedfordshire and the manner in which support was currently being provided.

Members were advised that 33% of the population (nationally) were at some point the subject of DA/DV. It was accepted that the Freedom Programme offered valuable support to victims and that there were clear the objectives and outcomes of the programme but Members were not fully aware of the extent of the problem of DA/DV in Central Bedfordshire.

Members were also advised of the benefits of enabling groups of victims to talk to another about issues in order to empower victims to seek further support. It was important that authorities encouraged a move away from stereotypes about DA/DV or that excuses were acceptable. There was also a perception that there were significant numbers of women who did not receive support because they refused to accept they were the subject of DA/DV. This was a significant issue as to how those women who did not want to or were unable to attend the programme could be empowered to reach the conclusion that they needed to seek support.

Members were made aware of the concerns of the head teacher regarding the waiting lists for some support services that were commissioned by the Council (for example by Sorted and Action for Children). Although one school was in receipt of these services due to the waiting times it had been necessary to commission additional services so that support could be provided in a timely way. Although schools were allocated funding to commission services themselves, in this particular school the level of funding was not always enough to commission those additional services in a timely way.

Members were also made aware of the concerns of one head teacher that the level of counselling support to the education profession was felt to be insufficient, particularly when dealing with DA/DV. Staff were sometimes unsure of the action they had taken in relation to individuals and whilst schools could pay out of their own budget for additional training or support this could be to the

# Background

detriment of other services. Sufficient training and advice was crucial to give staff the confidence to provide support to children and to encourage teachers to feel empowered to take appropriate action. It was also felt that whilst Child Protection Officers provided time 'on-site' in schools this was not always sufficient, particularly in high-risk schools.

Members discussed the value of community hubs as a means of delivering schemes such as the Freedom Programme. Community hubs provided a safe environment in which women could interact socially and seek support without feeling judged. There were however concerns that the refuges that currently operated in Central Bedfordshire were not fit for purpose and as a result it might discourage some victims from seeking support.

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee Meeting

Following the visit the Committee invited a range of representatives to attend the Committee meeting on 25 February 2014 as follows:-

- CBC Community Safety Team
- CBC Relay Officers
- Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator
- Freedom Programme
- Healthy Relationships Programme
- Home Group – Refuge and IDVA service provider
- Hawthorn Park Community Lower School
- Sorted

In setting the context for this item the Committee watched a DVD demonstrating the experiences of victims of domestic abuse and

domestic violence. A presentation was also provided by the Client Service Manager for Central Bedfordshire's Refuges with regards to the "Children's Worker Pilot". The presentation demonstrated the benefits of the Pilot that commenced in April 2013 and the impact of these posts on meeting the needs of women and children. The presentation highlighted the numbers of children that had been supported and detailed some of the other supported outcomes that had been achieved as a result of the pilot.

The Committee also received a presentation of the Deputy Executive Member that provided an overview of the prevalence of domestic abuse, the impact of abuse on children and the current support that was available in Central Bedfordshire. The presentation also set out some of the challenges and pressures in relation to providing support for children and responding to incidents of domestic abuse.

A service user also informed the Committee of their personal experience of domestic abuse and use of Women's Aid. The service users experience of domestic abuse highlighted some personal concerns regards the services that had been delivered, which would be discussed with relevant officers. Although there had been a negative experience of several services the benefit of the CHUMS service and the impact this had on the person's children had been positive, although it had taken a considerable period of time for the service to be provided. The importance of ongoing support and the benefit of sharing experiences with other service users were highlighted.

# Background

The remainder of this report is structured in relation to the key issues that were discussed at the meeting in order to supplement the Minutes of the meeting, available at the following link:-

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/modgov/documents/g4457/Printed%20minutes%20Tuesday%2025-Feb-2014%2010.00%20CHILDRENS%20SERVICES%20OVERVIEW%20SCRUTINY%20COMMITTEE.pdf?T=1>

# Early intervention

The Committee discussed the benefits of early intervention and the extent to which additional funding could be made available to provide additional resources that would enhance the services that were available. There was a need to recognise that funding in early intervention could reduce spend in the long-term although it was accepted that spending more on intervention and prevention could result in reduced funding being available to fund more reactive programmes of support.

There was also a genuine need for effective co-ordination of training and support for children across Central Bedfordshire in order to maximise outcomes of the support that was provided.

At the OSC meeting the professionals in attendance highlighted the difficulty of providing support to victims as there was a need for people to accept that they were a victim of domestic abuse before support could be provided. In Houghton Regis a group of schools provided £8k each into a joint pot to fund two parent support advisers to work in those schools or with children who lived in Houghton Regis but attended school out of the area. Schools already worked with identified vulnerable families so that support could be directed in the most appropriate way. These advisers provided real benefits but their work-load was such that they were over-run. Early intervention provided real benefit but it was sticking a plaster over the cracks, organisations needed to get at the root cause of domestic abuse at a much earlier stage to prevent a cycle of abuse in the future. Although work was underway locally there was a need for a co-ordinator to work specifically with children to maximise outcomes and to encourage training and support for children at a much younger age to help them identify inappropriate

behaviours. A key role for this co-ordinator would be to address the cycle of abuse that can develop where children 'learn' behaviours.

It was noted that much of the work that was currently underway focused on MARAC and IDVA, which focused on high-risk victims only. If Members felt that work with medium/low-risk victims or early intervention should be prioritised this may be to the detriment of the funding that was presently available for programmes. It was however noted that the Freedom Programme itself delivered support for early intervention so funding would need to come from elsewhere.

# Healthy relationships & identifying the impact of domestic abuse

The Committee discussed the importance of schemes such as the Healthy Relationships Programmes (which raises awareness and understanding for young people about what makes a healthy, non abusive relationship) and stressed the importance of encouraging schools to take part in these. There was however a need to understand what constituted a 'healthy relationship' to inform the training that is provided.

Attendees at the OSC felt that schools were the ideal place to run the Healthy Relationships Programme and this should be integrated more effectively into the school curriculum. There was a reluctance in some schools to become involved with this Programme but it was vital that they were carried out early in children's development and that the Police were involved in these conversations as well. There were a range of schemes currently in operation and getting schools to buy in to these was crucial. There was potential for relationship training to be delivered via Project Relay in the future.

Where possible the Committee felt there were real benefits to training being delivered by those who understand domestic abuse that more targeted and continued training should be provided for professionals.

The Committee specifically discussed the difficulty of distinguishing between learning difficulties and the impact of domestic abuse. Professionals referred to the Smile project, which had provided real benefits in terms of training professionals. It was felt that a similar approach could help them identify the impact of domestic abuse on children and this should be considered along side the recommendations regarding support and training.

# Providing support

The Committee discussed the importance of understanding the prevalence of women as perpetrators of domestic abuse and the levels of support provided to male victims. In light of the number of incidents and the manner in which support was currently provided the Committee discussed whether money could be saved by training a number of dedicated professionals to go to schools to deliver support, rather than schools arranging their own support.

Presently the Project Relay Support Officers notified schools's safeguarding leads of referrals for specific children so that appropriate support could be provided. An additional Project relay Support Officer was being appointed to extend the level of support that was available. Programmes that were delivered in schools (such as theatre and drama) by specialist advisers had provided real benefits but there was not enough funding to deliver these schemes widely enough in all schools or to younger children.

The Committee also discussed the 22 units provided by refuges in Central Bedfordshire, which were felt to be a really valuable asset and the self-contained nature of these was quite unique. There were however issues relating to the number of referrals to the refuges and there was always a need for more capacity. Whilst the Committee queried why there were no refuges in the area for men it was noted that provision across the UK was very limited. Statistically there were not the high number of male victims within Central Bedfordshire to justify the delivery of an additional refuge although there were specific support programmes provided within Central Bedfordshire for male victims. Providing support for victims could be complicated as some victims (particularly men) could also be

perpetrators of domestic abuse so an assessment process in these cases was particularly important.

There was a particular difficulty in providing support to address incidents where children were domestically abusing their parents. The Committee were advised of the work that was undertaken to educate and break the barriers between parents and their children in these circumstances. The Council delivered a Family Adolescent Support Team but work in this area had only just started to emerge. Engagement in these cases was important in order to prevent a cycle of abuse in the future.

There was also a real need to provide support in order to address the 75% of incidents that were perpetrated by repeat offenders. The Committee were informed that multi-agency working in this area was effective but changes in the way that Probation Services are delivered will have an impact later in the year. There was a significant amount of work still to do in relation to perpetrators and to join up work between agencies in this area but this was underway to ensure that resources were used effectively.

In order to provide support effectively the Council's directorates needed to work collaboratively in relation to domestic abuse and to focus effort on both children and adults in order to achieve successful outcomes. This included the Council's OSCs to ensure that appropriate Members and officers were engaged in conversations.

The HMIC had recently undertaken an Inspection of Bedfordshire Police in relation to their approach to domestic abuse/domestic

# Providing support

violence and as a result they were already undertaking work in this area to develop their approach and develop more effective means of supporting victims.

Finally the Committee discussed the following issues in relation to providing support that they felt needed to be taken into consideration:-

- The need to ensure that rural areas of Central Bedfordshire had the same level of access to programmes as those in urban areas.
- The value of Central Bedfordshire refuges and the service that they provided for women.
- The negative impact of the national media and television programming in the manner in which it displays domestic abuse.
- The importance of a multi-agency approach in order to effectively address the prevalence of domestic abuse.
- The critical importance of HomeStart as a way of engaging with families.

Where possible the Committee felt there were real benefits to training and support being delivered by those who understood domestic abuse and that more targeted and continued training should be provided for professionals.



# Signposting & communication

The OSC discussed the need to enhance signposting in schools to those services that were available in Central Bedfordshire. There was a real need to ensure that Members contacted the Intake and Assessment Team (during the day) or the Emergency Duty Team(out of hours) if they were made aware of an incident of domestic abuse of a child and the Police who should also be contacted.

Members discussed the value of raising awareness of the issue of domestic abuse and ensuring that schools were aware of the support that was on offer within the area. Raising awareness was an important mechanism for trying to identify the level of 'unknown' victims within the area who required support. It was widely accepted that schools and others could do more in this area but as there were always competing pressures there was a need to balance the level of resource that was provided in this area. A designated lead with the school for coordinating this work however could be beneficial as a means of giving people a voice.

The Committee felt it was critically important to raise awareness in relation to domestic abuse, which the Committee felt needed to be prioritised above the other recommendations agreed. Of particular importance was need to ensure that Councillors were aware of the services that were available in light of their roles as corporate parents.

# Recommendations

In light of their discussions the Committee discussed and agreed several recommendations that they agreed should be submitted to the Executive and reviewed in 6-months to ascertain progress.

These recommendations were as follows

RECOMMENDED as a priority that organisations develop more effective means of signposting to the support that is available for the victims of domestic abuse. The issue of domestic abuse should also be highlighted:-

- (i) through 'Central Essentials' (the school newsletter), the Governors and Headteachers Forums in order to encourage attendance at Local Safeguarding Children Board training; and
- (ii) at the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, especially in relation to mental health and substance misuse services.

RECOMMENDED that following detailed work on the above priorities the following also be considered:-

1. That the co-ordination of preventative and early intervention work to support children at risk be further enhanced.
2. That the Executive continue working with the Community Safety Partnership to identify sources of funding to preserve and enhance the current services that are available to support the victims of domestic abuse.
3. That the benefit of support and training for professionals to help identify victims, preferably delivered by those who understand the issues, be recognised and that targeted

training be provided for frontline professionals, particularly those in universal services e.g. health visitors, Children's Centres and GPs, with the aim of earlier identification of incidents of domestic abuse.

4. That the accessibility of services for victims in same sex relationships and disadvantaged groups, such as unemployed persons, Gypsies and Travellers and other BME groups be further enhanced.
5. That schools be encouraged to recognise the value of the "Healthy Relationships" programme and as well as developing similar programmes for younger age groups schools ensure that vulnerable teenagers are engaged in such programmes.
6. That all schools be encouraged to develop a system of staff mentors, particularly in areas of high incidence of domestic abuse, to provide support and a focal point for training.
7. That all schools be encouraged to designate a member of staff responsible for raising awareness and attending training in relation to domestic abuse and domestic violence.
8. That the level of future need for support services be identified and commissioned appropriately.
9. That an understanding be developed of the extent to which victims enter into a cycle of abusive relationships so organisations can determine the extent of support that is required.

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by email: [scrutiny@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

on the web: [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

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

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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 15 July 2014  
**Subject:** Agreement to Homes and Communities Agency Grant Funding Conditions  
**Report of:** Cllr Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Health & Housing  
**Summary:** The report proposes the Executive agrees to accept the funding conditions for the receipt of capital grant in respect of the development of Priory View, Dunstable and the Empty Homes Leasing scheme.

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**Advising Officer:** Julie Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing  
**Contact Officer:** Tim Hoyle, Head of Service Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Older People (MANOP)  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** None specifically  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key Decision** No  
**Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in (if appropriate)** Not Applicable

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

The actions support the Council priorities:

- Enhancing the local community.
- Promoting health and wellbeing and protect the vulnerable.
- Value for money.

### **Financial:**

1. The development of Priory View, Dunstable (formerly referred to as the Dukeminster Extra Care Scheme) is identified in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme. The Council has secured grant funding of £1.703M from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) towards the cost of the scheme, the balance being funded from the HRA. If the HCA funding is not secured then the Council will need to make up the shortfall.

2. In 2012, the Council also secured HCA funding of up to £0.2M to help bring long term empty homes back into occupation. A grant contribution of between £8k and £15k can be claimed from HCA for each home brought back into use under the scheme.

**Legal:**

3. The Council is required to provide an undertaking to comply with HCA's funding terms and conditions to ensure that the funding stream is secure for this and future projects.

**Risk Management:**

4. The main risk identified with the recommendation is the financial risk associated with the HCA having the right to reclaim grant paid if the funding conditions are not met. This risk is evaluated as being low and is being actively managed through the MANOP Programme and Capital Monitoring. Actions include regular reporting to HCA and quarterly progress meetings with them.
5. There is a very significant financial risk associated with not accepting the recommendations inasmuch as this would result in the grant not being paid and the loss of this sum to the Council. Thus the risk of not proceeding far outweighs the risk of proceeding.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

6. Not applicable.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

7. There are no specific equalities or human rights implications of this proposal.

**Public Health**

8. Not applicable.

**Community Safety:**

9. Not applicable.

**Sustainability:**

10. Not applicable.

**Procurement:**

11. Not applicable.

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

12. This matter has not been considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**The Executive is asked to:**

- 1. approve the acceptance of the Homes and Communities Agency's conditions in respect of grant towards the costs of the development of Priory View, as set out in Appendix A to this report; and**
- 2. approve the acceptance of the Homes and Communities Agency's conditions in respect of grant towards the Empty Homes Leasing scheme, as set out in Appendix A to this report.**

*Reason for Recommendations: To comply with the conditions required to receive the £1.703M funding contribution towards the cost of the Priory View development and up to £0.2M of Empty Homes leasing funding.*

**Executive Summary**

13. The Council was awarded a grant from the Homes and Communities Agency of £1.703M towards the cost of the development of Priory View.
14. The Council was awarded a grant from the Homes and Communities Agency of up to £0.2M towards an empty homes leasing scheme.
15. In order to receive these grants the Council must make an explicit undertaking to abide by the funding conditions. The same conditions apply to both grants.
16. If the Council fails to abide by the funding conditions then HCA can withhold payment and demand repayment of some or all of grant previously paid.

**Background**

17. In 2013 Central Bedfordshire Council applied for grant from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for funding contribution to the development cost of Priory View (formerly referred to as the Dukeminster Extra Care Scheme). In 2012 the Council made an application for up to £0.2M funding to tackle long term empty homes.
18. These applications were successful and the Council was advised that a grant of £1.703M had been awarded for Priory View and £0.2M for Empty Homes.
19. The grant for Priory View is payable in two tranches: 50% at the commencement of the development (the 'start on site' date) and 50% when the development is completed (the 'practical completion' date).
20. As Priory View development has commenced the first tranche of funding can now be claimed but before this can be transferred the HCA requires that the Council formally accepts the conditions that are attached to it.

21. Under the Empty Homes scheme a grant contribution of between £8k and £15k can be claimed from HCA for each home brought back into use under the scheme. Again, the HCA requires that the Council formally accepts the conditions that are attached to the grant before payment will be made.
22. The first two empty homes brought back into use under the leasing scheme have now been completed and grant can be claimed.

### **Funding Conditions**

23. The funding conditions are set out in full in Appendix A. The same set of conditions applies to both grants. Some of these conditions are of a technical nature or not relevant to either the Priory View development or empty homes scheme and are not referred to in this report.
24. It should be noted that the conditions refer to 'Registered Providers' (RP's) and in this context the Council is the Registered Provider.
25. The most significant conditions are set out in the sections below.
  - (a) Grant must be used in accordance with the HCA's criteria, procedures and audit arrangements. This includes a requirement to conduct an independent compliance audit once the scheme is completed.
  - (b) Grant must be applied to the provision of affordable housing within the designated scheme.
  - (c) Dwellings must meet the HCA's Design & Quality Standards.
  - (d) The RP must possess a legal interest in the property.
  - (e) No member, employee or agent of the RP should have an interest in the vendor, contractor or the land to be acquired.
  - (f) Rents and regulated charges must comply with those agreed at confirmation of the grant.
  - (g) Procurement of contracts in relation to the scheme must follow the EU Procurement regime.
  - (h) The RP must participate in and comply with the HCA's programme management and other management systems.
  - (i) The RP must explicitly agree to the funding conditions at 'Committee' level and retain a copy of the minute for Audit/Regulatory purposes.
26. As far as is possible, the Council is compliant with these and the remaining grant conditions. Where compliance has not yet been achieved (for example, rents have not yet been set at Priory View) it intends to achieve and maintain compliance as the scheme is brought to fruition.



**Sanctions**

27. Under the requirements of the funding agreement the HCA retains the right to withdraw and/or recover grant paid should a recipient fail to comply with the conditions. In some circumstances the Council would also be liable for interest on grant received. These are set out in detail in the HCA's 'Grant Recovery Principles'.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A: The Homes and Communities Agency Grant Funding Conditions under the Affordable Homes Programme

**Background Papers:** (open to public inspection)

None

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## **Appendix A – The Homes and Communities Agency Grant Funding Conditions under the Affordable Homes Programme**

### **Funding Conditions**

#### **Preamble**

These Funding Conditions apply to both ‘committed programme’ schemes and all allocations made under the Affordable Homes Programme (AHP) 11-15 programme, including the sub programmes. They also apply to any allocations made under the Affordable Homes Guarantees Programme and under the Care and Support Specialist Housing Programme.

‘The Committed programme’ is made up of allocations made under the National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP), or previous affordable housing programmes, and pre-allocations agreed under the 08-11 NAHP to be delivered within the 11-15 Programme Period.

The affordable housing investment provisions of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 came into force from 1 April 2010. Allocations for the provision of affordable housing made prior to 1 April 2010 are treated as being made under s18 of the Housing Act 1996. Allocations for the provision of affordable housing made from 1 April 2010 (including substitute allocations) are made under s19 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. It is likely that a number of providers will have allocations made under both sets of powers. In addition, from 1 April 2012 the Homes and Communities investment powers within Greater London pass to the Greater London Authority (GLA) who may provide funding for housing and regeneration under sections 30 and 333ZE of the GLA Act (as amended). These Funding Conditions apply to all allocations that exist outside of London, regardless of the powers under which they were made.

The Funding Conditions apply to all Registered Providers (RPs) of social housing, including newly registered RPs and local authorities.

These Funding Conditions set out the requirements that must be met by RPs when using Social Housing Grant (SHG), Social Housing Assistance (SHA), Purchase Grant (or any successor assistance to it) provided by the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) and its predecessor body the Housing Corporation (HC). For the purposes of these Funding Conditions, the generic term “grant” is used throughout to cover all of the above.

### **Grant Conditions applied to all Programmes**

1. All funding is subject to either the provisions of the Housing Act 1996 or the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 as applicable (or any amendment or re-enactment thereof) and any applicable determinations made under those Acts by the HCA.
2. All Grant applications and other scheme submissions relating to the achievement of forecast milestones must be made, and all Grants provided must be used, in accordance with the HCA's published criteria, procedures and audit arrangements; including but without limitation the Affordable Housing Capital Funding Guide. Non compliance with the HCA's requirements and procedures could result in the suspension or withdrawal of allocations or payments and recovery of Grant (plus interest where applicable). Where recovery arises within Greater London recovery will be to the GLA.
3. Grant funding is conditional upon RPs meeting the standards set by the social housing regulator under Sections 193 and 194 of the HRA 2008 including the regulator's tenancy standard. This will be monitored by the social housing regulator and assessments of providers published in accordance with the Regulatory Framework. *'The regulatory framework for social housing in England from April 2012' and associated materials can be found on the HCA's website at <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/regulatory-framework>.*
4. Where RPs are undertaking the role of Employer/Client on developments for which Grant has been requested, funding is conditional upon RPs undertaking grant funded projects in accordance with the principles set out in the '2012 Construction Commitments - Affordable Housing Provider version'. The HCA will exercise discretion in relation to RPs undertaking small or occasional projects with insignificant construction activity.
5. All Grant paid must be applied to the provision of affordable housing and must be used as prescribed in the HCA's guidance. RPs should ensure appropriate financial appraisal of schemes to confirm their viability both during the development period and in the long term. Where RPs have specified that schemes are to be developed to higher standards the schemes must be developed to incorporate these features unless specific prior approval to waive certain aspects is granted by the HCA. The dwellings produced should meet the HCA's Design & Quality Standards (April 2007). Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) assessments should be carried out at Feasibility, Scheme Design and Practical Completion stages and recorded within the HQI section of IMS.
6. Funding is conditional on RPs either possessing a legal interest in the property already, or having entered into a binding legal agreement to acquire such an interest as part of a scheme, prior to drawing down Grant.

Where RPs are acquiring an interest in the property or where works are to be done, the property must offer good title. Property already in RP's ownership must comply with this condition. Where a leasehold interest is to be acquired, the outstanding term should be at least thirty years for rehabilitation schemes, sixty years for new build schemes, and at least 99 years for affordable home ownership schemes at the date of purchase completion.

7. Under the NAHP 08-11 Programme Partnering Agreement (PPA) grant can be paid via the Lead Partner to other RPs within the partnerships. In this case, the Lead Partner is simply a conduit for payment and not a grant recipient. Lead Partners do not, therefore, need an interest in the site to enable this transaction.
8. No member, employee, agent or consultant of RPs or any partner organisation should have any interest in the proposed vendor, contractor or the land or property to be acquired, including properties purchased by individuals under Affordable Home Ownership or other such schemes. This includes any firm, partnership or organisation in which they or their families are involved.
9. The HCA takes a zero tolerance approach to bribery and corruption and sets the highest standards of impartiality, integrity and objectivity in relation to the stewardship of public funds and the management of its activities. The principles contained within this policy apply to any body or organisation undertaking business with the HCA. The Agency's Anti-Bribery and Corruption policy can be accessed via the link located within the Agency's Ethical Policies website page:  
  
<http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ethical-policies>
10. For the committed programme there should be consistency between the rents, including Housing Benefit (HB) eligible service charges specified by RPs at the time of Grant allocation, with those agreed at confirmation of Grant stage and those charged from first letting or point of sale onwards. RPs will therefore charge rents, including HB eligible service charges, on first letting or point of sale which are no higher than those agreed at confirmation of Grant and thereafter it will only change its rents in compliance with standards specified by the social housing regulator. The social housing regulator standard also applies to service charges and includes requirements related to annual changes. Where this is not the case, RPs must be able to demonstrate that the service charge increase is based on cost recovery. RPs should note the rent restriction does not apply to those specific committed programme schemes where an

agreement is in place to convert these units to Affordable Rent prior to completion.

11. For the 11-15 programme RPs rents must be consistent with those agreed at programme offer (unless a programme change notice has been agreed subsequently).
12. Where a scheme is to be developed by a different RP from that which will ultimately own or manage the scheme, there must be a written agreement between the RPs on the Terms of Transfer and the rents including HB eligible service charges to be charged for the scheme.
13. The conditions above in respect of rents and service charges apply equally where affordable housing is transferred to an RP, from an unregistered body which has received funding to develop that housing, whether under s27A of the Housing Act 1996 or s19 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.
14. All funding is subject to RPs complying with the EU Procurement regime.
15. RPs must ensure that house builder warranties suitable for mortgage purposes together with the accompanying 'cover note' as required under the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML) initiative are available upon completion of homes.
16. RPs are required to commission an appropriately qualified independent consultant or auditor to undertake a programme of self-assessment procedural compliance audit.
17. For the committed programme RPs undertaking delegated development activities in partnership with a 'Lead' RP shall fully co-operate with the Lead Organisation in order to enable the Lead Organisation to discharge its functions on behalf of its partner RP.
18. For the committed programme where an RP is acting as the 'Lead' for a group of other RPs that are participating in the delivery and/or management of homes included within a PPA, then that Lead Organisation will be deemed responsible to the HCA for the following additional responsibilities and obligations on behalf of any of the participating RPs:
  - monitoring programme delivery by all RP members of the partnership and taking appropriate action to avoid slippage;
  - ensuring that the principles of the '2012 Construction Commitments AHP version' are understood and followed within the partnership;
  - determining the individual RP that will carry out development functions for specific projects;

- usage of suitable legal and procedural documentation for all partnership members including an appropriate and binding agreement between the Lead RPs and the other participating RPs that sets out the roles and responsibilities of all parties and details arrangements for resolving disputes within the partnership;
- actively and effectively undertaking the role of Design Champion and promoting good design within the partnership;
- ensuring that relevant staff are trained in the use of 'Housing Quality Indicators' (HQIs) and in the assessment of projects using the 'Building for Life' criteria;
- ensuring that house builder warranties suitable for mortgage purposes together with the accompanying 'cover note' as required under the CML initiative are available upon completion of homes;
- where necessary, providing staff training and/or skills assistance to other partner RPs participating in development activities;
- where a development is carried out on behalf of another RP within the partnership, ensuring that the build contract is assignable to the other RP on completion, together with warranties from all design consultants and sub-contractors and where relevant, obtaining consent from the social housing regulator for the transfer;
- arranging regular progress review meetings involving all members of the partnership;
- agreeing and facilitating a programme of Quarterly Review meetings with the HCA's lead investor or lead area contact;
- commissioning appropriately qualified independent auditors to undertake a programme of self-assessment procedural compliance performance tests across the partnership as agreed with the HCA in accordance with the HCA's published standardised terms of engagement.

19. For the 11-15 programme RPs should comply with the lead partner responsibilities as set out in the Framework Delivery Agreement.

## **RENT**

20. All properties developed for letting at affordable rents on assured tenancies with SHG/SHA funding will be subject to the (Right to Acquire) provisions of section 16 of the Housing Act 1996 (or any amendment or re-enactment thereof), unless they are exempted by Part V of the Housing Act 1985 as amended by the Housing (Right to Acquire) Regulations 1997 or under one of the Housing (Right to Acquire or Enfranchise)(Designated Rural Areas) Orders 1997 or any subsequent amendments or because they are properties funded as part of a Temporary Social Housing scheme. In this context, "developed for letting at affordable rents" includes new build, rehabilitation, off the shelf, existing satisfactory purchase, purchase and repair, and re-improvement schemes.

## **SHARED OWNERSHIP**

21. The shared ownership lease used by RPs must include the Fundamental Clauses detailed in the HCA's Affordable Housing Capital Funding Guide. Failure to include, a breach of, or variation (without the explicit consent of the Agency) of the Fundamental Clauses may be considered a Relevant Event under clause 7(e) of the HCA's The Recovery of Capital Grants and Recycled Capital Grant Fund General Determination 2012, or its replacement, for Grant recovery purposes.

## **EQUITY LOAN**

22. For all shared equity schemes RPs must hold a valid Consumer Credit Licence and have received a Direction under section 60(3) of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 (as amended) as required by the HCA's Equity Loan procedures.

## **PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT/SYSTEM MANAGEMENT**

23. RPs must join and fully participate in the Department for Communities and Local Government's "Continuous Recording of Lettings System" (CORE) if they have a current development programme and they own or manage either self contained homes and/or hostel/shared housing bedspaces
24. The RP must join and fully participate in recording both:
  - any lettings made; and
  - any sales of RP stock, including outright sales and shared ownership schemes, but excluding sales of additional equity shares purchased by existing shared owners (known as 'staircasing').
25. RPs must follow the processes for re-forecasting milestones and for proposing any Grant variation as set out in the HCA's Affordable Housing Capital Funding Guide. Decisions on accepting proposed variations will be made in the light of the HCA's available resources and the organisation's progress towards meeting its targets.
26. The HCA may impose sanctions including amendment or withdrawal of allocations if forecast milestones are not met.
27. In the event of RPs failing to comply with these Funding Conditions or if there is any cause for serious concern about their performance or financial viability, the HCA reserves the right to suspend funding and, where there is a serious breach of these Funding Conditions or requirements set out in the Affordable Housing Capital Funding Guide, to recover relevant Grant payments made, plus interest where appropriate.



28. If RPs should fail to comply with the conditions specified under sections 18 (3), 20 (4) and 21(4) of the Housing Act 1996, or those imposed or required under ss19 and 31 to 33 of the Housing And Regeneration Act 2008 the HCA may suspend, withhold or recover all or part of the Grant, plus interest where appropriate, in accordance with the determinations made or powers arising under the relevant Act and its published guidance - including the HCA's Affordable Housing Capital Funding Guide.
29. Where RPs receive Grant funding this will be subject to the Agency's grant recovery principles as outlined in its Recovery of Capital Grants and Recycled Capital Grant Fund General Determination 2012 as supplemented by requirements in the Agency's Affordable Housing Capital Funding Guide unless otherwise specified in the Grant Agreement or Framework Delivery Agreement (FDA). These principles will also be applied where affordable housing is transferred to an RP, from an unregistered body which has received funding to develop that housing, whether under s 27A of the Housing Act 1996 or s 19 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.
30. RPs must review their security arrangements and in particular:
  - ensure that the HCA is notified immediately if a Security Administrator leaves or changes posts and responsibilities;
  - ensure that the list of IMS users and their authorities is regularly reviewed to ensure they are correct and appropriate;
  - ensure that users are removed from IMS immediately they leave the organisation or are no longer required to work on IMS; and
  - ensure that IMS passwords are not shared and that RP (RSL) users are prevented from entering IMS under a UserID other than their own.
31. Failure to comply with the above may result in the withdrawal of the RP's IMS access.
32. A copy of the relevant Committee minutes of the decision to agree to comply with the Funding Conditions must be retained by RPs for Compliance Audit/Regulatory purposes.
33. The HCA reserves the right to issue additional conditions in year as deemed appropriate and necessary.
34. The HCA reserves the right to update and amend these throughout the duration of the AHP 11-15 programme period.

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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 15 July 2014  
**Subject:** Capital Proceeds Arising from the Sale of the Former LuDun Industries Site  
**Report of:** Cllr Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care Health and Housing  
**Summary:** The report proposes investing the Council's share of the proceeds arising from the sale of the former LuDun site to create an on-going legacy through a Trust Fund for people with disabilities in Central Bedfordshire.

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**Advising Officer:** Julie Ogley, Director of Social Care Health and Housing  
**Contact Officer:** John King, System Redesign Officer(Prevention)  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key Decision** Yes  
**Reason for urgency/  
exemption from call-in  
(if appropriate)** Not applicable.

#### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Council Priorities:**

The creation of a Trust Fund for people with disabilities will enable the following Council priorities to be met as it will be used to provide training, education and facilitate access to work:

- Enhancing Central Bedfordshire – creating jobs.
- Improved educational attainment.
- Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable.

##### **Financial:**

1. In 1983 the then Bedfordshire County Council contributed some £56,000 to pay for improvements to LuDun Industries. Following sale of the land, the sum due to the Council has now increased to £82,378.
2. Although this proposal does imply foregoing this sum, it has not been accounted for in any forward plan, as a capital receipt, and in effect would be a windfall to the Council. The reasons for taking this approach are set out below, and are in keeping with the original objectives of the funding.

3. The Council made annual revenue savings of £300,000 following closure of the workshop.

**Legal:**

4. A Trust – LuDun Workshops Trust was set up in 1982 with the charitable objective of making grants to people with disabilities. This was removed from the Charity Commission in 2010.
5. Bedford and Luton Community Foundation have now established an Endowed Trust Fund which is also registered with the Charity Commission with similar charitable objectives to the LuDun Workshops Trust. Capital will be invested to produce a return which will then be used to provide grant funding to disabled people.
6. The Capital is invested to safeguard future income of the Trust and the Trustees of the Fund are under legal duty to apply the funds for the Trusts registered purposes of supporting people with disabilities.

**Risk Management:**

7. There is a risk that the funds would not be used to support individuals in the manner intended. This has been mitigated by ensuring that the Endowed Trust Fund was established in line with the original trust deeds.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

8. Not applicable.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

9. Central Bedfordshire Council has 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 reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
10. National research indicates that disabled people are much less likely than non-disabled people to be in work (47% compared to 77%) and that they continue to experience significant barriers in accessing employment opportunities.
11. By supporting the Trust Fund, the Council will be assisting disabled people, now and in the future, to access employment which will help to have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

**Public Health:**

14. This is a vulnerable group and can experience inequalities in health so ensuring access to training, education and employment will help to reduce inequalities as well as improve general health and wellbeing.

**Community Safety:**

15. There are no community safety implications.

**Sustainability:**

17. Whilst environment is a key element when considering sustainability, social and economic aspects are also important, the aim being that all three elements are able to benefit with out a detrimental impact on any of the others. The financial distribution of the Council's share of the capital from the sale of the LuDun site will, if approved by Executive, go towards supporting a number of projects, therefore having a positive social impact by providing support for residents with physical and mental disabilities.

**Procurement:**

18. Not applicable.

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

19. This matter has not been considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Executive is asked to agree that the Council foregoes its share of the capital realised from the sale of the former LuDun site, in order to invest in a Trust Fund for people with disabilities across Central Bedfordshire.**

*Reason for Recommendation: So that there will be a legacy from LuDun Industries that will benefit not just the ex-employees of LuDun but all people with disabilities in the future. The Trust Fund will help people with disabilities with education, training and access to employment thus fulfilling the original aims of LuDun in a sustainable way.*

**Executive Summary**

20. Executive agreed to a period of consultation with LuDun employees in November 2010 with a view to closing the service.
21. The service closed in May 2011 and the premises have been now been sold. The Council share of the proceeds is £82,378.
22. The LuDun Trustees have set up a Trust Fund with their share of the proceeds and have requested that the Council consider adding its share to the Fund, as a legacy for all people with disabilities in Central Bedfordshire.

**Background**

23. LuDun was originally established in the early 1950's, to provide opportunities for work and training to local people who had disabilities, as the result of injuries sustained in the Second World War.

24. In January 1982 a Charitable Trust was established by resolution of the then County Council of Bedfordshire 'to assist by the provision of employment, training, accommodation and such other services and facilities as may be seen expedient in Bedfordshire persons who by reason of physical or mental disability are temporarily or permanently incapable of or handicapped in obtaining normal employment . . . '. In July 1982 the premises were conveyed to the Trust.
25. In 1983 the then Manpower Services Commission (MSC) and Bedfordshire County Council made a loan of £250,318 for building repairs. If the building was sold the monies would go back, based on a given formula, to the MSC or its successor in title (now DWP, and to the Council (now Central Bedfordshire council (CBC)).
26. Over time the numbers of people using LuDun declined, resulting in the service being heavily subsidised by the Council by some £300,000 per year.
27. Alternative options were considered by the Council and the Trustees to make the business sustainable. When this was not possible, it was decided that closure was the only option available, and the Trustees gave the Council notice to close LuDun.
28. On 13 November 2010 Executive considered a report, following the notice of closure, that a period of consultation be carried out with the 24 employees, all of whom had disabilities.
29. At the end of May 2011 LuDun was closed and all the employees were made redundant. The site has now been sold.

### **The Trustees Wishes**

30. The Trustees of LuDun are keen that any proceeds of the sale should be used to create a lasting legacy for all disabled people, as well as a fund to be drawn on by the ex-employees of LuDun to enable them to access work, training or education, in line with the original trust deeds.
31. Such a fund creates an opportunity to continue to provide support to local people with disabilities now and in the long term future – improving the likelihood of them gaining meaningful employment.
32. The Chairman of Trustees received a joint letter from the Chief Executive of the Disability Resource Centre, Mick Dillon, and the Chief Executive of the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation (BLCF), Mark West, outlining proposals to use the Trust's funds.
33. They proposed a partnership between DRC and BLCF to create a permanent legacy to support those in greatest need in our community through an Endowed Trust Fund.

34. The BLCF has access to the Communities First challenge fund managed by the Community Development Foundation – it is this that enables 50% to be added to any endowment. The balance of any monies would be invested with the Churches, Charities and Local Authorities Investment Management Limited (CCLA) – a recognised investment broker within the Charity sector.
35. This part matched funding enables them to add 50% to the value of any new Endowed Fund, something the Council is not able to do. The income would be used to provide support to assist those with disabilities into employment or education. DRC is ideally placed to carry out such work and BCLF is the only locally based charity able to manage an Endowed Fund. The partnership brings two unique organisations together locally.
36. BLCF would hold the funds under the responsibility of its Trustees and invest those funds. All such funds would be shown as restricted in their accounts. Investment income would be used to support the disabled community through DRC, overall creating improved employment opportunities for those who need the support most.
37. The creation of an Endowed Fund would enable awards to be made in the name of LuDun in perpetuity. These awards will be shown through the annual reporting process of the BCLF.
38. A sum would be set aside immediately for an award making fund.

#### **Financial distribution**

39. The capital raised from the sale has been apportioned as per the original levels of investment, the Council share being £82,263.
40. The Trustees transferred the majority of their share to the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation (BLCF) to which that organisation has been able to add 50% to that sum under a government scheme (Communities First Challenge Fund), to support disabled persons in education and training in the CBC area.
41. A further £10,000 has been transferred to the Disability Resource Centre, Poynters Road to help establish a computer work centre for disabled persons.
42. The Trustees were hopeful that the DWP would forego their share of the sale, but unfortunately after some considerable delays and lengthy negotiation and representation, the DWP decided that this was not possible.
43. The Trustees have approached the Council through the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing to request that the Council consider foregoing its' share in order to enhance the Trust Fund outlined above.
44. The Council's share of £82,263 would also attract 50% match funding given it will be used in a similar way, increasing the Trust Fund by £123,395.

**Conclusion and Next Steps**

45. Executive is asked to agree to forego receiving the capital sum due so that it can be invested in the new Trust Fund.
46. This fund will provide a lasting legacy which will benefit not only the ex-employees of LuDun but also local people with disabilities in the future.

**Appendices:** None

**Background Papers:** (open to public inspection)  
There are no background papers.



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**Meeting:** Executive

**Date:** 15 July 2014

**Subject:** Extension of the Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract (North)

**Report of:** Cllr Brian Spurr, Executive Member for Community Services

**Summary:** This report seeks to secure agreement from Executive to extend the contract for Waste and Recycling Collection and Street Cleansing for the North of Central Bedfordshire, for a period of 2.5 years from 4 October 2016 to 31 March 2019. This period will allow the contract to align with the end of the South Waste and Recycling Collection and Street Cleansing contract on 31 March 2019. As a result, a single, harmonised contract can be procured from 1 April 2019 to serve the whole of Central Bedfordshire. This is expected to deliver significant financial savings from 2014/15.

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**Advising Officer:** Marcel Coiffait, Director of Community Services

**Contact Officer:** Melanie Clay, Chief Legal and Democratic Services Officer  
Tracey Harris, Head of Waste Services

**Public/Exempt:** Report Public. Appendices exempt under category number 3 and 5

**Wards Affected:** All

**Function of:** Executive

**Key Decision** Yes

**Reason for urgency/  
exemption from call-in  
(if appropriate)** N/A

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

The action supports the CBC priorities of:

- Managing growth effectively; and
- Creating safer communities

by providing collection of household waste and recycling (s.45 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990); achieving reductions in waste to landfill (Waste & Emissions Trading Act 2003, Waste Strategy 2007 and Waste Regulations 2011) and keeping public access land and highways clean and free of litter (s.86 EPA 1990).

**Financial:**

1. As an ongoing statutory service, adequate financial provision is made in base budgets for the period of the extension.

**Legal:**

2. The EU Procurement Directives and the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (as amended) apply in light of the value of the contract exceeding the EU procurement threshold, as do the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules. This is a part A Service
3. The legal basis for the proposed recommendations is included in Appendices A and B to this report. It is proposed to publish a Voluntary Transparency Notice in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) detailing the Council's intention to extend the contract to allow for any prospective service suppliers to come forward. If the market responds with any potential challenge further legal advice will be given to allow the Council to react appropriately.

**Risk Management:**

4. An options appraisal setting out the risks are included in Appendix A. If the extension to the waste collection contract is not agreed then the Council will risk significant operational difficulties and financial pressures from letting the contract to a new provider. The risk of challenge in this case is low due to the short term nature of the contract. Also the main opportunity for the long term combined contract for the whole of CBC will be openly procured to commence in 2019 which will be a more attractive offering to the market. This reduces the risk of challenge set out in paragraph 3 above.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

5. Not applicable.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

6. Not applicable - this decision would affect all residents equally and would not impact on the provision of assisted collections.

**Public Health:**

7. The health and wellbeing of residents would be negatively impacted if waste collections and street cleansing were disrupted or unavailable for an extended period of time.

**Community Safety:**

8. The Council's statutory duty under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 includes the need to address environmental crime such as fly tipping. The provision of the waste collection service allows residents to safely deposit their recycling and waste items, in a responsible and legal manner. If the provision of the service were disrupted it could lead to an increase in incidents of fly tipping, a criminal offence. The recommendation to agree to extend the North Waste Collection and Recycling contract ensures the Council fulfils its statutory duties in relation to crime and disorder.

**Sustainability:**

9. This proposal supports the continued efforts of CBC to manage waste as high up the waste hierarchy as possible as dictated by EU and UK legislation. As well as collecting residual waste for treatment and disposal it allows residents to continue to use the kerbside recycling, garden and food waste collections schemes to remove biodegradable waste from landfill, ultimately saving resources and reducing landfill gas emissions.

**Procurement:**

10. The implications for compliance with the European Procurement Rules, the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and the requirement to suspend the Council's Contract Procedure Rules are set out in the legal implications in Appendix B to the report. This proposal for an extension to the contract as a sensible approach as a short term contract of this nature would be unattractive to the market due to the depreciation of plant and equipment over a short period and significant time/cost involved in mobilisation. For these reasons they are an unattractive and unrealistic proposition for other potential providers. Also the main opportunity for the long term combined contract will be openly procured to commence in 2019 which will be a more attractive offering to the market.

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

11. This matter has not been considered by Overview and Scrutiny.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**The Executive is recommended to:**

1. **authorise Officers to issue a Voluntary Transparency Notice in the OJEU indicating the Council's intention to agree an extension to the existing Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract (North); and**
2. **subject to recommendation 1, agree to extend the contract for Waste and Recycling Collection and Street Cleansing for the north of Central Bedfordshire, for a period of 2.5 years from 4 October 2016 to 31 March 2019 and for this purpose, to suspend the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.**

<i>Reason for Recommendation:</i>	<i>This extension will allow the North Waste and Recycling Collection and Street Cleansing contract to align with the end of the South contract on 31 March 2019. As a result, a single, harmonised contract can be procured from 1 April 2019 to serve the whole of Central Bedfordshire.</i>
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### **Executive Summary**

12. The Waste and Recycling Collection and Street Cleansing services in the North and South of Central Bedfordshire are delivered under historic contracts procured by the two predecessor district councils. Both are operated by Biffa Municipal Ltd. The North contract runs to 3 October 2016 and the South to 31 March 2019 with an optional 6 year extension to 2025.
13. The North contract is due to be retendered shortly for a new contract to start on 4 October 2016. However, a separate north procurement does not allow for the harmonisation of the north and south contracts in to a single contract, with common outputs, performance framework and terms and conditions.
14. This report seeks approval to extend the contract for Waste and Recycling Collection and Street Cleansing for the north of Central Bedfordshire, for a period of 2.5 years from 4 October 2016 to 31 March 2019 and for this purpose, to suspend the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. This extension will allow the North contract to align with the end of the South contract on 31 March 2019. As a result, a single, harmonised contract can be procured from 1 April 2019 to serve the whole of Central Bedfordshire.

### **Background**

15. Under section 45 of the EPA 1990 it is the duty of CBC as a Waste Disposal Authority to provide the collection of waste from residents. UK targets for reductions in waste sent to landfill are set out in the WET Act 2003, Waste Strategy 2007 and Waste Regulations 2011. CBC is also a Principle Litter Authority and as such is responsible for keeping public access land and highways clean and free of litter as defined in section 86 of the EPA 1990. Under these obligations, CBC provides the kerbside collection of residual (black bin) waste, co-mingled recycling, green garden waste and food waste and also street cleansing, litter bins, dog bins and fly tipping collection services across the area.
16. The Council's overall objective is for the procurement of a single, harmonised service to cover the whole of Central Bedfordshire as this provides an equitable service and the opportunity to make savings. The contract would have a single set of outputs, performance framework and terms and conditions and has the potential to save costs and deliver service efficiencies. This is unachievable with the current contract end dates and a solution needs to be found.

17. The Waste and Recycling Collection and Street Cleansing services are delivered under separate historic contracts for the North and South of Central Bedfordshire which were procured by Mid Beds and South Beds District Councils respectively. Both are operated by Biffa Municipal Ltd. The North contract runs to 3 October 2016 and the South to 31 March 2019 with an optional 6 year extension to 2025. There is a 2 year 6 month period between the end on the north contract and the end of the south contract.
18. Both contracts perform well in the market. They have been benchmarked across other similar local authority contracts and are financially comparable. They are also well performing from a customer satisfaction perspective with very low volumes of complaints and few general service issues. Some progress has been made to utilise resources across the two contracts such as bulky waste collection and clinical waste collection resources. This has made savings which have been included in previous year's budgets. However any further progress to harmonise the contracts such as route optimisation has been unworkable due to the differing end dates.
19. The annual value of the contract is £4.4m and as such the EU Procurement Regulations and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules apply for a contract award for supplies and services over the threshold value of £172,514 per annum (2014 values).

### Options

20. To inform the approach for the continuation of the service, two options have been considered:
  - a) Conduct a full EU procurement for the service for 2.5 years.
  - b) Extend the current contract to 31 March 2019.

The impacts of each option are set out in Appendix A- Options Analysis- North Waste Collection & Street Cleansing Contract.

21. A third option for a separate standard procurement for each of the north and south was not considered as it does not allow for the harmonisation of the north and south contracts in to a single contract as per the Council's objectives.

### Summary

#### 22. **Option a) To conduct a full EU procurement for the interim period**

This option fulfils all requirements under EU contract law. However, as detailed in Appendix A, it has significant commercial risk implications for the Council such as risk of non-deliverability; additional costs to the council; lack of savings opportunity; additional resource requirements; potential TUPE transfer process; not utilising existing fleet and plant; significant disruption to services and reduced performance. For these reasons it is recommended that this option is not taken forward.

**23. Option b) To extend the current contract to 31 March 2019**

This option holds the risk of potential challenge, and related costs, from other potential service suppliers. It is intended to test the market by issuing a Voluntary Transparency Notice in OJEU. If the market responds with any potential challenge this will be assessed with further legal advice. However the likelihood of any challenge is reduced due to the short term nature of the contract being unattractive to the market, and conversely the opportunity for a subsequent procurement for the full service across both the north and south to commence in April 2019 being very attractive to the market.

24. Option b) also has several other advantages. It is easily deliverable; generates no additional service costs to the Council; has no requirement for additional resources; does not necessitate an additional TUPE process; utilises the remaining life of the current vehicles and plant; has no impact on service operations and, importantly, enables the realisation of significant savings on revenue costs for 2014/15 onwards which would be negotiated with the current contractor.

**Recommendations**

25. In conclusion, given the particular set of circumstances with which we are faced, there is significant justification for the approval of option b) to extend the current contract to 31 March 2019. It is recommended that Members:
1. Authorise officers to issue a Voluntary Transparency Notice in OJEU indicating the Council's intention to agree an extension to the existing Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract (North).
  2. Subject to recommendation 1 agree to extend the current Waste Collection & Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract for the north of Central Bedfordshire, for a period of 2.5 years from 4 October 2016 to 31 March 2019 and for this purpose to suspend the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

**Appendices:**

Appendix A- Options Analysis- North Waste Collection & Street Cleansing Contract. (Exempt)  
Appendix B – Legal Implications (Exempt)

**Background Papers:**

None

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**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 15 July 2014  
**Subject:** New Residential Children's Homes contract – Delivering Outcomes for Vulnerable Children  
**Report of:** Cllr Mark Versallion, Executive Member for Children's Services  
**Summary:** The report proposes that the Executive agrees to award a new contract for the management of residential children's homes from November 2014.

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**Advising Officer:** Edwina Grant, Deputy Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services  
**Contact Officer:** Karen Oellermann, Assistant Director Commissioning and Partnerships  
**Public/Exempt:** Main report Public (Appendix A exempt under exempt paragraph 3 – commercially sensitive information)  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key Decision** Yes  
**Reason for urgency/ exemption from call-in (if appropriate)** Not applicable

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

The provision of residential children's homes relates to the second of the Council's key priorities:

- Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people.

The service also supports the priorities set out in the Children and Young People's Plan:

- Improved educational attainment.
- Protecting vulnerable children.
- Early help and improving life chances.
- Being healthy and positive.

**Financial:**

1. The current contract for residential children's homes costs the Council £854k per year. This cost secures 50% of a shared contract with Bedford Borough Council that provides up to 14 places within two local residential children's homes. The current contract started in 2007 and will end on 30 October 2014.
2. The cost of the current contract equates to £2,346 per bed per week. This is based on Central Bedfordshire having 7 children placed in the homes at all times.
3. *The Department for Education, Children's Homes Data Pack 2013* stated that the national average amount spent on private/voluntary residential children's homes was £3,860 per child per week, and for homes run by Councils it was £4,135 per child per week.
4. The new contract will enable the Council to secure efficiencies of £297k per year based on full occupancy of the homes.

**Legal:**

5. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of looked after children in their community. This duty is supported by statutory guidance (*Securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children 2010*. Department for Education) that makes it clear that children should live in the local authority area, with access to local services and close to their friends and family, when it is safe to do so.
6. The guidance emphasises that 'having the right placement in the right place, at the right time', with the necessary support services such as education and health in place, is crucial in improving placement stability, which leads to better outcomes for looked after children.
7. The National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes were issued by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2011 under section 23 of the Care Standards Act 2000. The Secretary of State will keep the standards under review and may publish amended standards as appropriate. These national minimum standards are underpinned by the Children's Homes Regulations 2001 and as amended January 2014.

**Risk Management:**

8. The commissioning of local residential children's homes enables Council staff and partners to maintain a strong link with looked after children and therefore mitigate any risks to them. Children placed outside of the 'home' Council area face additional risks if their support is not provided in a coordinated way between all agencies.
9. By securing local residential children's homes places via a contract with one provider, the Council will manage the risk of paying significantly increased costs as illustrated in paragraph 3 above.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

10. There would be no impact on staffing.



**Equalities/Human Rights:**

11. The Council has 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 reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
12. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed. Paragraph 13 below outlines the summary of the EIA.
13. The Children's Commissioner and other national research has identified that invariably, the most damaged children and young people are placed in residential care, often with relatively largely unsupported and poorly trained care staff. The young people placed in these establishments need a broad range of support, focused on issues such as treatment, attainment and aspirations, as well as protection from abuse and exploitation. Experiences of residential care are also likely to vary by protected characteristics such as gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The invitation to tender includes a strong focus on addressing the issues that have been identified in national research and the contract is therefore likely to have a positive impact in terms of promoting equality and tackling discrimination.

**Public Health:**

14. By securing places in local residential children's homes, the Council will support looked after children to access statutory health services through working with our local partners.

**Community Safety:**

15. In line with statutory requirements, the providers of residential children's homes are obliged to complete a local area risk assessment in partnership with the police and Council. This assessment will be completed for both homes included in the contract and will be made available to the Community Safety Team.
16. If any specific risks relating to the homes or children placed in the homes are identified, the provider will develop action plans with the Council and police to address these.

**Sustainability:**

17. The re-commissioning of this contract will support the Council to secure improved social benefits by providing sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of looked after children in their community.
18. The new service will also secure economic benefits for the council and will deliver efficiencies as outlined in this report. By placing children locally, this will also reduce other costs associated with supporting children in care, including transport which in turn will have a positive impact on the environment.

**Procurement:**

19. The new service has been tendered in accordance with the Council's Corporate Procurement Rules. The Council's Code of Procurement Governance provides that the Executive must approve expenditure for any procurement over £500,000 per annum. The annual costs of the contract exceed that threshold.

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

20. This report has not been discussed at Overview and Scrutiny.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

**The Executive is asked to:**

1. **approve the award of the contract as outlined in this report and Appendix A.**

<i>Reason for Recommendations:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>To ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations to secure sufficient accommodation for looked after children. .</i></li> <li>• <i>To ensure that the Council provides suitable high quality residential places within the available resources.</i></li> </ul>
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**Executive Summary**

21. The statutory guidance "*Securing sufficient accommodation for looked after children 2010*" from the Department for Education emphasises the need to secure sufficient accommodation that meets the needs of looked after children as a means of achieving better outcomes for this vulnerable group. The award of this contract will support the Council to meet this duty.
22. Central Bedfordshire Council currently has 22 children placed in residential children's homes. Seven of these are placed within the homes managed by St Christopher's; the remaining 15 are placed with providers outside of Central Bedfordshire.
23. The demand for residential places is expected to remain at this level or increase in the next 5 years, therefore securing high quality places locally will support the Council to meet this demand. Further provision of additional residential places will be commissioned before the end of 2014 to address demand.
24. The current contract for local residential children's homes on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council is with the St Christopher's Fellowship, a charitable organisation, and ends on 30 October 2014. The current service provides 14 beds within two residential children's homes.
25. The current contract costs Central Bedfordshire £854k per year. This is 50% of the contract costs regardless of the proportion of use by the two Councils. This equates to each bed costing £2,346 per week.

26. The newly commissioned service will enable the Council to secure efficiencies of at least £297k per year for the life of the 5 year contract. This equates to a 34% reduction in costs against the current service.
27. The new Service Level Agreement with Bedford Borough Council will provide the governance for this contract. Each Council will pay for the places they use, and split the costs for any un-allocated beds on a 50/50 basis.
28. The new contract will also enable the Councils to offer spare places to other Councils who may have suitable young people who could be placed there. This will provide both Councils with the opportunity to maximise the cost effectiveness of the contract if we are unable to place suitable children in the homes.
29. Bedford Borough has agreed to commit to the Service Level Agreement that will support the award of this contract, and for Central Bedfordshire Council to manage the contract on behalf of both Councils.
30. The award of the contract follows a robust re-commissioning process that has focussed on securing the best outcomes for the children that will reside in the homes whilst delivering excellent value for money.
31. The outcome-based specification for the new service reflects nationally recognised good practice and focusses on securing a provider that has demonstrable experience of managing residential children's homes that are recognised by OFSTED as Good or Outstanding.
32. There were five providers that submitted an application to manage the residential homes. Of these original applicants, three were shortlisted and invited to interview. The shortlisting and interviews were supported by representatives from both Councils and the Children in Care Council.
33. The results of the competitive commissioning process are enclosed in Appendix A.

### **Background Information**

34. The Council inherited a service from the predecessor County Council for the management of three children's residential homes with the St Christopher's Fellowship. This contract started in 2007 and will end on 30 October 2014.
35. Bedford Borough Council currently manages the contract with St Christopher's. Central Bedfordshire Council pay Bedford Borough Council 50% of the contract regardless of the proportion of beds that is used by each Council.
36. The original contract was for the management of three residential homes – 80 Bunyan Road, Kempston, 32 Bedford Road, Clophill and 14 St Peter's Close, Flitwick. Due to an inadequate OFSTED inspection in 2012, the Councils, in conjunction with St Christopher's Fellowship, decided to close the home in Flitwick.

37. The Clophill home is currently graded as Good by OFSTED. The Kempston home is graded as Good by OFSTED.
38. The Clophill home is owned by Central Bedfordshire Council, the Kempston home is owner by Bedford Borough Council. The successful provider will be provided with contained leases for the management of the buildings for the whole of the 5 year contract.
39. The new specification for services reflects the considerable changes to the statutory requirements for residential children's homes. The specification has been designed to reflect the outcomes of Central Bedfordshire's Children and Young People's Plan and the Bedford Borough Partnership Framework for Bedford Borough Children, Young People and Families.

### **Conclusion and Next Steps**

40. The Executive is asked to agree to award the contract to the successful provider as proposed in Appendix A.
41. Following the decision of the Executive, the contract will be awarded to start from 1 November 2014 to secure a seamless continuation of the service for the children currently placed in the homes.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix A – **Exempt** results of competitive commissioning process

### **Background Papers:** (open to public inspection)

None.

**Location of papers:** Priory House, Chicksands

**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 15 July 2014  
**Subject:** Quarter 4 Performance Report  
**Report of:** Cllr Maurice Jones, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources  
**Summary:** To report on Quarter 4 2013/14 performance for Central Bedfordshire Council's Medium Term Plan indicator set.

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**Advising Officer:** Deb Clarke, Director of Improvement and Corporate Services  
**Contact Officer:** Elaine Malarky, Head of Programme & Performance Management  
**Public/Exempt:** Public  
**Wards Affected:** All  
**Function of:** Executive  
**Key Decision** No  
**Reason for urgency/  
exemption from call-in** N/A

#### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

**Council Priorities:**

The quarterly Medium Term Plan performance report underpins the delivery of all Council priorities.

**Financial:**

1. None directly but the indicator set does monitor the percentage increase in Council Tax.

**Legal:**

2. None.

**Risk Management:**

3. Any areas of on-going underperformance would be a risk to both service delivery and the reputation of the Council.

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

4. None.

**Equalities/Human Rights:**

5. This report highlights performance against a range of indicators which measure how the Council is delivering against its Medium Term Plan priorities. It identifies specific areas of underperformance which can be highlighted for further analysis. Whilst many of the indicators deal with information important in assessing equality, it is reported at the headline level in this report.
6. To meet the Council's stated intention of tackling inequalities and delivering services so that people whose circumstances make them vulnerable are not disadvantaged, performance data for indicators in this set is supported by more detailed performance data analysis at the service level and this is used to support the completion of equality impact assessments. These impact assessments provide information on the underlying patterns and trends for different sections of the community and identify areas where further action is required to improve outcomes for vulnerable groups.

**Public Health:**

7. The indicator set includes an indicator monitoring the percentage of 40 to 74 year olds offered a health check.

**Community Safety:**

8. The levels of Serious Acquisitive Crime and Anti-social behaviour are included in the indicator set.

**Sustainability:**

9. Included in the indicator set are a broad range of indicators relating to sustainability including those covering employment, access to broadband, library usage, active recreation and waste.

**Procurement:**

10. Not applicable.

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

11. This report will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committees during their July 2014 cycle of meetings.

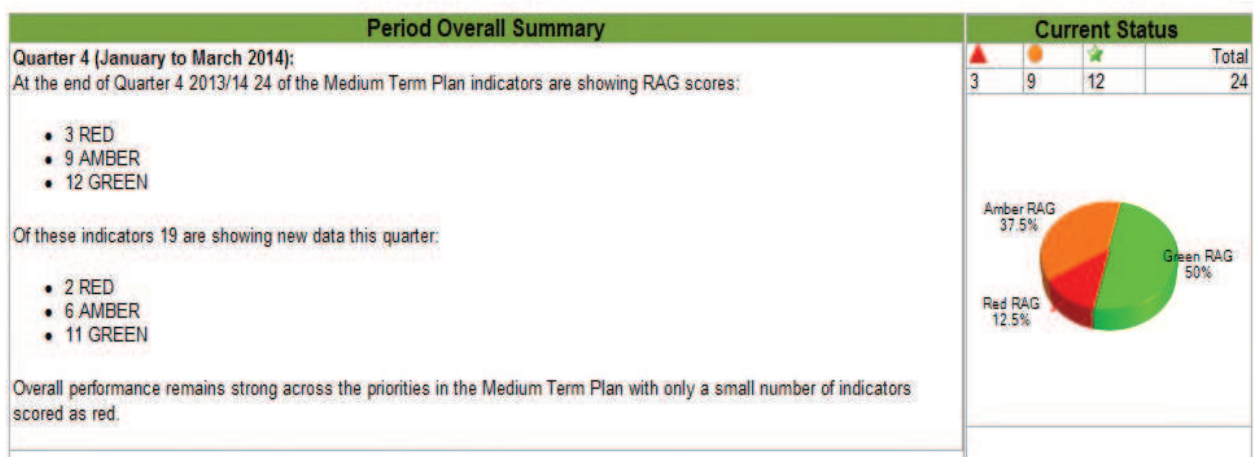
**RECOMMENDATION: The Executive is asked to:**

1. **acknowledge the continuing good performance in Quarter 4, and overall improvement across the Medium Term Plan indicators in 2013/14, and to recommend officers to further investigate and resolve underperforming indicators as appropriate.**

<i>Reason for Recommendation:</i>	<i>To ensure a rigorous approach to performance management across Central Bedfordshire Council.</i>
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<b>Executive Summary</b>	
12.	This report focuses on the indicators that support the monitoring of progress against the priorities in the Council's Medium Term Plan.
13.	<p>The report comprises of the following sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall summary for the reporting period</li> <li>• The Executive report scorecard</li> <li>• This Quarter's Green performance</li> <li>• This Quarter's Amber performance</li> <li>• This Quarter's Red performance</li> <li>• Directorate summaries.</li> </ul>
<b>Overall Summary</b>	
14.	This report shows that overall the Council's performance has continued to strengthen over 2013/14 and in paragraphs 16 to 19 this quarter's performance is reported in more detail.
15.	<p>There are 29 indicators in the current MTP basket, performance for 24 of these is monitored against agreed targets and a RAG status reported, and there are five indicators where we monitor direction of travel only.</p> <p>No direct comparison against last year can be made for nine of these indicators. During 2013/14, seven of these were changed to either strengthen the robustness of the indicator or better reflect new ways of working. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident's satisfaction indicator for road and pavement maintenance which is now reported as two indicators.</li> <li>• Percentage of dementia care that is 'good' or 'excellent' as in 2012/13 we were monitoring our progress in putting in place the systems necessary to judge the quality of care. Similarly with Village Care scheme coverage, rather than measure our delivery plan we have started reporting the actual percentage achieved this year as this is also the case for the delivery of extra care flats.</li> <li>• Following the Munro review of children's safeguarding we have moved to a new system of single assessment and changed two of our indicators accordingly</li> </ul> <p>and we await results for the two indicators which measure broadband coverage.</p> <p>Where we can directly compare actuals for 2013/14 with the actuals reported in 2012/13, it is pleasing to report that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eleven indicators show improved performance</li> <li>• five indicators show no change from 2012/13, with four of these continuing to achieve the maximum level of performance; and</li> <li>• four show a slight downturn.</li> </ul> <p>Overall this is encouraging and shows real progress has been made in 2013/14.</p>

16. In the table below it can be seen that at the year end of those indicators which we RAG score, twelve indicators were meeting or exceeding agreed targets (GREEN), nine narrowly missed targets (AMBER) and three had missed their target and were scored as RED. Those not scored are where targets have not been set. Importantly, within each of the RED, AMBER and GREEN categories there are indicators showing significant improvement when compared to 2012/13.



17. Overall in this quarter, performance remained good across the Medium Term Plan (MTP) priorities with twelve indicators meeting their MTP targets and therefore scored as Green.

Eleven of these indicators reported new data this Quarter:

- Throughout 2013/14, the Council maintained its 100% record of approved residential developments of ten or more units achieving CABE excellent status (A3 MTP).
- At year end for Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC), which includes domestic burglary, robbery and theft of and from a motor vehicle, we achieved our MTP target of having a crime rate of less than 11.8 crimes per 1,000 population, with an overall annual rate of 11.3 crimes per 1,000. In Quarter 4, the crime rate was 2.9 crimes per 1,000 population compared to 3.2 in the same quarter last year. It is acknowledged that Central Bedfordshire is seeing higher than expected levels of SAC and the Community Safety Partnership has identified a range of measures including Integrated Offender Management to address this (A4 MTP).
- The number of education and training opportunities made available last Autumn increased to 5,211, exceeding the Council's annual target (B3 MTP).
- Throughout 2013/14, the percentage of schools classed by Ofsted as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' consistently exceeded the target of 75% and ended the year at 83% (B4 MTP).
- Our indicator monitoring our effectiveness in protecting vulnerable adults was scored as Green throughout 2013/14, reflecting amongst other things the robust auditing processes that are in place and the improvements that have been made to the Adult Social Care database (Swift) (C1 MTP).
- We ended the year with the Village Care Scheme covering every ward in Central Bedfordshire (C4a MTP).



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognising the importance of good quality dementia care the Council has worked with care providers to get the quality of their work accredited. It is therefore encouraging that we have achieved this year's target of having 60% of all Council commissioned dementia care provided rated as either 'Good' or 'Outstanding' (C5a MTP).</li> <li>• The number of Health Checks offered at 21,058 greatly exceeded the target of 15,916 in 2013/14 and highlights the importance placed on these checks as an opportunity for the early detection and prevention of poor health (C7 MTP).</li> <li>• Performance in respect of the percentage of child protection cases due to be reviewed during the year that were reviewed, throughout the year remained at 100% (C10 MTP).</li> <li>• Whilst we currently only have data to the close of Quarter 3, the year to date position shows that we are continuing to meet our target of ensuring that 51% of waste is sent for reuse, recycling or composting (E1 MTP).</li> <li>• With no increase in the Council's element we continued to meet the 0% increase in Council Tax target (F1 MTP).</li> </ul> <p>The indicator not reporting new data this Quarter is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfaction with the Library Service, where a 95% satisfaction rate was last reported in March 2013 (E3 MTP).</li> </ul>
18.	<p>In this Quarter there are nine indicators scored as Amber.</p> <p>Six of these indicators reported new data this Quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The latest data (September 2013) for the number of people in employment, shows the third successive quarterly improvement, and with the Central Bedfordshire employment rate 4.7% above the national average we are moving closer to achieving our target of being 5% above the national average (A2 MTP).</li> <li>• The annual measure for the percentage of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) shows that Central Bedfordshire at 4.3% continues to out perform the national average (5.3%) and the regional average (5.1%). This indicator is scored as Amber because we remain just outside the top quartile (43<sup>rd</sup> out of 152 authorities). We would need to be 38<sup>th</sup> or higher to be in the top quartile, which is our target (B2 MTP).</li> <li>• At the close of the year, 99.6% of Council housing stock was classified as decent. Whilst this is just below the MTP target of 100% it reflects a change in approach outlined in the Housing Asset Management Strategy designed to make more efficient use of resources (C3 MTP).</li> <li>• Following the Munro review of Safeguarding and the publication of the Working Together Statutory Guidance we have moved to a new single stage assessment process. Under this new approach at the end of Quarter 4, 72.5% of referrals of children led to the provision of a social care service. This is very close to the target of 75% (C8a MTP).</li> <li>• At the close of 2013/14, 84.4% of children's social care assessments were carried out within 45 working days. Whilst this falls short of our ambitious yet realistic target (90%) this is good performance and we are confident of further improvements in 2014/15 (C9a MTP); and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Bedfordshire continues to do well when compared to other authorities when it comes to the average time taken between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family. Whilst the provisional outturn performance for 2013/14 was 4 days above the national target at 551 days (due to a number of longer term cases being concluding in Quarter 4), meaning that it was scored as Amber, this was a significant improvement of the previous year where our outturn was 600 days, (C11 MTP).</li> </ul> <p>The three indicator not reporting new data this Quarter are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resident’s satisfaction with road maintenance (D1a MTP) and pavement maintenance (D1b MTP). These were last reported in September 2013 at 33% and 45% respectively; and</li> <li>• The Active People’s Survey published in December 2013 recorded that 23.6% of adults in Central Bedfordshire were taking part in sport or active recreation.</li> </ul>
19.	<p>In this Quarter there are two indicators scored as Red.</p> <p>These indicators reported new data this Quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the number of additional ‘Extra Care’ flats provided, which as previously reported is scored as Red due to delay in the building of the flats. However progress is now being made the ‘Ground breaking event’ marking the start of work on Priory View site on the 11 April 2014 (C2 MTP); and</li> <li>• the percentage of social care clients receiving self-directed support indicator is scored as Red as it reflects the ambitious 100% MTP target. The provisional outturn of 74.6 % for 2013/14 shows a small dip in performance, however it is likely that this will show as good performance when compared to our statistical neighbours and others within the Eastern region, once this finalised comparative data becomes available later in the year (C6 MTP).</li> </ul>

**Appendices:** Appendix A

**Background Papers:** None.

### Enhance your local community

...	Performance will be reported	Latest Data	Performance Judgement	Current Status
A1 MTP Percentage of Central Bedfordshire residents satisfied with the local area as a place to live	Resident's Survey	Sep 13	↑	n/a
A2 MTP Number of people in employment aged (16 to 64) (% above national average)	Quarterly	Sep 13	↑	🟡
A3 MTP % of approved residential developments achieving CABE excellent status	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	🟢
A4 MTP Number of Serious Acquisitive Crimes (Rate for 1,000)	Quarterly	Mar 14	↑	🟢
A5 MTP Number of recorded anti-social behaviour incidents	Quarterly	Mar 14	↑	n/a

### Improved educational attainment

...	Performance will be reported	Latest Data	Performance Judgement	Current Status
B1 MTP Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English & Maths - ranking	Annual (School Yr)	Dec 13	↓	🔴
B2 MTP Young People who are not in education, employment or training-Ranking	Annual Average (Nov - Jan)	Feb 14	↓	🟡
B3 MTP Number of education and training opportunities made available in the Autumn.	Annual (School Yr)	Dec 13	↑	🟢
B4 MTP Published Ofsted School & College classifications (% good/outstanding)	Quarterly	Mar 14	↓	🟢

### Promote health and wellbeing and protect the vulnerable

...	Performance will be reported	Latest Data	Performance Judgement	Current Status
C1 MTP Protecting Vulnerable Adults	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	🟢
C2 MTP Additional 'Extra Care' flats provided	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	🔴
C3 MTP Percentage of decent homes (Council stock)	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	🟡
C4a MTP Village Care Scheme % Coverage	Quarterly	Mar 14	↑	🟢
C5a MTP Percentage of council commissioned dementia classed as 'good' or 'excellent'	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	🟢
C6 MTP % clients receiving self directed support	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	🔴
C7 MTP Percentage of 40 to 74 year olds offered a health check	Quarterly	Mar 14	↑	🟢
C8a MTP % of referrals of children leading to the provision of a social care service (Cumulative)	Quarterly	Mar 14	↑	🟡
C9a MTP % of children's social care assessments within 45 working days of start (Cumulative)	Quarterly	Mar 14	↑	🟡
C10 MTP % child protection cases due to be reviewed during that year were reviewed	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	🟢
C11 MTP Average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	🟡

### Better infrastructure

...	Performance will be reported	Latest Data	Performance Judgement	Current Status
D1a MTP Percentage resident satisfaction with road maintenance	Resident's Survey	Sep 13	↑	🟡
D1b MTP Percentage resident satisfaction with pavement maintenance	Resident's Survey	Sep 13	→	🟡
D2 MTP Percentage of Central Bedfordshire with access to superfast broadband	Annual (March)	Mar 13	↑	🟡
D3 MTP Percentage of Central Bedfordshire with access to at least 2Mb broadband	Annual (March)	Mar 13	↑	🟡

**Great universal services**

	Performance will be reported	Latest Data	Performance Judgement	Current Status
...				
E1 MTP % of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (cumulative)	Quarterly	Dec 13	↓	🌱
E2 MTP Percentage of adults in Central Bedfordshire taking part in sport or active recreation (Activ	Bi-Annual	Dec 13	↑	🟡
E3 MTP Percentage Satisfaction of adults with library services	Annual (March)	Mar 13	↑	🌱
E4 MTP Number of visits to libraries	Annual (March)	Mar 14	↑	⚠️
<b>Value for money</b>				
...	Performance will be reported	Latest Data	Performance Judgement	Current Status
F1 MTP Percentage increase in Council Tax	Annual (March)	Mar 14	→	🌱

## Green Performance

Indicator	Latest data	Target (Period)	Actual (Period)	Current Status
A3 MTP % of approved residential developments achieving CABE excellent status	Mar 14	100	100	★
A4 MTP Number of Serious Acquisitive Crimes (Rate for 1,000)	Mar 14	3.2	2.9	★
B3 MTP Number of education and training opportunities made available in the Autumn.	Dec 13	5,169	5,211	★
B4 MTP Published Ofsted School & College classifications (% good/outstanding)	Mar 14	75	83	★
C1 MTP Protecting Vulnerable Adults	Mar 14	?	Green	★
C10 MTP % child protection cases due to be reviewed during that year were reviewed	Mar 14	100.0	100.0	★
C4a MTP Village Care Scheme % Coverage	Mar 14	100.00	100.00	★
C5a MTP Percentage of council commissioned dementia classed as 'good' or 'excellent'	Mar 14	60.00	61.20	★
C7 MTP Percentage of 40 to 74 year olds offered a health check	Mar 14	100.00	138.25	★
E1 MTP % of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (cumulative)	Dec 13	51.00	51.20	★
E3 MTP Percentage Satisfaction of adults with library services	Mar 13	93	95	★
F1 MTP Percentage increase in Council Tax	Mar 14	0.00	0.00	★

## Amber Performance

Indicator	Latest data	Target (Period)	Actual (Period)	Current Status
A2 MTP Number of people in employment aged (16 to 64) (% above national average)	Sep 13	5.00	4.70	●
B2 MTP Young People who are not in education, employment or training-Ranking	Feb 14	38.00	43.00	●
C11 MTP Average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family	Mar 14	547	551	●
C3 MTP Percentage of decent homes (Council stock)	Mar 14	100.0	99.6	●
C8a MTP % of referrals of children leading to the provision of a social care service (Cumulative)	Mar 14	75.0	72.5	●
C9a MTP % of children's social care assessments within 45 working days of start (Cumulative)	Mar 14	90.0	84.4	●
D1a MTP Percentage resident satisfaction with road maintenance	Sep 13	36.0	33.0	●
D1b MTP Percentage resident satisfaction with pavement maintenance	Sep 13	50.00	45.00	●
E2 MTP Percentage of adults in Central Bedfordshire taking part in sport or active recreation (Activ	Dec 13	24.8	23.6	●

## Red Performance

Indicator	Latest data	Target (Period)	Actual (Period)	Current Status
B1 MTP Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English & Maths -ranking	Dec 13	50.00	114.00	▲
C2 MTP Additional 'Extra Care' flats provided	Mar 14	?	Red	▲
C6 MTP % clients receiving self directed support	Mar 14	100.0	74.6	▲



Social Care, Health & Housing						
Promote health and wellbeing and protect the vulnerable	Performance will be reported	Latest Data	Direction of Travel	Current Status		
C1 MTP Protecting Vulnerable Adults	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	→		
C2 MTP Additional 'Extra Care' flats provided	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	→		
C3 MTP Percentage of decent homes (Council stock)	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	→		
C4a MTP Village Care Scheme % Coverage	Quarterly	Mar 14	←	→		
C5a MTP Percentage of council commissioned dementia classed as 'good' or 'excellent'	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	→		
C6 MTP % clients receiving self directed support	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	→		

## Summary - Social Care, Health & Housing

### Quarter 4 (January to March 2014)/2013-14 Outturn

The Directorate has performed well during 2013-14 against the Medium Term Plan priority "Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable".

Performance remained consistently strong for the proportion of customers receiving self-directed support (C1 MTP). There was a slight drop in the proportion of customers receiving self-directed support, compared to the previous year, however overall performance still exceeded the national target and remains strong in comparison to neighbouring authorities and the Eastern region. The local aspiration to achieve 100% remains.

A Ground Breaking event marking the start of the construction work at the Priory View Extra Care development site took place on the 11th April 2014. The anticipated completion date for Priory View is August 2015.

The Village Care Schemes for Sandy and Leighton/Linslade came into being in February and March 2014, with the Leighton/Linslade scheme covering the three wards in Leighton Buzzard and Linslade. All Wards in Central Bedfordshire are now covered by a Village Care scheme, achieving the target of 100% coverage.

Progress has been maintained in the other targets.

## Public Health

Promote health and wellbeing and protect the vulnerable

C7 MTP Percentage of 40 to 74 year olds offered a health check

Performance will be reported	Latest Data	Direction of Travel	Current Status
Quarterly	Mar 14	↑	↑

## Summary - Public Health

### Quarter 4 (January to March 2014)

The number of Health Check invitations offered exceeded the revised target set as stated in the Medium Term Plan reaching 132% by the end of the full period.

In addition to the figures relating to those having been offered Health Checks, the cumulative percentage of Health Checks delivered was 87% for the period, a similar level of performance from 2012/13.

The reasons for not achieving the annual target for Health Checks delivered included some significant underperformance by some providers. This under-activity could not be fully supplemented by either alternative GP providers or alternative commissioned services. Work will continue to support the underperforming Primary Care providers with as well as exploring alternative methods of delivery, including clustering delivery around high-performing providers within GP localities. Horizon Health Choices will also be contracted to increase delivery options, both in supporting under-performing providers and ensuring supplementary delivery of the NHS Health Check service in a range of community settings.



## Children's Services

Improved educational attainment	Performance will be reported	Latest Data	Direction of Travel	Current Status
B1 MTP Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English & Maths - ranking	Annual (School Yr)	Dec 13	↘	▲
B2 MTP Young People who are not in education, employment or training-Ranking	Annual Average (Nov - Jan)	Feb 14	↘	●
B3 MTP Number of education and training opportunities made available in the Autumn.	Annual (School Yr)	Dec 13	↗	★
B4 MTP Published Ofsted School & College classifications (% good/outstanding)	Quarterly	Mar 14	↘	★
<b>Promote health and wellbeing and protect the vulnerable</b>				
C8a MTP % of referrals of children leading to the provision of a social care service (Cumulative)	Quarterly	Mar 14	↗	●
C9a MTP % of children's social care assessments within 45 working days of start (Cumulative)	Quarterly	Mar 14	↗	●
C10 MTP % child protection cases due to be reviewed during that year were reviewed	Quarterly	Mar 14	↗	★
C11 MTP Average time in days between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family	Quarterly	Mar 14	↘	●

## Summary - Children's Services

### Quarter 4 (January to March 2014):

The percentage of young people not in education, employment or training is low and Central Bedfordshire continues to perform well at 4.3% - better than the national average 5.3% and the regional average 5.1%. An Amber rating has been given as the target of being in the top quartile has been missed by 0.2%. Central Bedfordshire remains in the 2nd quartile of all Local Authorities and is currently 43rd out of 152 Authorities. To be in the top quartile Central Bedfordshire needs to be in the top 38 performing authorities.

The number of education and training opportunities made available during the Autumn in Central Bedfordshire has increased to 5211 from 5169 the previous year.

End of year performance shows 83% of schools and colleges are good or outstanding - which is good performance. Ofsted publish a similar indicator which does not include colleges or sponsored Academies which are yet to be inspected. This shows Central Bedfordshire compares well to statistical neighbours and national averages - as at 31 December 2013, 85% of Central Bedfordshire Schools are good or better and the Statistical Neighbour Average was 79% and England 80%.

Provisional performance data across safeguarding measures is good at the end of 2013/14. Child protection reviews completed within timescales continue to achieve the 100% target.

The 90% target for assessments completed within 45 days is ambitious and whilst this level of performance was not achieved, our provisional outcome of 84.4% demonstrates that performance is good. The new processes are now well established with further improvement expected in 2014/15.

Referrals leading to the provision of a social care service is close to the 75% target at 72.5%. This indicator reflects the proportion of referrals that go on to further social care support, in most cases this will be to start an assessment. Detailed analysis of completed referrals has shown that assessments are started where needed and continue to focus correctly on the right children who need our services.

Children are placed in their permanent home without undue delay which is particularly important in enabling very young children to form positive emotional attachments. The average timescales from entering care and moving in with adoptive family for the 3 years ending 31/03/14 was 551 days which is 4 days above the nationally set target threshold, 49 days below our 2012/13 outcome and 79 days below the comparator average for 2012/13. So, although timescales for adoption have dipped, as some longer term cases come through the system, there has been improvement on last year and Central Bedfordshire continues to compare well to other local authorities. With more adoptions planned and shorter timescales in most cases it is expected that improvements will continue.

## Community Services

Enhance your local community	Performance will be reported	Latest Data	Direction of Travel	Current Status
A1 MTP Percentage of Central Bedfordshire residents satisfied with the local area as a place to live	Resident's Survey	Sep 13	↑	n/a
A5 MTP Number of recorded anti-social behaviour incidents	Quarterly	Mar 14	↑	n/a
A4 MTP Number of Serious Acquisitive Crimes (Rate for 1,000)	Seasonal Quarterly	Mar 14	↑	★
Better infrastructure				
D1a MTP Percentage resident satisfaction with road maintenance	Resident's Survey	Sep 13	↑	●
D1b MTP Percentage resident satisfaction with pavement maintenance	Resident's Survey	Sep 13	↓	●
Great universal services				
E1 MTP % of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (cumulative)	Quarterly	Dec 13	↓	★
E2 MTP Percentage of adults in Central Bedfordshire taking part in sport or active recreation-Active	Bi-Annual	Dec 13	↑	●
E3 MTP Percentage Satisfaction of adults with library services	Annual (March)	Mar 13	↑	★
E4 MTP Number of visits to libraries	Annual (March)	Mar 14	↑	↓

## Summary - Community Services

### Quarter 4 (January to March 2014)

Quarter 4 saw lower rates of serious acquisitive crime and anti-social behaviour than were recorded in the same quarter in 2012/13. In the case of anti-social behaviour this was a reduction of 15%. In response to the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, the Community Safety Partnership has supported the development of an ASB Partnership group to bring about a more victim centred approach with swifter responses.

The latest data (Quarter 3 2013/14) showed a drop in the percentage of waste being sent for recycling, reuse or composting following a seasonal trend, but the cumulative performance for the year at 51.2% shows that we are still on track to meet our annual target.

*Note to CMT: the Resident's Survey indicators a formally reported to Executive with supporting commentary in the Quarter 1 Report and the Library Service Survey has not yet been undertaken.*

# Directorate Summaries

Regeneration					
Enhance your local community	Performance will be reported	Latest Data	Direction of Travel	Current Status	
A2 MTP Number of people in employment aged (16 to 64) (% above national average)	Quarterly	Sep 13	↑	🟡	
A3 MTP % of approved residential developments achieving CABE excellent status	Quarterly	Mar 14	→	🟢	
Better infrastructure					
D2 MTP Percentage of Central Bedfordshire with access to superfast broadband	Annual (March)	Mar 13	↑	🟡	
D3 MTP Percentage of Central Bedfordshire with access to at least 2Mb broadband	Annual (March)	Mar 13	↑	🟡	

## Summary - Regeneration

### Quarter 4 (January to March 2014)

Recognising the time delay in the reporting of employment data it still encouraging to note that the latest data (September 2013) shows the fourth successive quarterly increase in the employment rate. This latest data shows that we are 4.7% above the national rate, 1% above the East of England and 0.7% above the SEMLEP average. We will continue to build on this good performance in 2014/15, as we actively work to encourage the growth of suitable businesses in Central Bedfordshire; influencing this through effective use of our assets, sector development and a package of support from Central Bedfordshire Council.

A key factor in the development of new businesses and jobs is the need to have the right information technology in place. Included in this quarter is some updated broadband availability data, whilst this is not directly comparable to the data required as per the definition of our two MTP indicators we annually report, it does show that good progress is being made in the roll out of both 2Mb and superfast broadband.

Finance				
Value for money	Performance will be reported	Latest Data	Direction of Travel	Current Status
F1 MTP Percentage increase in Council Tax	Annual (March)	Mar 14	➔	★

## Summary - Finance

### Quarter 4 (January to March 2014)

At Full Council on the 20 February 2014, the Council agreed for the fourth consecutive year not to increase the Council Tax charges it makes, so there will be no increase for the 2014/15 year. This has only been possible through very careful financial management which has seen some £60M removed from the annual running costs of the Council since 2009.

Whilst no increase in Council Tax means that further savings have to be made in the 2014/15 financial year, this is being carefully planned so that front line services are protected as much as possible. The savings will be made through re-negotiated contracts, income generation, use of technology and changes to the way we deliver services.

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