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

This meeting will be filmed.*

please ask for Sandra Hobbs
direct line 0300 300 5257
date 22 November 2018

NOTICE OF MEETING

EXECUTIVE

Date & Time
Tuesday, 4 December 2018 at 9.30 a.m.

Venue at
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
	R Wenham	–	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources
	I Dalgarno	–	Executive Member for Community Services
	S Dixon	–	Executive Member for Families, Education and Children and Lead Member for Children's Services
	E Ghent	–	Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery
	Ms C Hegley	–	Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations (HRA)
	B Spurr	–	Executive Member for Health
	N Young	–	Executive Member for Regeneration

All other Members of the Council - on request

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

***This meeting will be filmed by the Council for live and/or subsequent broadcast online and can be viewed at https://centralbedfordshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home.**

At the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting will be filmed by the Council. The footage will then be published to the Council's website. A copy of it will also be retained in accordance with the Council's data retention policy. The images and sound recording may be used for training purposes within the Council.

By entering the Chamber you are deemed to have consented to being filmed by the Council, including during any representation you might make, and to the possible use of the images and sound recordings made by the Council for webcasting and/or training purposes.

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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 9 October 2018.

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 Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part 4G of the Constitution.

6. **Public Participation**

   To respond to general questions and statements from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part 4G of the Constitution.

7. **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

   To receive the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019.

Decisions

Item Subject

8. **Gypsy and Traveller Responsiveness**

   To seek support for additional Council resources to support our response to Gypsy and Traveller matters in Central Bedfordshire.

9. **The Future of Ampthill Day Centre for Older People**

To consider the outcome of the consultation into the future of the Ampthill Day Centre and agree the relocation of the service to Silsoe Horticultural Centre and other community venues.

10. **Discharge of Homelessness Duty to a Suitable Private Sector Home Policy**

To present the draft Discharge of Homelessness Duty to a Suitable Private Sector Home Policy for Executive approval.

11. **Using Compulsory Purchase Orders to bring Empty Homes back into Occupation**

The report presents a case to use compulsory purchase order (CPO) powers to bring empty homes back into occupation. The report recommends the use of CPO for a particular long term empty home but also seeks delegated authority to take all necessary steps to complete the process.

12. **East West Rail Western Section (Phase 2)- Central Bedfordshire Council Formal Objection**

To ratify the recently submitted 'Statement of Case' made to the Department for Transport by CBC relating to Phase 2 of the Western Section of East West Rail (Bicester to Bedford and Aylesbury to Milton Keynes).

13. **Revised Policies for Travel Assistance for Children and Pupils Attending School and Post 16 Students and Post 19 Young People in Education**

To seek the views on adopting the revised Travel Assistance Policies and consulting on a post 19 Transport Policy.

14. **Regional Adoption Agency**

This report sets out the plans for forming the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) which will be hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council and seeks delegated authority for the Director of Children's Services (DCS) to negotiate and conclude a partnering agreement to enable this to be implemented with a planned live date of 1 April 2019.

15. **Consultation on the Council's Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year 2020**

To approve the commencement of the Council's consultation on admission arrangements to ensure the statutory requirement for admissions consultation is met. The Council is the admissions authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

16. **Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2018 - 2021**

To summarise progress in reviewing the Council's Equality Strategy and developing a refreshed Equality Action Plan 2018 – 2021.

17. **Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20**

To review the Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme and address the requirement to recommend to Council the approach to Local Council Tax Support for 2019/20.

18. **Voluntary and Community Sector Funding Review – Phase 1**

To provide Members with the outcomes of the scrutiny task force review into voluntary and community infrastructure funding in Central Bedfordshire.

19. **Procurement of Facilities Management Contracts**

To authorise the procurement of Facilities Management Contracts and to delegate authority to the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery, to award the Contracts.

20. **Award of Contract – The Repairs, Maintenance and Capital Works Programme**

This report seeks approval to award the contract for the repairs, maintenance and capital works programme to the Council's housing stock.

Monitoring Matters

Item Subject

21. **Revenue Budget Monitoring - September 2018 (Quarter 2)**

The report sets out the forecast outturn financial position for 2018/19 as at the end of September 2018.

22. **Capital Budget Monitoring Report - September 2018 (Quarter 2)**

The report sets out the Capital forecast outturn for 2018/19 as at the end of September 2018.

23. **Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring - September 2018 (Quarter 2)**

The report provides information on the 2018/19 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) projected outturn revenue and capital position as at September 2018.

24. **Performance Report - September 2018 (Quarter 2)**

To report Quarter 2 2018/19 performance for Central Bedfordshire Council's Medium Term Plan (MTP) indicator set.

25. **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 Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Exempt Appendices

Item	*Subject*	*Exempt Para.*
26.	**Using Compulsory Purchase Orders to bring Empty Homes back into Occupation** To receive the exempt Appendix.	* 3
27.	**Award of Contract – The Repairs, Maintenance and Capital Works Programme** To receive the exempt Appendix.	* 3

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** held in the Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Tuesday, 9 October 2018.

PRESENT

Cllr J G Jamieson (Chairman)
Cllr R D Wenham (Vice-Chairman)

Executive Members:	Cllrs	I Dalgarno S Dixon E Ghent	Cllrs	Ms C Hegley B J Spurr J N Young
Deputy Executive Members:	Cllrs	A D Brown K M Collins Ms C Maudlin	Cllrs	Mrs T Stock S Watkins B Wells
Apologies for Absence:	Cllrs	Mrs S Clark Mrs A L Dodwell		
Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	C C Gomm Mrs S A Goodchild	Cllrs	P Hollick J A G Saunders

Officers in Attendance	Mr R Carr	Chief Executive
	Mr M Coiffait	Director of Community Services
	Mr A Davie	Development Infrastructure Group Manager
	Mrs S Hobbs	Senior Committee Services Officer
	Mrs J Ogley	Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
	Mr S Rix	Interim Monitoring Officer
	Mrs M Scott	Director of Public Health
	Mrs S Tyler	Assistant Director Business and Supporting Services
	Mr C Warboys	Director of Resources

E/18/44 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 August 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

E/18/45 **Members' Interests**

None were declared.

E/18/46 **Chairman's Announcements**

Central Bedfordshire Council had been recognised, jointly with Northumberland County Council, as the best school places planning authority in the country.

E/18/47 **Petitions**

Bus Shelter, Caddington

Mr Waller presented a petition, signed by 151 residents, requesting the Council to refrain from demolishing the brick and tile bus shelter in the centre of Caddington. He explained the history and the location of the bus shelter. He hoped that with the increased growth in the area, bus services would be improved and that the bus shelter would be used again. The parish council was hoping to renovate the shelter similar.

Councillor Collins presented a petition, on behalf of the lead petitioner, signed by 192 residents, seeking the demolition of the bus shelter. He highlighted the reasons for the proposed removal, which included that the bus shelter was no longer in use, it impeded the sight line for drivers and that it was covered in graffiti. The lead petitioner had suggested that a commemoration bench would be more appealing.

The Executive Member for Community Services referred the petitions to the Traffic Management meeting to enable him to receive a full report from officers so that he could make an informed decision on the future of the bus shelter. It was emphasised that this meeting would be held in public.

E/18/48 **Public Participation**

No members of the public had registered to speak.

E/18/49 **Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

RESOLVED

that the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 November 2018 to 31 October 2019 be noted.

E/18/50 **Farm Estate Plan – Adoption of Plan**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery that summarised feedback from the recent public consultation and presented the final Farm Estate Plan.

Reason for decision: To enable the Council to manage its farm estates.

RESOLVED

1. **that the results of the public consultation on the draft Farms Estate Plan be noted; and**

2. **that the Farms Estate Plan be adopted.**

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/51 **Fees and Charges 2019**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that set out the proposed fees and charges for 2019.

In response to a question, the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children confirmed that Academies were seeking advice from the School Improvement Team. The proposed charges for traded services to schools and academies for 2019/20 would be considered by the Executive on 5 February 2019.

RECOMMENDED to Council

1. ***that the pricing schedule and the inflationary rate to be applied (where applicable) for January 2019 Fees and Charges, set out in Appendices C to K to the Executive report, be approved; and***

2. ***that the Fees & Charges analysis, set out at Appendices A and B to the Executive report be noted.***

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/52 **Recommissioning Support Services for Children and Young People**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children that outlined the approach that had been taken and the rationale for the proposed option for recommissioning support services for children and young people.

In response to questions, the Executive Member confirmed that the procurement process would be from October 2018 to May 2019.

Reason for decision: To procure the services from external providers would be more favourably perceived by the local market and would avoid significant extra management costs and employee liabilities that an in-house model would incur, as well as present more opportunities for raising community funds.

RESOLVED

that the proposed option be approved to procure:

- **five separate contracts for services for 0-12 year old aligned to the localities,**
- **one all age, all area contract for supervised contact service; and**
- **one contract for universal and targeted youth provision.**

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/53 **Purchase of Properties for use as Transitional Accommodation**

The Executive considered a report from the Executive Members for Social Care and Housing, Assets and Housing Delivery and Corporate Resources that sought approval for the Council to purchase residential accommodation, as identified in the exempt papers, funded by the Housing Revenue Account.

The Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources moved an amendment to the recommendation to include the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery in the consultation.

Reason for decision: The Council had a statutory obligation to provide accommodation and the proposed purchase would provide transitional homes to residents that become homeless.

RESOLVED

that the acquisition of the two properties identified in the exempt appendix 1 be approved and the Director of Community Services be authorised to enter into and complete all necessary legal documentation relating to the purchase in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery.

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/54 **2018/19 Quarter 1 Performance Report**

The Executive considered a report from the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources that set out the quarter 1 2018/19 performance for the Central Bedfordshire Medium-Term Plan indicator set.

In response to a question, the Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations explained that a task force had been established to consider future support for the community and voluntary sector infrastructure organisations.

In response to questions, the Executive Member for Community Services acknowledged the increase in the leisure centre usage and hoped that this would continue once Dunstable Leisure Centre was reopened. Road closures were taking place across Central Bedfordshire to enable repairs to the road network in the area.

Reason for decision: To ensure a rigorous approach to performance management across Central Bedfordshire Council.

RESOLVED

1. **that the performance be noted against the indicators currently being used to help support the monitoring of progress against the Medium-Term Plan priorities; and**

2. **that officers be requested to further investigate and resolve underperforming indicators as appropriate.**

The decision was unanimous.

E/18/55 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED

to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that its consideration was likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

E/18/56 **Purchase of Property for use as Transitional Accommodation**

Minute E/18/53 related to exempt business. See minute E/18/53 for details.

E/18/57 **Exempt Minutes from 11 September 2018**

RESOLVED

that the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 10.30 a.m.)

Chairman …….……

Dated ……..

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Central Bedfordshire Council
Forward Plan of Key Decisions
1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019

1) During the period from **1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019,** 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 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.

   *Savings are significant if they exceed £200,000 per annum (revenue) or £5000,000 whole life cost (capital). Expenditure is significant if it exceeds, in respect of revenue contracts: (i) £300,000 per annum; and (ii) £1m total cost; and (iii) 5 years duration (including contract extension periods); or £750,000 financial commitment (capital).

   There are exceptions to these criteria which is set out in Part 2 Article 12 paragraph 1.3 in the Council's Constitution. Specifically, expenditure which is identified in the approved Council revenue and capital budgets are not key decisions.

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:

Councillor James Jamieson	Leader of the Council
Councillor Richard Wenham	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources
Councillor Ian Dalgarno	Executive Member for Community Services
Councillor Steven Dixon	Executive Member for Families, Education and Children and Lead Member for Children's Services
Councillor Eugene Ghent	Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery
Councillor Carole Hegley	Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations (HRA)
Councillor Brian Spurr	Executive Member for Health
Councillor Nigel Young	Executive Member for Regeneration

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
3 April 2018	22 March 2018
12 June 2018	31 May 2018
7 August 2018	26 July 2018
9 October 2018	27 September 2018
4 December 2018	22 November 2018
8 January 2019	20 December 2018
5 February 2019	24 January 2019
2 April 2019	21 March 2019

Central Bedfordshire Council

Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019

Key Decisions

Date of Publication: 22 November 2018

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
1.	Foster Carers Loans Policy -	To seek approval for the introduction of a Council loans policy for foster carers.	8 January 2019	Corporate Parenting Panel – 25 October 2018 Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 20 November 2018	Open	Families, Education and Children - Executive Member and Lead Member for Children's Services Comments by 08/12/2018 to Contact Officer: Micky Pompa, Finance Manager Email: Micky.Pompa@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6822
2.	Air Quality Action Plan -	To seek permission to go out to consultation on the draft air quality action plan.	8 January 2019	Public Consultation	Open	Community Services - Executive Member Comments by 08/12/2018 to Contact Officer: Kay Stirling, Technical Officer Email: Kay.Sterling@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5065

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.	Procurement Framework of Consultancy Services for the Regeneration & Business Directorate -	The report provided for information to advise members of the forthcoming procurement via an open EU compliant procurement process, of a framework agreement for the provision of consultancy services for the Regeneration and Business Directorate.	8 January 2019	All statutory consultees.	Open	Regeneration - Executive Member Comments by 08/12/2018 to Contact Officer: Heather Price, Head of Business Performance Email: heather.price@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4964

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 Transitional Accommodation Scheme, Windsor Drive, Houghton Regis -	To authorise the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery, to tender and award the contract for construction of new Transitional Accommodation scheme at Windsor Drive, Houghton Regis.	8 January 2019		Open	Assets and Housing Delivery - Executive Member Comments by 08/12/2018 to Contact Officer: Mark Rees, Construction Project Manager Email: Mark.Rees@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4891
5.	Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy -	To present the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the rationale behind the three priority areas for focus.	8 January 2019	Various stakeholders have been involved in the development of the strategy which has also been considered at public meetings of the Health and Wellbeing Board.	Open	Health - Executive Member Comments by 08/12/2018 to Contact Officer: Celia Shohet, Assistant Director of Public Health Email: celia.shohet@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4578

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
6.	Housing Development Company -	To seek approval to the establishment of a wholly owned Development Company.	8 January 2019		Part exempt	Assets and Housing Delivery - Executive Member Comments by 08/12/2018 to Contact Officer: Elaine Bradbury, Development Manager Email: elaine.bradbury@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4026
7.	Disposal of Houghton Lodge -	To authorise the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery, to dispose of the property on commercial terms.	8 January 2019		Part exempt	Assets and Housing Delivery - Executive Member Comments by 08/12/2018 to Contact Officer: Andrew Gordon, Head of Estate Management Email: andrew.gordon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk 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.	Community Safety Partnership Priorities 2019-2022 -	To consider the emerging priorities identified by the Community Safety Partnership.	5 February 2019		Open	Community Services - Executive Member Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Lisa Scott, Community Safety Strategy Officer Email: lisa.scott@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5733
9.	Housing Infrastructure Fund: Forward Funding -	The report provides an overview of the Housing Infrastructure Fund Forward Funding business case to be submitted to Central Government in March 2019. Executive are asked to endorse the development and submission of the Housing Infrastructure Fund Forward Funding Business Case.	5 February 2019	All statutory consultees	Open	Chairman of the Executive and Leader of the Council Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Ingrid Hooley, Programme Enabling Manager Email: ingrid.hooley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5224

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
10.	Developing a Vision for Central Bedfordshire -	The report sets out the intention to develop a Vision for Central Bedfordshire which will inform the next 5 year plan and provide a decision making Framework for future decision making by Central Bedfordshire Council. Executive is asked to endorse and support the development of the Vision.	5 February 2019	All statutory consultees	Open	Chairman of the Executive and Leader of the Council Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Anna Bosworth, Programme Enabling Manager Email: anna.bosworth@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4105
11.	Flitwick Station Area Regeneration -	To confirm the delivery mechanism and approve the progression.	5 February 2019	Flitwick Town Council – September 2018.	Open	Regeneration - Executive Member, Assets and Housing Delivery - Executive Member Comments by 05/01/19 to Contact Officer: Sam Caldbeck, Major Projects Officer Email: samuel.caldbeck@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4410

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
12.	Commissioning of New School Places in Leighton Buzzard for September 2020 -	To seek approval of additional middle and upper school places in the Ward of Leighton Buzzard North through the expansion of Gilbert Inglefield Academy and Vandyke Upper School (academy) for September 2020.	5 February 2019	Governors, staff and parents/carers of both academies plus trade union representatives, all CBC Councillors, all CBC schools and academies, local MP, Leighton Linslade Town Council, C of E Diocese and RC Diocese, neighbouring local authorities, general public. By consultation documents, direct emails, school newsletters, school websites, press release & drop-in held at the schools. Consultation from 11/10/18 to 15/11/18.	Open	Families, Education and Children - Executive Member and Lead Member for Children's Services Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Victor Wan, Senior Education Officer (Planning) Email: victor.wan@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5574
13.	Parking Management Strategy -	To seek agreement for the implementation of a Council Parking Management Strategy from 1 April 2019.	5 February 2019		Open	Community Services - Executive Member Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Jeanette Keyte, Head of Community Safety Email: jeanette.keyte@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5252

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
14.	Improving Care Home Provision for Older People in Central Bedfordshire -	For the Executive to consider the opportunity in West-Mid Bedfordshire to improve care home provision, to authorise the commencement of consultation on the proposals contained within this report and to authorise the commencement of a procurement process to identify a suitable provider.	5 February 2019	The report itself authorises a consultation.	Open	Adults, Social Care & Housing Operations (HRA) - Executive Member Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Tobin Stephenson, Head of MANOP (Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Older People) Email: tobin.stephenson@centralbedforshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4098
15.	Adult Social Care Business System -	To approve the award of contract for the Adult Social Care Business system.	5 February 2019	Business stakeholders consulted throughout 2016 and re-engaged from April 2018.	Part exempt Commercial Sensitivity	Adults, Social Care & Housing Operations (HRA) - Executive Member, Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Nick Murley, Assistant Director Resources Email: nick.murley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 4605

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.	Roof Replacement and Repairs to Housing Properties -	To accept the most economically and qualitative advantageous tender for carrying out roof replacement and repairs to Housing properties.	5 February 2019		Part exempt	Adults, Social Care & Housing Operations (HRA) - Executive Member Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Jonathan Rogers, Building Surveyor Email: jonathan.rogers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
17.	Decision Making Arrangements for Removing BT Payphones in Central Bedfordshire -	To review objections to payphone removal and authorise the Director of Community Services / Parish Council regarding the removal / alternative use for those payphones in Central Bedfordshire.	2 April 2019		Open	Community Services - Executive Member Comments by 02/03/2019 to Contact Officer: Sarah Hughes, Community Engagement Manager Email: sarah.hughes@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6166

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
18.	Central Bedfordshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements -	To outline the new proposed local arrangements to establish the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.	2 April 2019		Open	Cllr Steven Dixon Comments 02/03/2019 to Contact Officer: Phillipa Scott, Strategic Safeguarding Partnership Manager Email: phillipa.scott@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6194

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.	Commissioning of New School Places in Biggleswade for September 2010 -	To seek approval of additional middle school places in the ward of Biggleswade North through the expansion of Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School for September 2020.	2 April 2019	Governors, staff and parents/carers of Edward Peake C of E VC Middle School, plus trade union representatives, all CBC Ward Members, all CBC schools and academies, local MP, Biggleswade Town Council, C of E Diocese, RC Diocese, neighbouring local authority and the general public By consultation document, direct email, school newsletter, CBC and school websites, press release & drop-in held at the school. Preliminary consultation from 9/10/18 to 13/11/18. Statutory consultation from 4/01/19 to 01/02/19.	Open	Families, Education and Children - Executive Member and Lead Member for Children's Services Comments by 02/03/2019 to Contact Officer: Victor Wan, Senior Education Officer (Planning) Email: victor.wan@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5574

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
20.	A6-M1 Link Road and Land North of Luton -	To seek approval of the Heads of Terms with the Land North of Luton Consortium in relation to their option on CBC owned land within the Land North of Luton development area and other matters.	2 April 2019		Fully exempt	Regeneration - Executive Member Comments by 02/03/2019 to Contact Officer: Stephen Mooring, Head of Place Delivery Email: stephen.mooring@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6241
NON KEY DECISIONS						
21.	Draft Revenue Budget 2019/20 -	To set out the draft revenue budget for 2019/20 and update the Medium Term Financial Plan.	8 January 2019	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2019.	Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comment by 08/12/2018 to Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083

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.	Draft Capital Budget 2019/20 -	To set out the draft capital budget for 2019/20.	8 January 2019	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2019.	Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 08/12/2018 to Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083
23.	Draft Housing Revenue Account Budget 2019/20 -	To set out the draft housing revenue account budget for 2019/20.	8 January 2019	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2019.	Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 08/12/2018 to Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
24.	Housing Enabling Strategy -	To recommend to Council the approval of the Housing Enabling Strategy.	5 February 2019		Open	Regeneration - Executive Member Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Michael David, Housing Strategy & Implementation Manager Email: Michael.David@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
25.	Final Revenue Budget 2019/20 -	To recommend the final revenue budget for 2019/20 to Council for approval on 21 February 2019.	5 February 2019		Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
26.	Final Capital Budget 2019/20 -	To recommend the final capital budget for 2019/20 to Council on 21 February 2019.	5 February 2019	Executive on 8 January 2019. Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2019.	Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083
27.	Final Housing Revenue Account Budget 2019/20 -	To recommend the final housing revenue account budget for 2019/20 to Council for approval on 21 February 2019.	5 February 2019	Executive on 8 January 2019. Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2019.	Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083

Ref No.	Issue for Key Decision by the Executive	Intended Decision	Indicative Meeting Date	Consultees and Date/Method	Documents which may be considered	Portfolio Holder and Contact officer (method of comment and closing date)
28.	Social Care, Health and Housing Fees and Charges 2019/20 -	To recommend to Council on 21 February 2019 the approval of the fees and charges for social care, health and housing for 2019/20.	5 February 2019	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2019.	Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083
29.	Proposed Charges for Traded Services to Schools and Academies 2019/20 -	To recommend to Council on 21 February 2019 the approval of the charges for traded services to schools and academies for 2019/20.	5 February 2019	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2019.	Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083

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)
30.	Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Policy 2019/20 -	To recommend to Council on 21 February 2019 the approval of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2019/20.	5 February 2019	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2019.	Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083
31.	Capital Strategy 2019/20 -	To recommend to Council the approval of the Capital Strategy for 2019/20.	5 February 2019	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2019.	Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083

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)
32.	Investment Strategy 2019/20 -	To recommend to Council the approval of the Investment Strategy for 2019/20.	5 February 2019	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2019.	Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 05/01/2019 to Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083
33.	Housing Revenue Budget Monitoring 2018/19 - Quarter 3 -	To report the quarter 3 housing revenue account budget monitoring 2018/19 report.	2 April 2019	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 May 2019.	Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 02/03/2019 to Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083

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)
34.	Capital Budget Monitoring 2018/19 - Quarter 3 -	To report the quarter 2 capital budget monitoring 2018/19 report.	2 April 2019	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 May 2019.	Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 02/03/2019 to Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083
35.	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2018/19 - Quarter 3 -	To report the quarter 3 revenue budget monitoring 2018/19 report.	2 April 2019	Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 May 2019.	Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 02/03/2019 to Contact Officer: Denis Galvin, Assistant Director of Finance Email: denis.galvin@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 6083

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)
36.	Quarter 3 Performance Report 2018/19 -	To receive the 2018/19 quarter 3 performance monitoring report.	2 April 2019		Open	Corporate Resources - Executive Member and Deputy Leader of the Council Comments by 02/03/19 to Contact Officer: Jackie Woods, Head of Knowledge and Insight Email: jackie.woods@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 300 5655

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 2017/18 the Forward Plan will be published on the following dates:

Period of Plan	Date of Publication
1 May 2018 – 30 April 2019	22 March 2018
1 June 2018 – 31 May 2019	3 May 2018
1 July 2018 – 30 June 2019	31 May 2018
1 August 2018 – 31 July 2019	2 July 2018
1 September 2018 – 31 August 2019	26 July 2018
1 October 2018 – 30 September 2019	31 August 2018
1 November 2018 – 31 October 2019	27 September 2018
1 December 2018 – 30 November 2019	1 November 2018
1 January 2019 – 31 December 2019	22 November 2018
1 February 2019 – 31 January 2020	20 December 2018
1 March 2019 – 28 February 2020	24 January 2019
1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020	1 March 2019
1 May 2019 – 30 April 2020	21 March 2019

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive **4 December 2018**

Gypsy and Traveller Responsiveness

Report of: Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Executive Member for Community Services (ian.dalgarno@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director(s): Marcel Coiffait, Director of Community Services (marcel.coiffait@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a decision that is Key

Purpose of this presentation

1. The purpose of the report is to seek support from the Committee for proposals for additional Council resources to support our response to Gypsy and Traveller matters in Central Bedfordshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. support the proposal set out in the report and approve the draw down on the Community Safety earmarked reserve, as set out in paragraphs 27-30 below.

Issues

The report sets out the proposed approach and the required resources for consideration.

Council Priorities

2. Developing the Councils response to Gypsy and Traveller matters supports the following priorities:

   a. Enhancing Central Bedfordshire – the approach set out in the presentation will enable the Council to take a more proactive stance on a range of G&T issues that impact on the physical environment and will work towards developing improved community cohesion.

b. A more efficient and responsive Council – the approach will enable improved join up and will seek to drive out a more efficient response to dealing with Gypsy and Traveller matters in Central Bedfordshire by setting clear policy and procedure that will facilitate more efficient working and budget management.

Context

3. In determining and managing its response to Gypsy and Traveller matters the Council has many responsibilities that it must consider including:

    a. Plan for future accommodation needs for Gypsy and Travellers
    b. Enforcement of planning and licensing breaches
    c. Health and welfare
    d. Community safety
    e. Equality Duty to advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination and foster good relations.

    These responsibilities are reflected in the proposals set out in the report.

4. There are 49 Gypsy and Traveller sites in Central Bedfordshire broken down as follows:

    38 permanent Gypsy and Traveller sites

    9 Travelling Showpeople sites

    4 Council owned Gypsy and Traveller sites

5. The majority are well run and integrate well with the local community with very few issues reported although some sites are more complex, pose more challenges and need more input.

Billington

6. The on-going project at two sites in Billington reflect the complexities that both the Council and our partners face in addressing concerns and issues raised by the community, residents local to sites and partner agencies. The challenges include:

    a. Breaches of planning permissions
    b. Absence of licensing
    c. Sub-letting of caravans
    d. Infrastructure (sewage, clean water and electricity)
    e. Crime and anti-social behavior, including previous reports of modern day slavery
    f. Local community concerns and impact

7. As complex as the issues are the multi-agency approach the Council is leading with key agencies has supported action that is driving, and will continue to support, improvements on the sites:
    a. Stakeholder groups for residents and Parish Council are established and working effectively
    b. Significantly improved information and intelligence about plots, owners and interested parties
    c. Sustained reduction in fly-tipping around the sites
    d. Abatement notices served on some unsafe caravans
    e. Alternative accommodation provided for some tenants
    f. Regular visits and engagement with site residents
    g. Enforcement work is underway:
        i. Planning Contravention Notices issued to all residents
        ii. Personal Circumstance Questionnaires issued to all residents
        iii. Enforcement Notices against breaches are being drafted

8. The Councils decision to give site residents the opportunity to engage and work collaboratively with us and partners in the project has provided tangible benefits and learning about how to work with sites in a positive way.

9. Officers understand that the local settled community want to see a reduction in the number of dwellings and residents on these two sites as quickly as possible. However, the Council and its partners must work within legal frameworks that are often complex and take time to progress.

Unauthorised Encampments (UAEs)

10. In addition to the work on the Billington sites the Council has made progress in the last two years at managing and reducing the number of UAEs in Central Bedfordshire:

    Jan- Sept. 2017 95 UAEs (54 on CBC land)

    Jan -Sept. 2018 70 UAE's (25 on CBC land)

    26% reduction in encampments to date (46% reduction on CBC land)

11. To achieve this the Council:
    a. Recruited a full time UAE Officer
    b. Carried out target hardening (e.g. barriers, ditches etc.) to prevent UAEs at 15 locations
    c. Obtained a High Court Injunction prohibiting 11 individuals from setting up UAEs in our area and protecting parcels of land from UAEs
    d. Continues to Lobby Government with MPs to strengthen legislation

Opportunities

12. The work on Billington has shown that a collaborative approach encourages and supports site residents to work with us to improve issues. The experience and knowledge gained from this work can be used to help inform the Councils approach to working with other sites in Central Bedfordshire.

13. The Councils progress on its UAE work can be developed further by using Temporary Stopping Sites thereby enabling the use of additional police powers to support further reductions.

14. Working with the Gypsy and Traveller community needs a cohesive approach from the Council, and our partners, to ensure that we are working as effectively as possible. Bringing together some of our current work strands will drive a more effective and holistic Council approach.

Temporary Stopping Sites (TSS)

15. Using TSSs in Central Bedfordshire will facilitate further reductions in UAEs. UAEs are costly in terms of time and resource to affect removal, cost of legal action and clear up and the impact on local communities.

16. A TSS provides a site for Gypsy and Travellers to stay for a short period of time (normally 28 days). The site has toilets, electricity, water, waste collection and is regularly patrolled.

17. TSS are generally located in non-residential areas with good access and egress and within a reasonable distance of core services. Occupants pay weekly rent and a deposit to stay on the TSS.

18. Gypsy and Travellers sign a License to Occupy and this is supported by police S.62 powers which ensures that occupants move off the TSS within the agreed stay period.

19. Any Gypsy and Travellers that set up a UAE in Central Bedfordshire would be directed to the TSS (subject to available space). If they refuse to use the TSS then the police can use their S.62 powers to remove the UAE which then moves the Gypsy and Travellers out of Central Bedfordshire and they are prohibited from returning for 3 months.

Gypsy and Traveller Unit

20. Several Council services work across Gypsy and Traveller communities on a wide range of issues that are not just about planning and enforcement. Gypsy and Travellers are often more disadvantaged than any other ethnic group in terms of access to healthcare and education as a result of not being able to find authorised sites to live on.

21. The Council has a duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. For our Gypsy and Traveller communities this requires a balanced approach between how we engage and how we enforce and it also needs the Council to have the necessary resource in place to support its approach.

22. Creating a central hub, in the form of a Council Gypsy and Traveller Unit, managing engagement, enforcement and looking at broader Gypsy and Traveller issues would support a balanced approach that is better co-ordinated, better informed and more effective.

23. The unit's functions would include:
    a) management of both engagement and enforcement (UAEs and regulatory breaches) approaches ensuring a consistent and agreed approach by the Council.
    b) management of Temporary Stopping Sites
    c) improving access by the G&T community to Council services by working across the Council and partner organisations.
    d) support the development of collaborative working between the Council and the G&T community.
    e) develop networks with specialist G&T organisations (nationally & locally) to inform and develop best practice in Central Bedfordshire.
    f) develop specialist legal networks to ensure enforcement is successful

Proposals

24. The Councils commitment to addressing Gypsy and Traveller matters is clearly set out in the report. The investment in the work to date has proved effective but there remains a significant amount of work to be done in terms of engagement, community cohesion, regularisation of sites and UAEs.

25. To continue to build upon the progress made to date it is proposed that:
    a) the Council introduces Temporary Stopping Sites
    b) the Council creates a Gypsy and Traveller Unit

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

26. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Financial and Risk Implications

27. Subject to approval and subsequent post evaluation the anticipated cost of the unit per year is £342k. This figure includes two existing posts already funded by base budget. The additional costs of £250k (including £50k operational budget) will be funded from the Community Safety reserve of £500k for a period of two years. After this time £250k would be built into the base budget in the MTFP.

28. A capital Business Case and Project Initiation Document is being developed for the TSS. The capital funding, estimated at £450k, has been included as part of the current MTFP process which will be presented to Council for final decision in February 2019.

29. Gypsy and Traveller issues are a key concern for communities in Central Bedfordshire and the Council is a key stakeholder in responding to them. The Council has responsibilities around planning applications, enforcement (planning breaches and unauthorised encampments), vulnerability, social care and community safety. There is significant risk to the Council reputationally if it fails to respond effectively to G&T matters. The work on Billington and ongoing concerns being raised from Parish Councils, residents and MP about the Councils failure to effectively manage future supply of G&T sites and breaches of planning permission reflect the challenge for the Council.

30. Managing the level of outstanding breaches of permissions will require additional resources at a cost of £75k for two additional interim planning enforcement officers for a period of six months. Reserve funding has been identified for this cost and legal costs of the enforcement work will be covered within Planning Delivery budgets.

Equalities Implications

31. 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.

32. The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to treat someone less favourably because of a range of protected characteristics, including race, nationality or ethnic or national origins. The following of a nomadic lifestyle is lawful and is recognised and protected through legislation. Romany gypsies and Irish Travellers have been granted protection under the previous Race Relations Acts. The Public Sector Equality Duty places a duty on the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

33. Gypsies and Travellers can sometimes find themselves in a cycle of ‘enforced’ nomadism, being continually moved on by the authorities because of the shortage of authorised sites. As a result, Gypsies and Travellers are often more disadvantaged than any other ethnic group in terms of access to healthcare and education. The lack of authorised public sites and the difficulties associated with getting planning permission for private sites, has meant that Gypsies and Travellers have set up home on land belonging to others or on their own land without permission.

Conclusion and next Steps

34. The presentation sets out some of the key challenges facing the Council regarding Gypsy and Traveller issues, and sets out a recommended approach to improve the Councils Gypsy and Traveller approach and responsiveness.

35. The next steps will involve:

    a. Completing Project Implementation Document and Business Case for TSS for approval and prioritization.
    b. Identifying suitable land for TSS
    c. Complete job descriptions for evaluation and begin recruitment process
    d. Subject to sign off initiate the TSS Project

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

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Director of Community Services

Marcel.coiffait@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive **4 December 2018**

The Future of Ampthill Day Centre for Older People

Report of: Cllr Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing (carole.hegley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director(s): Julie Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing (julie.ogley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a decision that is Key

Purpose of this report

To consider the outcome of the consultation into the future of the Ampthill Day Centre and agree the relocation of the service to Silsoe Horticultural Centre and other community venues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. **consider the outcome of the public consultation on the options for Ampthill Day Centre as set out in this report and Appendix 5;**

2. **agree the implementation of the hub and spoke model to replace the current day service provision at Ampthill Day Centre and to agree the subsequent closure of the centre; and**

3. **delegate authority to the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing in consultation with the Executive Member for Social Care and Housing, the decision on the date of closure of Ampthill Day Centre.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. The Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee meets on 26th November and recommendations from that meeting are set out at Appendix 7.

Issues

2. At its meeting on 7th June 2016 the Executive approved recommendations set out in a report on the Day Offer for Older People and Adults with Disabilities. The report described the current offer provided, challenges and opportunities facing this service area whilst acknowledging the important contribution that day services make in supporting vulnerable adults and their carers. It proposed a two-phase approach to the development of a new Day Offer for these customer groups.

3. Phase 1 of the project was designed to develop key components and principles which would apply to any future Day Offer. This was achieved by engagement with customers, family carers and centre staff and adopting a co-production approach. Following a period of formal consultation, these resulting key components and principles were agreed by Executive on 4th April 2017. These state that the Day Offer will:

   Key components

   1 Meet customer outcomes for social interaction, physical activity and mental stimulation.

   2 Meet carer outcomes for respite and peace of mind.

   3 Meet customers' care and support needs.

   Principles

   4 Promote and maintain independence in a way which is personalised, flexible and responsive.

   5 Promote learning in a stimulating and supportive environment.

   6 Deliver greater partnerships with the local community.

   7 Maximise the use of community facilities that can be accessed by older people and adults with disabilities.

4. Further details can be found in Appendix 1 - The Day Offer for Older People and Adults with Disabilities in Central Bedfordshire. These key components and principles are expected to apply to any proposed changes to the Day Offer in the future.

5. Executive also approved the commencement of Phase 2, whereby specific centres would be reviewed using a framework set out in the report. It is expected that all Day Centres will be reviewed over the next 4 years.

6. The first centre to be reviewed was Ampthill Day Centre for Older People. This day centre has been in operation for over 40 years and is outdated as well as oversized for the number of customers that attend. The catchment area of the centre covers West-Mid Beds and extends to an approximate area between Marston Moretaine in the north and Barton-le-Clay in the south and Woburn in the west and Shefford in the east.

7. A project team was formed, and work commenced to investigate the options available. In order to test potential options and ensure they meet the agreed components and principles, the Council piloted running day services from alternative venues, including in sheltered housing schemes and at Silsoe Horticultural Centre. This enabled the development of options for the future of Ampthill Day Centre.

8. The 4th August 2018 Executive meeting approved the commencement of a public consultation on the options for the future of Ampthill Day Centre and requested that the outcome of the consultation was reported to a future meeting.

9. The Council reviewed a number of options which are laid out in the consultation documents, see Appendix 2. Appendix 3 to this report also provides additional detail and an appraisal of the options considered. The preferred option, which is considered to deliver the greatest overall benefits, is to offer a day service to be run from alternative venues and to close Ampthill Day Centre, this model is referred to as the 'hub and spoke'.

10. The Council have evaluated a range of community venues including sheltered housing schemes run by Grand Union Housing Group. The proposed option would use a main day 'hub' based at Silsoe Horticultural Centre which is an existing Central Bedfordshire Council run day centre for adults with learning disabilities. This would operate from Monday to Friday (as current) and continue to be used as a base for adults with learning disabilities as well as accommodating a day service for older people. There would also be several 'spokes' using community venues which would run alongside the hub. Thus, the proposed service would operate from Silsoe Horticultural Centre and one community venue every weekday. The proposed alternative venues are shown in Figure 1.

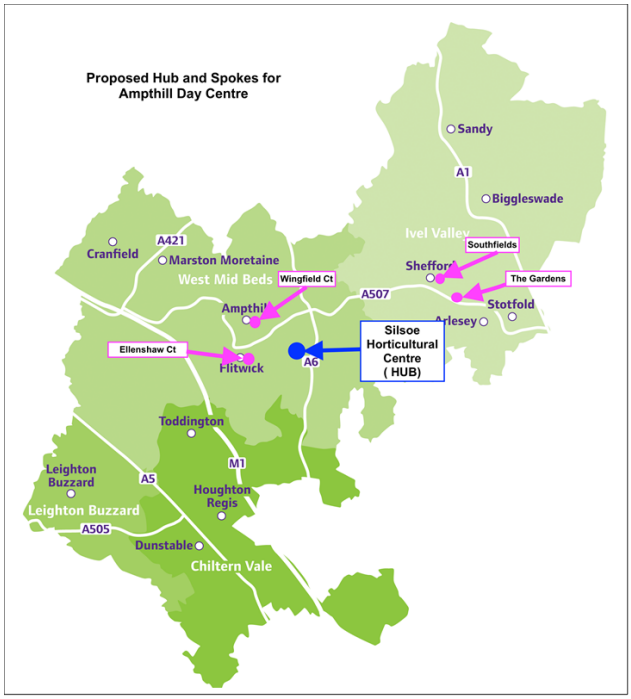

Figure 1 – Map of Central Bedfordshire showing the proposed alternative venues to Ampthill Day Centre

11. The preferred option meets the key components and principles agreed in Phase 1 and this is evidenced in the background paper 'Day Offer Pilot Evaluation Report'.

12. The 'hub and spoke' option set out in paragraph 9 would replace the service currently being delivered at Ampthill Day Centre and this centre would then close.

Consultation Process

13. A 12-week consultation process was undertaken. This started on 14th August 2018 and ran until 12th November 2018. This report sets out the findings of the consultation, based on results available at the time of writing.

14. Following the engagement with customers, their relatives or representatives and centre staff that had taken place in phase 1 of the project, representatives from these groups were invited to take part in a co-production group. This group included officers from the Council's project team, carers and representatives from a variety of independent organisations. The group continued to meet during the consultation period, making valuable contributions to the process.

15. The consultation papers and questionnaire were published on the Council's website on 14th August 2018. The consultation was also advertised on the Council's social media platforms and sent out as an e-bulletin to those on the Council's consultation mailing list. All customers of Ampthill Day Centre, their relatives or representatives, Ampthill Day Centre staff and other interested parties received a consultation pack which included the 'Have Your Say on the Future of Ampthill Day Centre' document which provides an overview of the proposed Future Day Offer, the 'Options Considered' paper, and a consultation questionnaire. All of the consultation papers were also made available on the Council's website. An easier read version of the consultation questionnaire and 'Have Your Say' documents were also developed and made available at the Ampthill Day Centre and online. These are available as background papers.

16. The Council currently supports around 64 customers at Ampthill Day Centre, with up to 27 currently attending on any given day. Individual consultation meetings were held with 49 day centre customers, with the remainder either in respite, had not attended the day centre for a considerable period, were unwell or meetings were not arranged for other reasons. These meetings were designed to help customers understand what the proposals might mean for them and provide reassurance about the process. Copies of the consultation documents, including the easier read versions, were available during meetings with customers, and customers were supported to help respond to the questionnaire when requested. For customers with a diagnosis of dementia or those that may require more support, a Social Worker met with them and carried out a mental capacity assessment to ensure that as many customers as possible could have their say about the proposals. An interpreter was provided for one customer whose first language was not English.

17. Consultation meetings were also offered to relatives and representatives either alongside, or separately to the meeting with the customer. These meetings were an opportunity to discuss the proposals in more detail and to answer any questions that arose. Relatives were also contacted where known unless requested not by the customer. 29 relatives accepted invitations to a consultation meeting.

18. Customers at Silsoe Horticultural Centre were invited to a meeting with an independent advocate to discuss how the proposals might impact on them and their day centre. Relatives or representatives for each customer were also invited to an engagement meeting to discuss the proposals, with two relatives accepting this offer and one attending.

19. During the consultation period customers who had not previously participated in the pilots were given the opportunity to visit Silsoe Horticultural Centre, so they had the opportunity to view one of the possible alternative venues. This could help those customers to better understand the proposed option.

20. During the consultation period, a Consultation Update report was sent to customers, their relatives or representatives and other interested parties. This set out the consultation activity to date and answered the most common questions asked during the process so far. This document appears as Appendix 4.

21. Additional stakeholders and organisations were also contacted directly and invited to respond to the consultation. This included organisations who use the centre during the evenings and at weekends.

22. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was completed ahead of the consultation and this is available as Appendix 6. This will be reviewed and updated following the outcome of the consultation and the Executive's decision. If the preferred option is approved, the EIA will be kept under review and further updated as required.

Consultation Response

23. The Council have received 77 responses to the consultation questionnaire, some 49% of respondents were day centre customers, 25% were relatives of customers using day services, and the remainder were other respondents including a Town Council and a local business.

24. Comments received covered a variety of areas however a key theme that emerged was that 37% of respondents expressed a preference about the 'hub and spoke' model and could list benefits of this model. 28% of respondents clearly did not agree with the Council's preferred option and the majority of these respondents stated that they would prefer for the Ampthill Day Centre to remain as it is or be re-utilised in some way. A further 28% of respondents expressed a mixed opinion and gave benefits of both remaining at Ampthill Day Centre and moving elsewhere in their consultation response. Further details of the responses are available in Appendix 5

25. 35% of respondents said that they thought the Council had evaluated all the options correctly although 36% of respondents said they were unsure whether the options had been evaluated correctly. Further details of the responses are available in Appendix 5

26. 36% of respondents said they thought the Council did not need to investigate any of the proposed options further. Of the 26% that thought further investigation of these options was required, half suggested retaining or re-utilising Ampthill Day Centre.

27. A number of respondents highlighted that provision of transport would be important to them if the preferred model is agreed. Some customers said they did not want to travel too far whereas others were quite happy to travel a little further as long as they were enabled to attend. Further details of the responses are available in Appendix 5.

28. Friendship groups and socialisation was also identified as important. Some customers reported that they enjoyed meeting the tenants of the sheltered housing schemes during the pilots.

29. Effective communication was noted as important by a number of respondents when asked how the Council could successfully manage a transition period. Several respondents highlighted that they were pleased with how the messages had been communicated to them so far and found that individual consultation meetings helpful.

30. The full results of the consultation along with the Council's response to the issues raised appears in Appendix 5 to this report

31. The Council is committed to delivering an option that delivers the key components and principles set out in Phase 1 and this has been the primary focus throughout the process.

32. In response to the matters raised by the consultation, the proposed option, if agreed, would be improved as follows:

    32.1 Facilities at Silsoe Horticultural Centre would be adapted to create more capacity to allow for current and future needs. A risk assessment has been carried out and appropriate security measures designed to ensure customer safety remains a priority.

    32.2 Further upgrading of the toilets would be carried out to cater for a wider range of customers.

    32.3 Access to the site would be improved to create more space for transporting customers as well as parking for the public.

    32.4 Consideration of a further, relatively small amount of capital investment, should the preferred option proceed, would have the potential to increase the accessibility to the service by customers enabling a greater number to take advantage of the Silsoe Horticultural Centre and its facilities.

    32.5 The preferred option places additional emphasis on providing opportunities for a wider range of activities and integration with adults with disabilities at Silsoe Horticultural Centre and other older people in the community settings.

    32.6 The Council and Grand Union Housing Group, who operate the sheltered housing schemes would work together to provide a suitable environment for both our customers and their tenants.

33. In addition, it was noted by the co-production group that:

    33.1 Friendship groups should be maintained as much as possible with sufficient capacity to provide for those people who need a consistent venue.

33.2 Opportunities to offer self-funders access to services and future activities should be explored in the future.

Delivery of changes to existing services

34. Should the preferred option be agreed, it is expected that transition to the new day service model would be gradual and involve:

34.1 A staff consultation period.

34.2 Further individual meetings with customers and their relatives or representatives to discuss next steps.

34.3 A transitional approach which will include further visits to alternative venues to promote familiarity ahead of a permanent move.

34.4 Further exploration of activities that could be delivered in the new hub and spokes.

35. Under the preferred option, it is expected that closure of the Ampthill Day Centre would take place 3 to 4 months after agreement by Executive.

36. It should be noted that whilst these changes would provide a sustainable service for older people in West Mid Beds, the development of new extra care and care home facilities planned for the locality in the next two to three years should offer further opportunities to develop and enhance day services.

Reason/s for decision

37. The current operation does not effectively meet the key components and principles of the Day Offer.

38. The current service utilises an asset that is oversized and out of date.

39. The preferred option could offer additional benefits such as services that may be closer to where people live which in turn could mean reduced transport costs, increased opportunity to develop new friendships and the offer of a more personalised service.

Council Priorities

40. The proposed action supports all the Council's priorities, listed below:

- Great resident services
- Protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing
- Creating stronger communities
- A more efficient and responsive Council

Corporate Implications

41. Whilst the staff who deliver the Council's day services are managed through the Social Care, Health and Housing directorate there is considerable involvement of staff from other directorates such as Community Services which manages the transport arrangements and the repair and maintenance of the buildings. Changes to services may well have impacts on these areas.

42. Steps have been taken to involve staff and managers from these areas in work thus far and this will continue.

Legal Implications

43. The Care Act 2014 confers on the Council the duty to meet the care and support needs of eligible people either by commissioning services from independent organisation or by providing the service directly. The Council's day services form part of this provision. The Care Act also places duties on the Council to carry out an assessment of any carer's needs, which may include taking part in education, training and recreation.

44. Where a Council is contemplating changes to care and support services it has a public law duty to consult with those who would be affected and there is clear guidance and precedent about how consultation should be conducted and the part they would play in future decision-making.

45. Central Bedfordshire Council has a duty under the Human Rights Act 1998 to ensure that its actions are not incompatible with the Rights under the European Convention on Human Rights, 'The Convention'. The Council will therefore need to consider whether the proposed Day Offer is likely to breach any of the service user's rights under Articles 8, 3, and 2:

    - Article 2: Right to life and liberty
    - Article 3: Prohibition on torture, inhuman treatment or punishment
    - Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life

    If the decision is likely to breach the Convention, the Council will need to explore any particular facts and determine if such a breach is proportionate and justified.

Financial and Risk Implications

46. The proposed hub and spoke model would have initial implications in terms of staffing. However, the extra cost of running 2 bases will be mitigated by the hub offering a service both to older people and adults with disabilities. This will provide some potential efficiencies in terms of deploying staff more effectively. As the spokes develop it is also envisaged that there will be opportunities to develop the role of volunteers thus reducing costs. These variances are able to be managed within existing budgets.

47. In terms of assets the proposed model does deliver efficiencies as the new service will be using an existing building. This will incur some additional utility costs in the hub and rental costs for the spokes but deliver considerable savings by closing the existing centre. The proposal also means that the Council will not incur ongoing capital costs associated with any older building.

48. No significant unmanaged risks have been identified. A project management approach has been taken to manage the process so far which includes the identification, assessment, mitigation and management of risks associated with the activities.

Equalities Implications

49. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity and have due regard to the need to 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.

50. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed as part of the development process, and it is available as a background document. Members should read and consider the EIA before coming to a decision on the recommendations in this report.

51. The EIA has identified that the main protected characteristics that define users of day opportunities are age and disability. A change to existing day centres and day opportunities could therefore have the potential to have a disproportionate effect on these groups, especially people that are older, have a physical disability, have a learning disability, dementia, autism and those suffering from anxiety or depression.

52. However, it is also recognised that the Day Offer's key components and principles provide a good basis for the development of personalised services that meet both carers' and clients' needs. As part of this process the EIA has highlighted that consideration should be given to ways of designing services that:

    1 Reflect individual preferences as to how care and support needs can be met.

    2 Maximise stability and familiarity where appropriate to help those with the transition to new services.

    3 Maintain friendship groups.

    4 Ensure there is a specific carer's offer for each service.

53. The EIA will be regularly reviewed and it will be updated prior to any future decisions of the Executive about changes to services or individual centres.

Conclusion and Next Steps

54. From the consultation feedback it is clear that, while there are some understandable concerns about a move away from a long-standing centre, there are a significant number of responses that speak of the proposed 'hub and spoke' model favourably and could identify the benefits of this. The hub and spoke model offers variety and opportunity that isn't deliverable at the Ampthill Day Centre and reduces risk of temporary closures due to building issues.

55. The Council is committed to providing the investment required for the more intensive use of Silsoe Horticultural Centre should the preferred option go ahead, ensuring that it is capable of delivering great services for customers. It is recommended that the preferred option, to reprovide the Ampthill Day Centre service at Silsoe Horticultural Centre and several spokes, be approved by the Executive.

56. The project team will deliver according to the decision made by Executive.

57. As set out in paragraph 34 there is a need to ensure that reviews of centres and any agreed changes are timetabled to take account of other development plans.

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Day Offer for Older People and Adults with Disabilities in Central Bedfordshire

Appendix 2: Have Your Say on the Future of Ampthill Day Centre

Appendix 3: Options Considered for the Future of Ampthill Day Centre

Appendix 4: Ampthill Day Centre Consultation Mid-Point Update Report

Appendix 5: Consultation Report on the Future of Ampthill Day Centre

Appendix 6: Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 7: Overview and Scrutiny Comments

Background Papers

(i) Pilot evaluation report
(ii) Easy read versions of consultation documents

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Appendix 1

Central Bedfordshire Council

The Day Offer for Older People and Adults with Disabilities in Central Bedfordshire

1. Scope of the Day Offer

Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to offering a wide ranging day offer to older people and adults with disabilities focussing on those who are assessed as having eligible care and support needs. The overall aim is to secure better outcomes for current and future customers within Central Bedfordshire, encompassing older people and adults with disabilities, which includes people from the age of 18 with a physical and/or learning disability.

Typically day opportunities and day services are terms used to describe a range of activities and support services. Day Services are delivered outside people's own homes and are generally building-based, and include day Centres. Central Bedfordshire Council directly provides eight day centres. Five of these are for older people and adults with physical disabilities and three for people with learning disabilities. The term 'day opportunities' is generally used to describe other day activities which may or may not be building-based, and although commissioned by Central Bedfordshire are delivered by other providers. Customers may access such services through personal budgets or direct payments. The day offer encompasses all of these.

2. New Day Offer:

The new day offer is based on the key components and principles outlined below. They have been developed following a period of engagement and formal consultation with current day centre customers, carers and wider stakeholders. These key components and principles will be used as a basis on which to commission and deliver services in the future. This will include the councils' own services. The offer takes into account best practice examples from other areas. Implicit in the transition from the current to the new day offer is the need to effectively manage council resources and deliver improved value for money whilst achieving the transformation objectives.

2.1 Key Components

These have been identified as important outcomes that should be achieved through a future day offer both for customers and their carers.

A. Meet customer outcomes for social interaction and physical and mental stimulation.

i. The importance of the social aspects and maintaining social interactions with others in counteracting isolation is the major component for most customers.

ii. For the adults with learning disabilities, it was clear that many had attended centres for a long time and had formed friendships that were important to them. However, some commented that they would also like to make new friends. Older people also developed friendships and enjoyed meeting the same people through regular attendance.

iii. The routine was seen to be important for some people with dementia, and adults with autism, enabling them to maintain existing skills and abilities.

iv. Meals were an important element in the current day especially for older people who live alone or for people with dementia. Carers felt this was a vital part of the day ensuring that people's needs for hydration and food were met.

v. For adults with learning disability, the meals had a wider value in terms of attendees preparing basic snacks which gave them skills as well as a role to play.

vi. The activities provided featured highly for both groups of attendees and carers, and was an area where it was felt more could be provided.

vii. It was recognised that for some people anything new was daunting, so the chance to learn new skills needed to include the encouragement to try something new, promoting learning and enabling environments and positive risk enablement.

viii. For adults with learning disabilities it was felt important to be able to learn new skills that could lead to wider opportunities including employment.

ix. The belief that even those who have the most difficulty communicating and/or taking part in activities, or with behaviours that may challenge, still derive benefit from interacting with others in an environment where activity is taking place.

B. Meet carer outcomes for respite and peace of mind.

i. Nearly every carer described the important respite role that services play in providing a vital chance to catch up with tasks or allow for personal space without the worry of caring.

ii. Additionally, the importance for carers that services provide a safe environment where customers' care needs are being met.

iii. Staff who were consistent and knew their loved one was also valued, especially where people had dementia, profound needs or lacked cognitive skills.

iv. Carers expressed the need to improve communication between themselves and the service in the future, and some would be keen in taking part in activities in the centres alongside their loved ones.

v. They also valued meeting other carers and interacting with staff at the centres as part of this process, being listened to and said they would like regular opportunities to continue meeting.

C. Meet care and support needs.

i. It was recognised that care and support needs are increasing over time, necessitating well trained staff to deliver the care and support needed. For services for older people this includes training in dementia.

ii. This included the provision of suitable facilities to cater for those with profound physical care needs and those with dementia.

iii. The staff play a vital role in creating and maintaining a happy, friendly atmosphere.

iv. The offer should be flexible and person-centred, recognising the wide spectrum of customers and carers needs, including their capacity.

v. For frailer people, a local service to minimise time on transport was important. For others, transport didn't seem to be a problem as it enabled them to maintain ongoing friendships.

vi. Widening the current Monday to Friday 9 to 4 offer should be considered, as we plan for future needs and aspirations.

vii. The centres provide the opportunity to promote health and wellbeing and positive lifestyle choices, linking to wider health services.

2.2 Key Principles:

These have been developed based on the outcomes identified within the key components and provide an overarching set of principles through which the day offer should be delivered.

A. Promote and maintain independence in a way which is personalised, flexible and responsive.

i. Encourage people to have choice, make decisions, feel involved and valued and able to make a meaningful contribution where able.
ii. Have an individual focus with identified and agreed goals.
iii. Recognise and respond to current and changing care and support needs.

B. Promote learning in a stimulating and supportive environment

i. Create an ethos of continuous learning and improvement, by encouraging people to try new things and develop new skills, including life and employment skills.
ii. Use a wide range of sensory stimuli.
iii. Access a wide range of expertise to provide learning, including experts by experience (potentially customers) and external partners where required.
iv. Pioneer the use of emerging technologies

C. Deliver greater integration and partnership with local communities

i. Deliver opportunities as close to peoples homes as possible.
ii. Utilise existing local services and support the development of new services.
iii. Encourage involvement of a wider range of people including across generations and the community.
iv. Develop opportunities that bring people together with a variety of needs and interests where possible and desirable.
v. Deliver services in ways that integrate with NHS services.
vi. Develop stronger links with voluntary sector and other partners in the local community.
vii. Actively promote volunteering.

D. Maximise the use of community facilities that can be accessed by older people and adults with disabilities

i. Where possible create dedicated space in facilities such as leisure centres, libraries, care homes and other community spaces.
ii. Where possible day services should facilitate customers to access universal, non-specialist services.
iii. Aim to use more local facilities.
iv. Proactively work with planners and developers to ensure new developments are future proofed, integrated and can provide accessible and flexible community use.

have your say...

...on the future of Ampthill Day Centre for Older People

Find out more about the consultation process and how you can have your say on the future of Ampthill Day Centre

Central Bedfordshire

Find Central Bedfordshire Council online at

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations

Why do we consult?

Councillors are responsible for making decisions for the Council. Holding a consultation gives those directly affected by a proposed decision the opportunity to have their say and influence the decision that is made. Those directly affected, community organisations and the general public are encouraged to review the proposals and feedback their opinions and ideas to the Council.

During the consultation process you can request further information, ask questions and request that the Council looks into alternative options that have not been identified.

All comments made during the consultation process are recorded. The Council will publish its response to these comments and this information will be considered by Councillors, so they can make an informed decision.

What we are consulting on:

Central Bedfordshire Council wants the best possible quality of life for all its residents and is committed to developing and enhancing day services for older people and adults with disabilities. The Council owns and operates seven day centres, four of which are for older people and the remaining three for adults with disabilities. The Council also operates a smaller hub for older people within Priory View in Dunstable.

In early 2016 the Council began the process of developing the future day offer for older people and adults with disabilities. This is a two-stage process and stage one involved agreeing Key Components and Principles[1] which outlined what the Council wants to offer day service customers and their relatives based on the feedback they gave.

Stage one of this project is now complete and the Council are now in stage two which involves looking at each of the seven centres individually. The Council has started this process by reviewing Ampthill Day Centre and have run several pilots trialing new activities and basing day services from alternative venues in line with the agreed Key Components and Principles.

The Council believes it can offer better opportunities to Ampthill Day Centre customers and is therefore consulting on the future of Ampthill Day Centre. Having reviewed a number of options for the future of the centre, the Council's preferred option is to offer alternative day service venues across the catchment area for all existing customers. This service would have a main 'day hub' or base with several 'spokes' in community venues more local to the people who use them. The Council would then close Ampthill Day Centre.

If you would like to take part in this or would like more information about what we are proposing for this service please see the information at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations or contact us using the details at the end of this document

Consultation Timetable	
Key Date	**Activity**
20th August 2018	Consultation opens
12th November 2018	Consultation ends
4th December 2018	Report to Executive for decision on the future of Ampthill Day Centre
14th December 2018	Implementation of Executive decision

[1] Consultation on the future day offer 2017, Components and Principles

How we will consult

Everyone can respond to the consultation by reading this factsheet, which has a summary of the proposals, and completing the consultation questionnaire. There is more information in the document 'Options Considered for the Future of Ampthill Day Centre for Older People' which we encourage people to read before responding.

If you have any questions about the options, need more information or would like the Council to consider other ideas these would be welcome. The ways you can contact the Council are explained at the end of this factsheet.

For those people who are most directly affected by the proposal – customers at Ampthill Day Centre, their relatives and the staff who work there – we will organise meetings and events to enable everyone who wants, to participate in the consultation.

We will take special care to ensure that the customers who access day services at Ampthill Day Centre are consulted, without causing distress to those who may have difficulty understanding what is happening. We will discuss this with the people who know the customers best – their relatives and the staff at the centre.

For those customers who may need help, we will offer support through advocates provided by POhWER, an independent organisation, who will assist them to ensure that they can express their views.

The consultation activities with customers and relatives will be tailored to individual requirements and the options that will be offered include:

- Meetings held at Ampthill Day Centre for customers, relatives and staff - either in small groups or one to one.
- Meetings held in areas local to relatives for those who find it difficult to get to the centre.
- Communications via post or email to customers, relatives and staff to inform them of activities and the progress of the consultation.

In addition, members of the consultation team are available to meet with other individuals and organisations who would like to hear more about the proposals. Our contact details are at the end of this factsheet.

What the proposals are trying to achieve

A number of options in relation to the future of Ampthill Day Centre have been considered and evaluated against four important questions. These are:

- Improved quality of facilities/services – would the option improve the facilities and activities customers are able to access?

- Value for money – would the option represent good value for money– both in the short and longer term?

- Minimal disruption – what degree of disruption to the lives of current customers would result from the option in question and what will the impact of this be on their health and wellbeing?

- Key Components and Principles of the enhanced offer – would the option meet the Key Components and Principles agreed in 2017, summarised below?

Key Components:
These have been identified as important outcomes that should be achieved through day services for both customers and their carers.

- Meet customer outcomes for social interaction and physical and mental stimulation.
- Meet carer outcomes for respite and peace of mind.
- Meet care and support needs.

Key Principles:
These have been developed based on the outcomes identified within the Key Components and provide an overarching set of principles through which the day services should be delivered.

- Promote and maintain independence in a way which is personalised, flexible and responsive.
- Promote learning in a stimulating and supportive environment
- Deliver greater integration and partnership with local communities
- Maximise the use of community facilities that can be accessed by older people and adults with disabilities

The options we have considered

The Council has considered the following options:

- Do nothing – continue to run Ampthill Day Centre in its present form.
- Offer alternative venues for customers attending Ampthill Day Centre through the delivery of a 'Hub and Spoke' arrangement and close Ampthill Day Centre.
- Move customers to other Central Bedfordshire Council Day Centres and close Ampthill Day Centre
- Refurbish Ampthill Day Centre so it meets modern standards
- Commission an independent service and close Ampthill Day Centre.

These options are set out in more detail in the document 'Options Considered for the Future of Ampthill Day Centre for Older People'.

How we have evaluated the options

In the table below, we have summarised how these options have been evaluated.

Outcomes	Options				
	Do nothing	Hub & Spoke	Move to alternative centre	Refurbish	Commission new provider
Improved quality of facilities/services	✗	✓	✗	✓	?
Minimal disruption for existing customers	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Value for money	✗	✓	✓	✗	?
Meets Key Components and Principles of the enhanced day offer	✗	✓	✗	✓	?

Preferred option

Having considered these options for the future of Ampthill Day Centre, the Council's preferred option at this stage is to offer alternative venues across the catchment area for all existing customers. This would be delivered through a main 'Day Hub' and several smaller 'spokes' in community venues. The Council would then close Ampthill Day Centre.

This is the preferred option because:

- **Improved quality of facilities/services:** it would enable existing customers to access more personalised facilities whilst still meeting their care and support needs. Facilities would be integrated within the community therefore encourage growth of personal friendship networks and prevent isolation.
- **Minimal disruption for existing customers:** any change in day services would mean some disruption for customers, however during investigation of alternative day services the project team have fully involved customers from Ampthill Day Centre. The majority of customers have been involved in pilots so have already experienced what the hub and spoke model would offer including accessing services from alternative facilities. If those pilots become part of the final offer, there would be very little disruption for most Ampthill Day Centre customers. Where there may be others who have not been as involved in new activities, measures would be put in place to mitigate any risks to their health and wellbeing.
- **Value for money:** moving to the hub and spoke model and closing Ampthill Day Centre would mean the building running costs of the centre would be saved. The 'new' main day hub is already an existing service (Silsoe Horticultural Centre) which would be used more efficiently and effectively. The other facilities and potential future developments in the Ampthill area that could be used as 'spokes' would be in existing buildings that have available space or new buildings where the ability to offer day services would be only a part of the service offer. This would represent better value for money to the Council and council tax payers than the existing arrangements.
- **Key Components and Principles of the enhanced day offer:** development of a hub and spoke model of service would increase levels of social interaction and physical and mental wellbeing of customers and their carers by providing more personalised and local services. Delivering more services in the community with local people would enhance partnerships with local organisations and promote access to services across the area.

Although this is the preferred option we want to hear your views before coming to a decision. This is why the consultation process is so important.

Have your say

We want to know the views of current customers, their relatives and others who have an interest in the future of the day service at Ampthill Day Centre. We also want to understand what the positive and negative impacts will be on individuals and how we might best manage these issues.

This factsheet and a more detailed document - 'Options Considered for the Future of Ampthill Day Centre for Older People' are available on the Council's website and printed copies will be available on request.

You can ask us any questions or tell us your view through the methods on the next page. We are particularly keen to get your answers to the following questions:

- What are your views on the Council's preferred option?
- Do you think all options have been correctly evaluated?

- Are there any options listed that you think the Council should investigate in more detail?
- Are there any other options that you think the Council should consider that are not in the document?
- What could the Council do to minimise the impact of any changes on the existing customers at Ampthill Day Centre?
- Do you have any further comments about the proposals?

For more information

- Visit our website for more information and complete our online questionnaire: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations
- Email us at: day.offer@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
- Write to us at: FREEPOST RSJS GBBZ SRZT (you do not need a stamp)
  Day Offer Consultation
  Central Bedfordshire Council
  Priory House, Monks Walk
  Chicksands, Shefford
  SG17 5TQ
- For advocacy support contact: POhWER on 0300 456 2364 or pohwer@pohwer.net

The consultation is open until 12th November 2018

If you need information in alternative formats or languages…

Email: consultations@centralbedfordshirecouncil.gov.uk

Telephone: 0300 300 6609

Website: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations

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Central Bedfordshire

Central Bedfordshire in contact

Contact us…

by telephone: 0300 300 8000

by email: customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

on the web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

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

Options Considered for the Future of Ampthill Day Centre for Older People

This document provides detailed information about the options currently being considered in relation to the future of Ampthill Day Centre. It aims to support people who wish to participate in the consultation process about the future of the centre and should help people make an informed response to the consultation questionnaire.

For more information about what consultation is, how it works and how you can contribute please read the factsheet 'Have Your Say on the Future of Ampthill Day Centre'.

Reasons for Review

In early 2016, the Council began the process of developing the future day offer for older people and adults with disabilities. This project has followed a 2-stage process;

Stage 1 of the project was to work with people who use our services and their carers to identify what we wanted to offer and achieve in the future. Following a 12-week public consultation in 2017 the project team received approval of the proposed enhanced offer (made up of components and principles which are summarised below).

Key Components:

These have been identified as important outcomes that should be achieved through day services for both customers and their carers.

- Meet customer outcomes for social interaction and physical and mental stimulation.
- Meet carer outcomes for respite and peace of mind.
- Meet care and support needs.

Key Principles:

These have been developed based on the outcomes identified within the key components and provide an overarching set of principles through which the day services should be delivered.

- Promote and maintain independence in a way which is personalised, flexible and responsive.
- Promote learning in a stimulating and supportive environment
- Deliver greater integration and partnership with local communities
- Maximise the use of community facilities that can be accessed by older people and adults with disabilities

Stage 2 of the project has involved reviewing individual day centres based on the offer.

Options Considered

When considering the future of Ampthill Day Centre, the Council has considered and evaluated several options. The outcome of our consideration to date is set out below.

1. Do nothing – continue to run Ampthill Day Centre in its present form

What would this mean in practice?	The Council would continue to own and operate Ampthill Day Centre as at present. No changes would be made to the building or the arrangement for the delivery of care and support.
Cost	Estimated annual direct running costs (including staffing, utilities, transport, day- to-day repairs and maintenance, and supplies) are £353,000. Estimated future capital repairs and maintenance £110,000[1]. These running costs for Ampthill Day Centre equate to an estimated £74 per person per day.
Approximate timescales	Immediate, as it would be a continuation of the existing arrangement.
Assumptions	None
Advantages	• There would be minimal disruption to customers as they would remain where they are. • The customers care and support needs would continue to be delivered by staff with whom they are familiar. • The staff in the centre would not be affected.
Disadvantages	• The existing building would need significant investment and disruptive works in the long term to extend its useful life and meet the needs of our customers. • An alternative building may be required to run the day service from whilst building works take place. • Does not meet the principles of the enhanced day offer[2] agreed in 2017.

Initial assessment:

Doing nothing is not considered to be an acceptable option as it does not deliver an improved, more personalised service for existing and future customers. The building is too large for current and forecasted demand and the estimated future repairs and maintenance costs would not represent good value for the Council.

[1] This is an estimate based on the amount required to renew aspects of the building that are coming to the end of their useful life and assuming that there is a need to extend the use of the building for an indefinite period. If there is a need only to extend the life of the building for a limited period, then this sum could be reduced.

[2] Consultation on the future day offer 2017, Components and Principles

2. Move to a hub and spoke delivery model and close Ampthill Day Centre (preferred option)

What would this mean in practice?	The Council would move to operate day services from alternative venues across the catchment area and close Ampthill Day Centre. The future service would have a main 'day hub' or base with several 'spokes' in community venues more local to the people who use them. It is anticipated the main day hub could be facilitated from Silsoe Horticultural Centre. Further works would be required to be undertaken on site at Silsoe to meet the needs of the people who would use it. This hub would be fully accessible and offer an integrated service for people with higher and lower level needs and disabilities including learning disabilities and dementia and would operate 5 days a week. Pilots have taken place at Gale Court (low level needs), and Wingfield Court (low and medium level needs), future spokes could include libraries, community centres, leisure centres etc. Initially these services would be located in sheltered housing schemes across the area to provide a service for 5 days a week between them. Current identified spokes are: Wingfield Court, Ampthill Ellenshaw Court, Flitwick The Gardens, Henlow Southfields, Shefford A separate staff consultation would take place if this option is agreed.
Cost	Estimated annual direct running costs (including staffing, utilities, transport, day- to-day repairs and maintenance, and supplies) are between £352,000 and £356,000 Estimated capital expenditure of between £10,000 and £20,000 would be needed to complete internal modifications to Silsoe Horticultural Centre. This overall cost reflects the need for an increase in staffing to operate from a minimum of 2 bases per day. This is mitigated by a reduction in running costs as Silsoe Horticultural Centre is already an established service whose current running costs are included in the Council budgets. Therefore, it is anticipated that utilities would be the only increased site cost.

	An indicative figure of £5,040 has been apportioned to cover the cost of using sheltered housing schemes. These running costs equate to an estimated £74 per person per day.
Approximate timescales	December 2018 – March 2019 (time to transition into a permanent day service)
Assumptions	• The Silsoe Horticultural Centre pilot is successful (pilot is active during consultation period) and is a suitable main base. • The number of places available each day will be the same as at present. • The transport costs are the same.
Advantages	• Enables the full range of care and support needs of all customers to be met due to improved changing facilities. • Customers would continue to receive support from staff they are familiar with as they would support services within the day hubs. • Most customers have trialled the pilots and are therefore familiar with them. Following the selection and assessment process, this is likely to lead to a smoother transition. • Services are closer to where people live, and transport costs may be reduced. • Offers a homelier environment. • Provides a broader range of services to older people and customers currently accessing the service at Silsoe Horticultural Centre. • The provision of a meal at lunchtime would remain and there would be the opportunity for this to be extended to other groups using Silsoe Horticultural Centre at some point in the future. • Offers more personalised services to people accessing day care in Central Bedfordshire. • Increases opportunity of developing new friendships by providing services in alternative venues such as sheltered housing schemes. • Increases volunteering opportunities for older sheltered housing tenants.

	• Meets Key Components and Principles[2] as agreed in 2017.
Disadvantages	• Some disruption to Silsoe Horticultural Centre customers due to the changes to on site facilities (building works to provide shared/individual service spaces, changing places toileting facilities). • Some customers may not be able to attend their preferred location due to the limited availability of places, restrictions on transport or the inaccessibility of the venue. • Possibility of splitting friendships groups within the current cohort depending on availability of alternative services. However thorough engagement with customers, carers and staff would take place to identify friendship groups and assist, where possible, maintaining these groups. If this is not possible in some cases, then plans would be put in place to help facilitate continuation of these friendships. • Some spokes do not currently meet the needs of all customers, therefore limiting choice.

Initial assessment

Option 2 is the Council's preferred option as it offers a wider range of community focused, local services to all people accessing day services. It also meets all the Key Components and Principles of an enhanced day offer agreed in 2017. Although some spokes may not meet the needs of all customers, the service would continue to evolve and source alternative suitable options where developments in the local area arise. If this option is agreed, adjustments to the buildings would be looked into to enable a wider cohort of customers to attend. The model is more flexible and future proof. Any staffing increases required would be offset by reductions in running costs.

3. **Move customers to other Central Bedfordshire Council Day Centres and close Ampthill Day Centre** (NB. This could be temporary due to nature of this project)

What would this mean in practice?	Moving all customers currently in attendance at Ampthill Day Centre to alternative Day Centres within Central Bedfordshire and closing Ampthill Day Centre. A separate staff consultation would take place if this option is agreed.
Cost	This option would save current non-staffing running costs of £36,000 per year but would incur some additional Fleet Transport costs and staff relocation costs.

Approximate timescales	Up to 4 months following consultation decision, this would allow time for reviews and managed relocation of current customers to take place.
Assumptions	That there is capacity in other venues.
Advantages	• Provides time to investigate a solution that meets the needs of the growing customer base. • Allows time to develop a permanent solution that meets the Key Components and Principles[2] agreed in 2017
Disadvantages	• Disruption for customers of Ampthill Day Centre due to the requirement to move to an alternative service that they are not familiar with. • There would be no local day services for people living in West Mid Beds. • Limits access to services for new customers as places in other centres would be filled by Ampthill Day Centre customers. • This is potentially a short-term solution following reviews of each day centre as part of this programme and therefore could result in further upheaval for customers. • Potential impact on transport – routes, spaces on buses, distance customers would need to travel to access alternative services. • Movement of staff to other locations may impact on continuity for customers • Possibility of splitting friendship groups depending on availability of alternative services.

Initial assessment

Option 3 is not considered acceptable as this would be a short-term solution and the impact on customers could be over a sustained period. Due to the nature of the day offer programme, each centre will be reviewed over the next few years therefore any alternative centre placement will be affected at some point resulting in further disruptions for the customers affected. This option does not meet the Key Components and Principles of the enhanced day offer.

4. Refurbish Ampthill Day Centre

What would this mean in practice?	Refurbishment of Ampthill Day Centre to modernise the building and allow for a wider range of services to be offered including more community accessibility.
Cost	The total renovation costs are estimated to between £810,000 and £2,900,000 dependent on the extent of works undertaken.
Approximate timescales	Up to 2 years following consultation decision. This would allow time for managed relocation of current customers, possible procurement of contractor to undertake renovations and any building works to take place.
Assumptions	Other community organisations would use the building to provide services.
Advantages	• Renewed facilities may allow for the provision of more varied and personalised support/activities. • Refurbishment may provide potential to meet some Key Components and Principles [2] agreed in 2017.
Disadvantages	• Disruption to customers during renovation of Ampthill Day Centre. Customers would need to access alternative services during the renovation period. • Restricts access to services for new customers as places in other centres would be filled by Ampthill Day Centre customers during renovation period. • Would not offer a more localised and personalised service. • Would not resolve the issue that the centre is too large for the current and forecasted demand.

Initial assessment

The disruption to customers from this option would be significant and although a refurbished centre would meet some of the Key Components and Principles of the enhanced day offer the costs would be very considerable and would result in a building that was still too large for current and forecast demand. For these reasons this option is not considered to be acceptable.

5. Commission an independent day service and close Ampthill Day Centre

What would this mean in practice?	This would mean undertaking a procurement process so that an independent agency would operate the service on the

	Council's behalf, and the Council would no longer run the service directly. Moving all customers currently in attendance at Ampthill Day Centre to an alternative independent day centre.
Cost	Unknown at this stage. In some circumstances contracting out can result in cost reduction, but this also incurs extra costs such as the procurement process and ongoing contract monitoring.
Approximate timescales	A procurement process usually takes a minimum of 3 months but in reality, the whole process could take at least a year considering the requirement to develop a suitable specification through engagement with customers, stakeholders and the provider market and the need for a transition period to move to the new service.
Assumptions	There are providers in the market place with suitable experience, knowledge and premises.
Advantages	• Procurement can result in a more cost-effective service. • Service specifications/contract could include the Key Components and Principles[2] therefore providing an enhanced offer to the people of Central Bedfordshire.
Disadvantages	• Disruption for customers of Ampthill Day Centre due to the requirement to move to an alternative service that they are not familiar with. • The day care market for older people is underdeveloped, the process may not be effective in finding a suitable private provider who will be able to deliver the complete service and an enhanced offer that meets the Key Components and Principles agreed at Stage 1. • The Council would lose direct control of being able to monitor and develop the service and ensure that quality is maintained. • There is significant risk that providers would be unwilling or unable to deliver a replacement service which meets the quality standards the Council would want. • The Council may lose valuable staff to external providers.

Initial assessment

Option 5 is not considered acceptable as the risks are high and the benefits are low. Although it could meet some of the Key Components and Principles of the enhanced day offer once complete, this does not mitigate the negative impacts of this option.

Options Summary

The options are summarised against four key outcomes in the table below.

Outcomes	Options				
	Do nothing	Hub & Spoke	Move to alternative centres	Refurbish	Commission new provider
Improved quality of facilities/services	✗	✓	✗	✓	?
Minimal disruption for existing customers	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Value for money	✗	✓	✓	✗	?
Meets Key Components and Principles [2] of the enhanced offer	✗	✓	✗	✓	?

Having reviewed the options for the future of Ampthill Day Centre the Council's preferred option at this stage is to offer a hub and spoke model of day services and close Ampthill Day Centre. This is the preferred option at this stage because:

Improved quality of facilities/services: it would enable existing customers to access more personalised facilities whilst still meeting their care and support needs. Facilities would be integrated within the community therefore encourage growth of personal friendship networks and prevent isolation.

Minimal disruption for existing customers: any change in day services would mean some disruption for customers, however during investigation of alternative day services the project team have fully involved customers from Ampthill Day Centre. The majority of customers have been involved in pilots so have already experienced what the hub and spoke model could offer including accessing services from alternative facilities. If those pilots become part of the final offer, there would be little disruption for most Ampthill Day Centre customers. Where there may be others who have not been as involved in new activities, measures would be put in place to mitigate any risks to their health and wellbeing.

Value for money: moving to the hub and spoke model and closing Ampthill Day Centre would mean the building running costs of the centre would be saved. The 'new' main day hub is already an existing service (Silsoe Horticultural Centre) which could be used more efficiently and effectively. The other facilities and potential future developments in the Ampthill area that could be used as 'spokes' would be in existing buildings that have available space or new buildings where the ability to offer day services would be only a part of the service offer. This would represent better value for money to the Council and council tax payers in Central Bedfordshire than the existing arrangements.

Key Components and Principles of the enhanced day offer: development of a hub and spoke model of service would increase levels of social interaction and physical and mental wellbeing of customers and their carers by providing more personalised and local services. Delivering more services in the community with local people would enhance partnerships with local organisations and promote access to services across the area.

have your say...

...On the Future of Ampthill Day Centre

An update on Ampthill Day Centre consultation

Central Bedfordshire

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Ampthill Day Centre

Consultation Update 12th October 2018

What we have done so far

Following the approval by the Council's Executive Committee on 7th August 2018 to consult on the future of Ampthill Day Centre consultation documents have been sent out to customers, relatives and other interested parties. Since then the consultation team have been busy talking to customers, relatives and staff about the proposals and encouraging them to complete the consultation questionnaire.

Many customers and relatives have now spoken to or met Jenny, Sam, Rebecca and Claire in the consultation team who will be helping customers to contribute to the consultation.

Who we have consulted with

Along with the customers, relatives and staff, we have sent consultation information to the organisations listed below that all have a role in relation to Ampthill Day Centre.

East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) – part of the NHS that provides services to people with mental health needs including people with dementia.

Healthwatch – the national consumer champion in health and care. Healthwatch have significant statutory powers to ensure the voice of the consumer is strengthened and heard by those who commission, deliver and regulate health and care services.

Ampthill and Flitwick Town Councils

Carers in Bedfordshire – a registered charity existing to help family carers and former carers cope with the mental and physical stress arising from their role. They offer assistance such as practical help, advice, training, advocacy, support and information.

Age UK Bedfordshire – a local charity based in Bedford and operating through the whole of Bedfordshire and Luton for the benefit of all older people in the County.

Alzheimer's Bedfordshire – a charitable organisation providing information, support and services to people living with all types of dementia, their carers, family members, health professionals, and anyone else with concerns about their memory or that of someone else.

Older People's Network – an independent forum to improve the services Central Bedfordshire Council Provide for older people.

POhWER – a charity and membership organisation that provide information, advice, support and advocacy to people who experience disability, vulnerability, distress and social exclusion.

We have also sent consultation information to other organisations that use the day centre for other purposes or during out of hours.

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are some of the questions that we have been asked so far during the consultation by customers and their relatives.

What is meant by the 'Hub and Spoke' model?
The 'Hub' would be a day centre that is open every day between Monday and Friday. Although not limited to, this may suit those with higher care needs, or those who prefer the stability of the same place every time they visit. We think this would be Silsoe Horticultural Centre which is currently a day centre for adults with disabilities.

The 'Spokes' would be at venues across the local area on different days, however they would run from a different location on the same day every week. We think these would be communal lounges and dining rooms within sheltered housing schemes.

Would I be separated from the friends I have made at Ampthill Day Centre?
We understand the importance of friendships that are made at the day centre and would aim to maintain these where possible. If this is not possible for any reason then we would look at how we can help you continue these.

Jenny, Sam, Rebecca and Claire would discuss your friendships with you and try to make sure these are taken into account if a decision is made to close Ampthill Day Centre.

Would the days I attend change?
If a decision is made to close Ampthill Day Centre, Jenny, Sam, Rebecca and Claire would work with you to identify the days and venues most suited to you. We would try to accommodate your requests, but cannot guarantee the days you attend would remain the same.

Would we still have transport to the new centres and would we have to pay more?
We would discuss any changes to transport as part of the Assessor's review. We do not envisage any changes to transport fees.

Will I have to travel further?
We would work closely with transport colleagues to minimise the impact of change on customers as much as possible.

We hope that for many customers the day service they access would still be local to them, and may, in some cases, be nearer. For some customers however, it may mean a slightly longer journey time depending on which venue(s) they would be attending and the transport route.

Would the staff be made redundant?
If the decision is made to close Ampthill Day Centre then the Council would discuss any changes with the staff at Ampthill Day Centre. We would hope that all the staff would choose to remain with the service and that customers continue to receive support from staff they are familiar with.

Would the hub and spoke model require more staff?
This is something that the project team will work closely with the operations team to monitor. It is likely that more staff will be required to support this model.

What do you mean by accessible toilets?
An accessible toilet is designed to meet the needs of people with physical disabilities, limited mobility or inability to walk due to impairments. These toilets have more room than a standard toilet to enable assistance from staff and also have hand rails for support with sitting and standing.

A changing place is large enough to have a changing bed and hoist for those customers with higher needs who cannot transfer from a wheelchair.

Would I still have a hot lunch?
We anticipate that this will continue as we know how important a hot lunch is for our customers. We are looking into the ways that this can be offered at both the hub and spoke centres.

If I am not happy with the hub or spoke I am allocated to, would I be able to change venue?
The project team have been piloting running day services from alternative venues for smaller groups of customers to test how the 'hub and spoke' model works. The team are also facilitating ongoing visits to different venues to give customers the opportunity to see what these places are like. We hope that being able to visit alternative venues could help familiarise customers with the new places and enable a smoother transition if the changes are agreed.

If the proposal is agreed then an Assessor would look at your care and support needs, friendship groups and other criteria to make sure your new location is right for you.

Independent advice and support

If you would like to speak to someone other than the Council, below are the contact details for two local independent organisations that would be happy to discuss the consultation with you.

POhWER
advocacy, making your voice heard

Telephone: 0300 456 2370
Email: pohwer@pohwer.net

healthwatch
Central Bedfordshire

Telephone: 0300 303 8554
Email: info@healthwatch-centralbedfordshire.org.uk

Central Bedfordshire Council
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Consultation Period and Decision Making

No decision about the future of Ampthill Day Centre has yet been made. Below is a timetable of the activity planned between now and a final decision being made;

Dates	Activity	Notes
20th August to 12th November 2018	Consultation Period	On 20th August 2018 the Council published consultation documents. These outlined the options considered and the Council's preferred option for the future of Ampthill Day Centre. There is a questionnaire that people can fill in to respond to the consultation. A social worker and development officers are ensuring that all customers who want to participate in the consultation are supported in doing so. At the end of the consultation period the results will be published along with the Council's response to issues raised.
13th November to 22nd November 2018	Report writing	Completion of the Executive report which will contain information about the outcomes of the consultation and will make recommendations about the future of the centre.
4th December 2018	Meeting of the Council's Executive	The Executive (made up of elected local councillors) will consider the report and make a decision based on the recommendations in it. This is a public meeting – anyone can attend. It is also broadcast live on the internet and a recording can be viewed afterwards. The report that the Executive will consider will be published on the Council's website on 22nd November 2018.
4th December to 13th December 2018	Call In Period	The decisions made by the Executive on the 4th December 2018 will be published two days after the meeting. Decisions made by the Executive can be 'called in' for reconsideration within five working days of the date they are published. In the event that the decision is not called in we would expect to be able to implement any recommendations from 14th December 2018.

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What happens next?

Claire is the team's social worker, leading the consultation meetings and along with Jenny, Sam and Rebecca is continuing to meet with customers and relatives. They are ensuring that all customers have their say in the consultation if at all possible and are encouraging customers to be involved.

Alongside Claire, Jenny, Sam and Rebecca, the other members of the consultation team will also continue to be available at Ampthill Day Centre on a regular basis to answer any questions you have.

If you haven't completed the consultation questionnaire we would encourage you to do so. You can do this by filling in the questionnaire by hand and posting it to us at the address below or by leaving it with Lisa, the manager at Ampthill Day Centre. Alternatively the questionnaire can be filled in online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/consultations.

If you need copies of the consultation documents or the questionnaire you can get them from the website. There are also copies in the day centre. If you want to be sent any of the documents please contact Rebecca Carr on the phone number below.

The closing date for consultation responses is Monday 12th November 2018. All responses will be reviewed and included in a consultation report that will accompany a report on the future of Ampthill Day Centre which will be considered by the Social Care Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and at a meeting of the Executive in December 2018.

As soon as a decision is made by the Council's Executive we will inform customers, relatives and staff.

Meet the consultation team

The consultation team consists of (left to right) Jenny, Sam, Claire, Rebecca and Mel.

You can expect to see them in the centre and can contact any of them via Rebecca using the details below.

Contact us...

by telephone: 0300 300 6609
by email: rebecca.carr@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Write to: Rebecca Carr, Central Bedfordshire Council, Houghton Lodge, Houghton Close, Ampthill, MK45 2TG

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Appendix 5

Central Bedfordshire Council

Consultation on the Future of Ampthill Day Centre

Appendix 5 - Consultation Response Report

20th August 2018 – 12th November 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to offering a wide-ranging day offer to older people and adults with disabilities focusing on those who are assessed as having eligible care and support needs. The overall aim is to secure better outcomes for current and future customers within Central Bedfordshire, encompassing older people and adults with disabilities, which includes people from the age of 18 with a physical and/or learning disability.

1.2 In early 2016 the Council began the process of developing the future day offer for older people and adults with disabilities. The new day offer is a joint vision between Central Bedfordshire Council and the people that use the service. This is a two-phase process. Phase 1 involved agreeing a set of key components and principles[1]. These were developed following a period of engagement and formal consultation with current day centre customers, carers and wider stakeholders. This feedback was then consolidated and in April 2017 the Council's Executive agreed to their implementation.

1.3 These are:

Key components

- Meet customer outcomes for social interaction and physical and mental stimulation
- Meet carer outcomes for respite and peace of mind.
- Meet care and support needs

Principles

- Promote and maintain independence in a way which is personalised flexible and responsive
- Promote learning in a stimulating and supportive environment
- Deliver greater integration and partnership with local communities
- Maximise the use of community facilities that can be accessed by older people and adults with disabilities

1.4 Phase 1 of the project is now complete, and the Council will review each of its day centres individually as part of phase 2.

1.5 The Council are reviewing Ampthill Day Centre and undertook a mapping exercise with each of the current day centre customers to identify their interests, friendship groups, where they travel from and what they would like to see from their day service. Alongside this the project team identified a number of community venues across West Mid Bedfordshire. These were then evaluated for their suitability to provide a space for day services. A request was also shared on the Council's social media platforms to encourage external individuals or

[1] Consultation on the future day offer 2017, Components and Principles

organisations to share their skills or facilitate activities with day service customers.

1.6 The project team consolidated all of this information and using this, commissioned pilots. These were designed to test how day services could run from alternative venues. More details about this can be found in Engagement Activities section 4 of this report.

1.7 After an evaluation of these pilots and a comparison evaluation of Ampthill Day Centre, the Council believe the service delivered at Ampthill Day Centre could be delivered in a different environment which would better meet the key components and principles. We worked with Grand Union Housing Group who facilitated their own evaluation with the tenants at Wingfield Court, following the pilot there.

1.8 The Council ran a formal consultation on the proposals for the future of Ampthill Day Centre and have investigated the following options:

1. Do nothing – continue to run Ampthill Day Centre in its present form
2. Move to a hub and spoke delivery model and close Ampthill Day Centre
3. Move customers to other Central Bedfordshire Council Day Centres and close Ampthill Day Centre
4. Refurbish Ampthill Day Centre
5. Commission an independent day service and close Ampthill Day Centre

1.9 The Council have considered the above options, and the preferred option is option 2, to move to a hub and spoke delivery model and close Ampthill Day Centre.

1.10 This option would mean there would be a main 'hub' which would run from Monday to Friday and then several 'spokes' in community venues which would run on different days of the week alongside the hub.

1.11 The Council suggests that the main 'hub' could be Silsoe Horticultural Centre, which is currently a day centre for adults with learning disabilities. Both services would operate from the same building. It should be noted that the proposed option does not produce any significant change in service to the customers of the Silsoe Horticultural Centre.

1.12 Following an extensive mapping process, we propose that at this stage the spokes would be based in community lounges within various sheltered housing schemes across the area.

1.13 The formal consultation began on 20th August 2018 and ran for 12 weeks, ending on 12th November 2018. The hub and spoke model was identified in the consultation as the Council's preferred option.

1.14 Feedback to the proposals were collected via paper and online versions of consultation questionnaires. These were provided in both standard and easier to read versions. Customers and relatives were invited to individual consultation meetings to discuss the proposals and answer any questions they had. Additional engagement meetings were held with the current customers at Silsoe Horticultural Centre and also by an advocate to collect their views on how they felt the proposals could impact on them. Other stakeholders were also informed, see section 4 for information relating to engagement activities.

1.15 Members of the project team have been based at Ampthill Day Centre for over a year to provide reassurance to customers and be on hand to answer any questions or concerns about the day centre review.

1.16 A Social Worker has been involved throughout the consultation process to understand customers' capacity to input into the consultation and to ensure that the current Ampthill Day Centre customers were consulted, without causing distress to those who may have difficulty understanding what is happening.

1.17 An Independent Advocate was also involved in the consultation process to gain feedback from both Ampthill Day Centre customers and Silsoe Horticultural Centre customers. Further details can be found in appendix F.

2. RESPONSES RECEIVED

2.1 The formal consultation was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data from respondents, with results summarised within this report (percentages are rounded to the nearest one decimal place).

2.2 The Council have received 77 responses to the formal consultation via the consultation survey. Additional feedback from meetings with customers who chose not to complete a questionnaire but still gave a view, the views of customers who lacked capacity and did not complete the consultation questionnaire, views of Silsoe Horticultural Centre relatives and representatives and the outcome of the advocacy meetings with customers can be found in appendices C, D, E and F.

2.3 49% (38) of respondents to the consultation questionnaire were customers of a Central Bedfordshire Council Day Centre, 25% (19) were a relative/carer of someone who attends a Central Bedfordshire Council Day Centre, 1% (1) was a Town or Parish Council, 1% (1) was a local business, 8% (6) were a voluntary or community organisation and 16% (12) described themselves as 'other'. Respondents that answered 'other' included residents of Central Bedfordshire, an interested council tax payer, an Ampthill Town Councillor and someone who said they have involvement with people with a learning disability.

2.4 Details of respondent demography are recorded in appendix A.

3. RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION: QUESTION AND RESPONSE OVERVIEW

Full details of the qualitative responses can be found in appendix B.

3.1 Q1 What are your views on our preferred option?

76 out of a total 77 respondents replied to this question providing a range of feedback. 36% did agree with the Council's preferred option and could highlight the benefits of this alternative approach. 27% of responses were more mixed, with respondents highlighting the benefits of the hub and spoke model but also saying they liked it at Ampthill Day Centre. Some of these were also happy with the preferred option as long as it meant they continued to access transport to and from their day service. 27% did not agree with the Council's preferred option and the majority of this response wanted to re-utilise Ampthill Day Centre. The remaining respondents made other suggestions for the future of the service or did not give a clear view on any of the proposed options.

There were a few responses that raised concerns about how the figures relating to refurbishment were calculated and believed that the proposal is driven by cost saving.

3.2 Q2 Do you think all options have been correctly evaluated?

	Number	%
Yes	27	35
No	14	18
Don't know	28	36
Did not answer	8	10

3.3 Q2a If no, please state which one(s) and why you think it should be evaluated differently.

12 of the 14 respondents who answered 'no' to question 2 went on to provide further details. Responses reiterated concerns about whether financial calculations published in the Options Analysis were an accurate reflection of the true cost of the different options.

There was also a response saying the proposals could have been more imaginative. Another respondent questioned why the Council are not encouraging use of the centre by the voluntary sector. One respondent suggested whether the Council has intentionally run down the building in order to propose the closure. It was suggested by two respondents that the decision had already been made.

There were concerns about the impact the change would have on customers and a respondent felt that the views of customers had not been taken into account.

A respondent also referred to the Pilot Evaluation Report and said that the majority of customers that responded as part of the evaluation quite liked the service as it currently is. A respondent reinforced their view shared in their response to question 1 that they wished to remain at Ampthill Day Centre.

A few of these respondents questioned how the Council had evaluated the different options against the key components and principles. One respondent went on to say that they did not agree that Ampthill Day Centre fails on the four key elements of the proposed day offer, especially the points that Ampthill Day Centre is not as well connected in the community as Silsoe Horticultural Centre.

3.4 Q3 Are there any options listed that you think the Council should investigate in more detail?

	Number	%
Yes	20	26
No	28	36
Don't know	21	27
Did not answer	8	10

3.5 Q3a If yes, please state which one(s)

Of the 20 people that answered 'yes' to question 3, 19 went on to provide further details. Of these, around half suggested retaining or re-utilising Ampthill Day Centre. Three respondents raised concerns about whether the hub and spoke model would meet the needs of people with a diagnosis of dementia.

3.6 Q4 Are there any other option(s) that you think the Council should consider that are not in the document?

	Number	%
Yes	20	26
No	33	43
Don't know	21	27
Did not answer	3	4

3.7 Q4a If yes, please explain what these option(s) are.

Of the 20 people that responded to this question, feedback shared expressed the need to consider the growing population and specifically the needs of people

with dementia. There was also the suggestion that generations should be brought together. Eight of the respondents proposed retaining the existing building but opening it up to the wider community to better utilise the space. Three respondents said that they would like the day service to offer more outings.

3.8 Q5 Throughout the process we will be conducting individual meetings with customers and their relatives and providing advocates where necessary. What else could the Council do to minimise the impact of any changes on the existing customers and their relatives at Ampthill Day Centre?

The majority of respondents to this question highlighted the importance of communication throughout this process. A number of respondents felt that they had been well supported so far and found the meetings helpful. They asked that they are continued to be kept informed of project developments. Just under a quarter of respondents said that they could not think of any other ideas, some of these shared that they had no concerns. Seven responses said they would like to see further visits or trials arranged at alternative venues prior to any move. The future provision of transport was also a key theme.

3.9 Q6 Do you have any further comments about the proposals?

Due to the nature of this question, responses covered a range of areas. These included respondents reiterating the view that they wanted Ampthill Day Centre to remain as is whereas others said they are positive about the proposed changes. There were concerns from five respondents that the Council had not considered the impact of the proposed change on customers. A respondent added that they felt the evidence base on which recommendations have been made about the future of Ampthill Day Centre is too small. Two of the respondents went on to say they felt the decision about the future of the centre had already been made.

A couple of respondents said they felt unsure about the proposed venues. A respondent made suggestions about how the space could be better used at Silsoe Horticultural Centre to accommodate both existing customers and a group of older people which would enable specialist staff to concentrate on their activities.

Several respondents said they would like to see a broader range of activities (e.g. pottery, educational options, talks, outings) which would support social interaction. Respondents said they look forward to the opportunity to try new activities in the future.

It was reiterated by some respondents that there was a need to consider the impact of change, particularly on customers with dementia. It was also raised that it would be nice to know that staff could come too if they have to move.

Similarly, to previous questions, points were raised around future location and transport.

Almost half of the total number of respondents to this questionnaire either did not respond or put no further comment to this question.

4. ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

4.1 As part of the Ampthill Day Centre review, a mapping stage was undertaken where members of the project team met with customers on an individual basis to collect information about what activities they enjoy, where they travel from, who their friends are and what they would like to see from a future day service. Day centre staff and relatives were also involved in this process, where appropriate, to help build up a picture of individual customer preferences.

4.2 From this information the project team commissioned pilots at alternative schemes, where it was thought that customers would benefit from being in a homelier environment which may have also been more local to them. Each of the pilots ran for one day a week for between eight to ten weeks. Pilots took place in two sheltered housing schemes and Silsoe Horticultural Centre, further details can be found in the Pilot Evaluation Report. Feedback was collected from customers that participated in these pilots as well as from tenants at the sheltered housing schemes and customers at Silsoe Horticultural Centre. This feedback was consolidated and outlined in a Pilot Evaluation Report which is a paper that accompanied the consultation documents. The experience gained from the pilots tested out the viability of the proposed hub and spoke option.

4.3 Newsletters have been produced for Ampthill Day Centre customers and wider stakeholders to keep them informed of project progress. The most recent newsletter specifically relating to Ampthill Day Centre was issued in June 2018 which gave an update of pilot activity and provided information about what would happen next in terms of the consultation.

4.4 A Day Offer video was published in August 2018 and was designed to give an overview of the project and specifically how the pilots had worked. This included stories from customers and sheltered housing tenants of their experiences of the pilots in which they were involved over the preceding months. This video helped provide an explanation of the project in an alternative and more accessible format.

4.5 Visits to Silsoe Horticultural Centre have been ongoing throughout the consultation to offer the opportunity for customers that were not involved in a pilot to see one of the proposed alternative venues.

4.6 A co-production group was developed in phase 1 of the Day Offer project and has been meeting regularly during the review of Ampthill Day Centre. The co-production group includes representatives from the Council, relatives of day centre customers and independent organisations.

Communication and Engagement

4.7 Awareness of the consultation on the future of Ampthill Day Centre was generated via a range of channels including the circulation of consultation documents to customers, relatives, day centre staff and other interested parties. This included consultation papers sent to organisations that use the day centre for other purposes outside of normal day centre hours. Papers were hand delivered to three of these five organisations to discuss the proposals in more detail with members. One organisation was contacted over the phone and a meeting was arranged with the fifth to discuss concerns they raised about the proposals.

4.8 Background information to the project as well as electronic copies of the consultation documents were made available on the CBC web pages from 20th August 2018. Notification of the consultation was published in staff newsletters Connect and Staff Central and there was a targeted email distribution to notify of the consultation as well as posts on Central Bedfordshire Council social media.

4.9 A Members Briefing was produced at the start of the consultation to inform Members of forthcoming consultation activity. West Mid Beds Members, the locality in which Ampthill Day Centre is situated, were also emailed directly about the consultation start. The Mid-Bedfordshire MP, Nadine Dorries was also notified by email.

4.10 Other stakeholders notified of the consultation include:

- Central Bedfordshire Council Customer Services
- The Older People's Network
- Ampthill and Flitwick Town Councils
- Age UK Bedfordshire
- Alzheimer's Society
- Bedfordshire CCG
- Carers in Bedfordshire
- Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire
- MIND
- Stroke Association
- Via Just Ask

4.11 Appendix G provides more detail of the audience social media posts, CBC web pages and e-bulletins reached.

Consultation process

4.12 To ensure that our current customers were consulted without causing distress to those who may have difficulty understanding what is happening, dedicated members of the project team, which included a Social Worker, offered individual meetings to all Ampthill Day Centre customers.

4.13 All new customers that started at Ampthill Day Centre during the consultation process were also informed of the proposals.

4.14 The following documentation was produced to help customers, relatives, stakeholders and other interested parties have their say:

- Consultation questionnaire
- 'Have Your Say on the Future of Ampthill Day Centre' overview document
- Options Analysis
- Pilot Evaluation Report
- 'Have Your Say - easier read version'
- Consultation questionnaire - easier read version
- Consultation Update Report

4.15 To ensure that all our current customers were consulted in the most appropriate way, support to understand the proposals was provided to customers in one-to-one meetings. These meetings used an easier to read version of the consultation questionnaire, along with an easier to read version of the 'Have Your Say' overview paper, which details the different options the Council has considered. These papers were drafted and shared with the Day Offer Co-Production group for feedback. One member of the Co-Production group responded to this request and the papers were adapted based on this feedback to ensure messages were delivered in a clear and user-friendly way.

4.16 The consultation ran for 12 weeks from **Monday 20th August until Monday 12th November 2018** to offer the opportunity for customers and stakeholders to share their views, feedback and experiences on the proposals for the future of Ampthill Day Centre.

Consultation meetings

4.17 The Council currently supports around 64 customers at Ampthill Day Centre, with up to 27 currently attending on any given day. The average attendance was 21 customers per day. Individual consultation meetings were held with 49 Ampthill Day Centre customers during the course of the consultation. The remaining 15 were either in respite, had not attended the day centre for a considerable period, were unwell throughout the consultation or family members requested

they were not contacted due to concerns the consultation process may distress them. Due to the customer cohort, it was recognised that not all customers may have capacity to understand the consultation therefore a Social Worker met with these customers and carried out a Mental Capacity Assessment when appropriate.

4.18 Where known a relative or representative was contacted for each customer as part of the process to discuss the proposals over the phone and invite them to an individual meeting either with, or separately to the day centre customer. If they were unable to travel to the day centre, members of the project team visited their homes. 29 relatives accepted the invitation to a meeting with 24 relatives attending.

Consultation Update Report

4.19 Mid-way through the consultation a Consultation Update Report was produced, the content of this was shared with the Co-Production group. This was circulated on 18th October 2018 to customers, relatives, stakeholders and West Mid Beds Members directly. A copy was also made available in MIB and emailed to the Mid-Bedfordshire MP.

4.20 The report was designed to let people know what consultation activity had happened to date, provide answers to the most frequently asked questions raised at consultation meetings and understand the next steps.

Silsoe Horticultural Centre Engagement Meetings

4.21 Following the pilot at Silsoe Horticultural Centre, members of the project team met with existing customers to collect their views on how they felt about the group of older people being based at Silsoe Horticultural Centre. This feedback was shared in the Pilot Evaluation Report.

4.22 During the consultation period, 24 relatives or representatives of current Silsoe Horticultural Centre customers were contacted over the phone by a member of the project team and offered the opportunity to discuss the proposals in a one-to-one engagement meeting. Six relatives or representatives were not contactable over the phone but were sent letters advising them of the proposals and offering an invitation to meet with the project team to discuss further. In total, two relatives accepted the offer of a meeting with only one attending. Comments shared can be found in appendix E.

4.23 An independent advocate held group meetings with customers at Silsoe Horticultural Centre to understand and capture their views on the proposals. Further details of the responses from Silsoe Horticultural Centre customers can be found in appendix F.

4.24 Members of the project team were also available at Silsoe Horticultural Centre on different days to answer any questions customers or staff had about the proposals.

5. SUMMARY

5.1 The Council have received a mixed response to the consultation on the proposal to deliver the day service currently at Ampthill Day Centre through a hub and spoke model and to subsequently close Ampthill Day Centre.

5.2 A number of responses from customers and relatives said that customers enjoyed the opportunity to pilot having a day service from an alternative venue and could list different benefits for this model. There were comments in favour of trying out alternative opportunities if the preferred option is agreed.

5.3 A small number of customers stated that they have been coming to Ampthill Day Centre for a long time and did not want to move. Some responses said they could not see anything wrong with the current facilities at Ampthill Day Centre.

5.4 Some comments expressed the need to consider the demand from the growing population and the impact the proposed changes could have on customers.

5.5 There was concern about whether transport would still be provided if customers moved to alternative venues. Several customers were in favour of the new model on the basis that they would still continue to access transport.

5.6 There have been some comments about how the figures in the Options Analysis paper have been calculated, particularly the cost of refurbishment of Ampthill Day Centre. There were further comments suggesting the proposals are a money saving exercise and that the decision has already been made.

5.7 The majority of responses said it is important to continue the engagement and be kept informed of developments throughout the process. A number of responses said they feel supported by the Council and found individual consultation meetings helpful.

5.8 In conclusion, feedback received during the consultation period has been mixed with some responses agreeing with the proposed option and the opportunity to move to alternative venues, whilst others want the centre to remain as it is currently or to be refurbished. It is clear that engagement with customers and relatives during this process has been helpful and that they, understandably, want to continue to be kept informed in such a way.

6. THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

6.1 The Council is committed to continuing to offer day services to older people and adults with disabilities. The future offer will be based on the key components and principles outlined in the Introduction and will apply to current and future services.

6.2 Whilst the Council has a duty to provide best value, the main focus is to continue to provide high quality care and support to those who need it, now and in the future.

6.3 The Council recognises that any proposals to change existing services are likely to receive a mixed response and this has been evident during the consultation. We are grateful to all of the people who took time to respond to the consultation. We understand that this is an important decision and that it is therefore important to listen to and address the concerns of individuals, especially customers and their relatives/representatives, before any decision is made about the future of Ampthill Day Centre.

6.4 We are glad that people found the opportunity to meet face to face with staff from the Council useful. In the sections below, we set out the Council's response to the main issues that were raised.

6.5 <u>Keeping the centre as it is</u>

The Council recognises that many customers are happy with the current service they receive. Customers value the day centre staff, the activities delivered and their friendships. The Council's view is that all these elements can be achieved in a more suitable, less institutional environment.

The current centre is too large for the current numbers of customers and the distances from facilities is not ideal for customers whose frailty is increasing. The pilots evidenced that smaller, homelier settings could offer a nicer environment for customers and promote social interaction.

Some respondents suggested that the use of the centre could be extended to the wider community (e.g. the voluntary sector) to make it more viable. The centre is currently available for the community to use, but there are only two regular outside organisations that use the centre during the day and only three groups in the evenings. The Council could consider promoting the use of all centres, however this would not address the issue that the day centre is too large for the number of day centre customers that use it.

6.6 Refurbishing or rebuilding Ampthill Day Centre on the same site

These options were discussed in the consultation documents along with the reasons why it was not felt they met the key components and principles. Both refurbishing and rebuilding would mean additional customer disruption as they would need to move twice, once to an alternative centre during a renovation or rebuild of Ampthill Day Centre and then again once the renovation is complete. For more vulnerable customers two such moves may not be in their best interests.

6.7 Cost of rebuilding/refurbishment

The financial costings of rebuilding / refurbishment were provided by the Council's Assets Team who used industry recognised publications, namely BCIP and SPONS, which detail guidelines for all aspects of construction. The costs include disconnection of existing utilities, demolition and removal, rebuild costs, professional fees, planning and building control costs and land costs where needed, along with associated access provisions.

6.8 The suitability of the alternative venues

Members of the Day Offer project team visited a number of community venues across West Mid Bedfordshire and evaluated the suitability of each against the key components and principles. When alternative venues were identified, the project team piloted running a day service from these venues to ensure they were suitable for customers. More details about this and how the alternative venues were evaluated during the pilot stage can be found in the Pilot Evaluation background paper.

If the decision is made to move to the hub and spoke model and close Ampthill Day Centre, the Council would look to make adaptations to bathroom facilities to ensure that personal care needs of customers continue to be met.

6.9 How the Council intends to meet the needs of people with a diagnosis of dementia

The Council envisages that the hub would be able to provide the five day a week consistency from which a customer with a diagnosis of dementia might benefit, as well as providing a safe and stimulating environment.

The pilots however showed that some customers with less advanced dementia enjoyed the smaller, more comfortable settings offered by the spokes.

We hope that current day centre staff would remain with the service which would help provide continuity to customers. Should the preferred option be agreed, there would be a formal staff consultation period.

Representatives from specialist dementia organisations have been involved in shaping and supporting with the Day Offer. Their continued involvement would help inform how the service is delivered in line with the needs of customers with dementia.

The service will continue to develop a wider range of suitable activities for all customers, alongside ongoing staff training, to ensure that the service meets the key components and principles. For example, the Council has invested in 'magic tables', an interactive set of games and activities suitable for people with dementia.

The Council will ensure that customers' needs will continue to be reviewed as part of the needs assessment process under the Care Act 2014.

6.10 The impact of moving for current customers

We understand this concern. The Council has a team of staff that has developed considerable experience and expertise in arranging and managing moves, including for people with a diagnosis of dementia. The team would work with day centre staff who know the customers well to ensure that individual concerns are addressed. Our experience is that with careful and sensitive support we are able to minimise potential anxieties that may be experienced by some customers. In all cases, before we support a customer to move, we would discuss the plans with them and their relatives to develop the best outcome for them.

The Council would maintain engagement with the customers at Silsoe Horticultural Centre, which is currently a day centre for adults with learning disabilities. Support would continue throughout any changes to their centre to minimise the impact this may have on them.

6.11 The provision of transport as part of the proposed model

Provision of transport is an important element for customers accessing day services. The Council has been working closely with colleagues in our Transport Team to ensure they are aware of the proposals and should the preferred option be agreed, teams would work together to ensure customers continue to access transport to their day service. We hope that the proposed hub and spoke model would mean that, for most customers, their day service would be more local and reduce travel time, however for other customers it could mean a slightly longer journey. The impact of transport would be reviewed for each individual customer individually.

6.12 The concern that friends will be separated and that smaller customer groups will mean there is less social stimulation

We understand the importance of friendships that are made at the day centre and would aim to maintain these where possible. If the preferred option is agreed, the

project team would have individual meetings with each of the customers and their relatives or representatives to develop the best outcome for them.

Feedback from the pilots at sheltered housing schemes showed us that customers benefited from smaller groups which created a greater level of personal interaction. It was also a good opportunity for day centre customers to mix with tenants at these schemes, providing socialisation for both.

6.13 <u>The belief that the proposals are motivated by cost savings rather than enhancing day services</u>

The Council's intention from the start of the Day Offer project has always been to enhance day services for older people and adults with disabilities. The Council has worked with customers, carers and other stakeholders to develop key components and principles that a future day offer should achieve.

While the Council has been led by the key components and principles of providing quality day services to secure better outcomes for current and future customers, in consideration of the options, it continues to have a duty to use public money to the best effect. Savings delivered through the closure of an under-utilised building while still enhancing the day service, offers benefits in both regards.

For clarification, no decision on the future of Ampthill Day Centre has been made at this stage and the Council retains ownership of the building. The focus of the Day Offer is to enhance day services for our customers in line with the key components and principles. The future of Ampthill Day Centre will solely be determined by the Executive's decision.

Appendix A: RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

Demographic profile of respondents from the public consultation survey

Q7. Are you responding as a:

	Number	%
Customer of a Central Bedfordshire Council Day Centre	38	49
Relative/ Carer of someone who attends a Central Bedfordshire Council Day Centre	19	25
Town or Parish Council	1	1
Local Business	1	1
Voluntary or Community organisation	6	8
Other	12	16
Did not answer	0	0

Q8. Are you:

	Number	%
Male:	30	39
Female	44	57
Did not answer	3	4

Q9. What is your age?

	Number	%
Under 16 years	0	0
16-19 years	0	0
20-29 years	1	1
30-44 years	4	5
45-59 years	13	17
60-64 years	7	9
65-74 years	18	23
75+	33	43
Did not answer	1	1

Q10. Do you consider yourself to be disabled? Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

	Number	%
Yes	32	42
No	42	55
Did not answer	3	4

Q11. To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

	Number	%
White British	63	82
Black or Black British	2	3
Asian or Asian British	1	1
Mixed ethnicity	0	0
Other ethnic group	8	10
Did not answer	3	4

Other:

- 4 respondents described themselves as 'White English'
- 1 as 'White Irish'
- 1 as 'White Spanish'
- 1 as 'White Ukrainian'

Appendix B: FULL QUALITATIVE RESPONSE

Q1 What are your views on our preferred option?

1. I think whilst it may save the council money, it is likely to cause disruption to staff and customers, which I think could be detrimental to the council in the long run. It maya also split up customers from some of their friends as they may live in a totally different area.
2. Hub and spoke - I think it is good but I don't like option 5 to commission a new provider. I want the day service to be run by the Council.
3. If it is going to cut the cost its good because it is always about the cost. I liked Silsoe, i liked going in the garden and being able to buy fresh fruit.
4. I think the hub and spoke is fine but I don't like the idea of Ampthill Day Centre being closed.
5. Seems like the most acceptable option, especially in the long term.
6. Ignore CBC proposal
7. Sounds sensible
8. The most appropriate solution would seem to be retaining the status quo but not necessarily in the existing premises. We all know that land sold for in Ampthill for housing in Ampthill would raise a small fortune. Hence perhaps a better option would be to relocate - Is there no land available @ chicksands or alternative for example the ex-garden centre @ Centre Parcs? The suggestion would be to balance the books over say 2 years and provide better facilities for customers in perhaps a less expensive location.
9. The Councils preferred option is flawed. The summary report states that the 'investigation of alternative day services the project team have fully involved customers from Ampthill Day Centre. The majority of customers have been involved in pilots so have already experienced what the hub and spoke model would offer including accessing services from alternative facilities'. However, further investigation of the full evaluation reveals that of the 65 users of Ampthill Day Centre, only 35 participated in the consultation of which the following numbers participated at the following locations 28 at Ampthill Day Centre, 5 at Gale Court, 8 at Wingfield Court and 5 at Silsoe Horticulture Centre. Is this a wide enough base to make the evaluation meaningful? Where for example are the equally valuable input of the carers of these residents? Surely with the greatest number of responses in favour of a location Ampthill Day Centre comes out top. The report seems to set out with an answer it wants to achieve namely the closure of Ampthill Day Centre, with questionable interpretation of the evaluation. For example under the options document it is claimed that if the building was fully refurbished this would cost between £810,000 and £2,900,000. This is ludicrous as the refurbishment of similar buildings in Ampthill, namely Parkside Community Hall and Ampthill Town Council/Ampthill Football Club cost in the region of £500,000 to £600,000. Indeed

with such inflated figure it puts in to doubt the validity of the costs for each option. How exactly were these figures calculated?

10. I like the idea of smaller and cosier venues. I'm not worried if I have to travel further as long as I can get there.
11. I don't know if I would want the move to Silsoe, although it is a nice place.. Ampthill is more central and has more potential. I would prefer the option of refurbishing Ampthill, although it seems okay as it is.
12. I am not interested in going to a smaller setting. For me, the closeness is the most important thing. I am on the bus for so long and the bus is uncomfortable when it goes over bumps.
13. The Council quoted nearly 3 million to refurbish Ampthill day centre- this seems to be an exaggerated amount of money. I think the Council is going backwards rather than forward. The population of Ampthill and Flitwick is significantly increasing and there is a need for an ongoing day centre. You could knock Ampthill day centre down and build a smaller building.
14. I don't want to get any further from home - I don't want to travel too far.
15. I like the Hub and spoke idea.
16. Positive more forward
17. The idea of having an "Ampthill Day Centre" that is not in the centre of Ampthill is a non starter to start with, and who ever thought of that idea, should try to understand that a day centre should be easily accessible to clubs such as the [Organisation A] which is for handcapped people.
18. I think the users of the service should be consulted but the premises should be visited by councillors or their representatives. I'm not sure Silsoe has a horticultural college so I'd like to visit that too.
19. As long as the care of the people attending the existing Day Centre is maintained, they are happy with the changes and they will benefit from more varied activities.
20. If it costs less money thats good.I don't mind were I go as long as I get entertainment.
21. No set views but concern would be regarding operating with smaller groups both from personal contact and services offered
22. Not worried about anything. What you are all doing is in the interest of all of us.
23. I don't really think the day centre is too big. I can't see anything wrong with it. I don't mind moving to a new venue as long as it's not too far and I see the same people.
24. As long as my [my relative] has social interaction with others we are happy, he needs to see other people otherwise he only sees me.
25. I don't mind but would like to still go to Ampthill. I don't mind either way if we do move to somewhere else.

26. People with dementia need to be taken to the same day centre all the time. I think my [relative] would be quite upset if he wasn't coming here.
27. SHOULD STAY AS IT IS
28. As long as it's the same quality as here I think it's okay
29. It must be because of the cost. If they can't afford to run it then they'll have to close it.
30. I don't really want Ampthill Day Centre to shut. Everything is here and it's in the perfect spot. I'd prefer it to be refurbished.
31. I don't know what the smaller venues are like so it's hard to make a judgement
32. I don't think it's a good idea - the other settings would be too small. I like it here.
33. I would rather keep the day centre as it is. I understand though that it's an expensive asset. My only concern about a smaller group- is how the people in the sheltered scheme would feel about the day centre people coming in.
34. Not sure as it is my [relative] that attends and his well being is what I would consider first.
35. When I visited Silsoe I didn't feel like it had any atmosphere and I would like to stay with my friends. I felt anxious about the customers who attended the Silsoe Centre.
36. Not sure about the new service. I like Ampthill Day Centre
37. I feel like the Council are wasting money. I think the Council might be spending more money transporting people to more venues. It would be important to be picked up. I have a shower on a Wednesday and would still need this.
38. I don't agree that the day centre is too big but I did like going to Wingfield Court and the activities there.
39. I think as long as the clients are looked after with the least disruption and change it will be fine
40. Okay but friendships are very important
41. I think the Council's preferred option sounds like a good idea as it seems to offer customers more choices, particularly for the more abled customers who can visit community venues (spokes) to take part in their preferred activities. I would be interested to see how this can be managed, to keep track of customers whereabouts.
42. Ampthill needs a Day Centre which meets the needs of Ampthill residents. Scattering the residents to small 'Homes' using their lounges with little storage space for putting activities and developing them will not meet their needs. People with Dementia need 'cognitive stimulation' developed and resourced by experts. People with mobility issues need appropriate exercises and an area in which to do this. I see no evidence your hubs have this. It would need a lot of people to manage these hubs effectively.
43. My [relative] and I have been using the day centre for 3 months because we knew nothing about it but we are very pleased to now be using the facility. I believe the

Day Centre should be sustained with a great deal more publicity about its use to promote the numbers who use it.

44. I think it's the best idea.
45. I liked Silsoe but are concerned in the winter months. I like the idea of Wingfield and Ellenshaw as they are near to were I live and I wouldn't need to travel far.
46. I would prefer to stay at Ampthill, but have been to Silsoe and like it.
47. I think that it is the right option
48. I am happy with the idea, I liked Wingfield Court when I tried there.
49. I'm happy with it
50. I wouldn't mind going to the different places.
51. I quite like Ampthill day centre. I like the building- it doesn't feel big. The people are nice. I don't mind moving to a new centre as long as I am with people I know. I wouldn't like to be with strangers. I also need to be picked up and dropped back home.
52. Not much. I've got used to coming to Ampthill. I've been coming here 3 or 4 years. It might not be the same in a different place. Although it might be nice to meet new people.
53. I'm very happy at Ampthill day centre. I'm not too bothered about moving to a new venue- it might be good to go to a new place.
54. It is a blatant money saving exercise. The needs of the current cohort will not be met, particularly those who are physically disadvantaged and require hoists. To take away the day centre facilities and not provide like for like is discriminatory
55. I like it here. The staff are friendly. I don't mind moving to a new centre as long as it's not too far.
56. I'm concerned that it could have a negative affect on the people who have dementia and require continuity. How will the cope going to a different place everyday. Is the hub large enough to accomdate everyone? Is there enough staff to work at the hub and spoke. What if you attend a spoke and need personal care will be able to move straight to the hub... will there be enough space?
57. I believe that it is not in the best interests of the people currently attending Ampthill daycentre. I think it is in the best interests of the council.
58. I don't think this building is too big. I think the Council want to sell it and make money from it.
59. I'd rather stay at Ampthill Day Centre - I've got used to it here. I didn't like Silsoe Horticultural Centre and I found it cramped.
60. Good
61. I don't mind going to a different place, it might make it more interesting.
62. I am happy to go with the councils plan as they know what we need.

63. [Town Council X] [TCX] agree with the proposals as long as the needs of Ampthill residents are met with either a hub or a spoke.

64. I don't think much to the idea of the centre closing. I like coming to Ampthill. I don't think it's too big.

65. Believe this offers the most flexible, cost effective and immediate option to reduce dislocation of services in the circumstance

66. The "options considered" document does not provide a fair and balanced set of information on the options to be considered. In particular: - Costing information is inconsistently reported accross the options. There is no per resident per day cost quoted for options 3 - 5, and the ammounts quoted have no conext. - The Environmental Impact is not considered in the Options document - CO2 load from transport, and refurbishment should be caclulable. Although the reduction in customers travel to a center for this option seems like a positive, it is not stated. - "Minimal distruption for existing customers" is not established in the options documents, - "Improved Quality" Cannot be established in the options document, however less travel and smaller out centres seem like a good idea.

67. The day centre is there to serve it local population and should remain in the community. If the centre moves out of the area then the cost of travel could exclude many from using the facilities offer by the day centre.

68. I have reservations about the mix of needs proposed in these plans. Learning Disabilty is very different from dementia in terms of management and support, this could be difficult to manage in a support network where staff are outposted away from clinical and managerial oversight.

69. Keep in Ampthill

70. I would be happy to stay at Ampthill. I wouldn't mind going to the new places as long as I was with my friends.

71. I would prefer my [relative] to stay at Ampthill Day Care Centre, Houghton Close, Ampthill

72. I think the proposal seems sound. Ampthill Day Centre could be made more of, however, by using screens to create smaller, more intimate groupings. Some of the rooms could be leased out as refreshment centre for people leaving nearby GP surgeries or social centre. Some rooms could be used for TV/music.

73. I support a hub and spoke arrangement - as it often allows for more local, responsive service

74. Please see question 6

75. In recent years there has been a flurry of activity in local government redesigning Day Offers for older people. The responsibility to provide a Day Offer its shape, scope, outcomes and how to ensure a quality service have been interpreted by local authorities in different ways is not prescribed specially in legalisation. I have engaged as part of the co-production group in both stages 1 and stage 2 of this process and even before that engaging with customers of Ampthill Day Centre listening to their views of how they spend their time, their aspirations and life

stories. There is a consensus that there should be a Day Offer and that the Day Offer should suit the needs of its customers well and that it should be forward looking and future proofed. It should be the best it can be given financial constraints so customers while they are ageing can lead their best lives irrespective of the challenges that come with getting older. In replying to this consultation, I urge everyone involved to consider what elements of a best life is reflected in the preferred option for each customer. What does quality in this context look like? I am not sure that the pilots and their evaluation show quality adequately. When redesigning a service from a customer or laymen point of view a way of looking at it is for them to describe "my worst Day Offer day" and the learnings from this to help shape what could be "my Best Day Offer Day". There is also a bank of research evidence that has built around the Day Offer/Centre provision. I fail to see how this has been used in the proposals for change or even referenced. As I understand it Day Offer Services are not regulated by the CQC in the same way as residential care nor are they regulated in the same way as Day Nurseries that are regulated by Ofsted. This suggests that it would be prudent to have robust scrutiny of Day Offer Services internally or independent review or peer to peer review between local authorities. I agree the hub and spoke model in the preferred option is the least risky option. With regard to introducing changes to current customers I welcome the acknowledgement that this will be handled sensitively. Staff ratios are not touched on in this proposal including overall staff ratios and trained staff ratios including staff ratios of staff who have or are working towards recognised qualifications in the care of people living with dementia. Although this consultation is not concerned with the future of current staff it is apparent from conversations with current customers that they value the staff and are concerned for themselves with regard to the changes. A key component of service re-design alongside other consideration is that there should be a demonstrable improvements in the service for customers. On the evidence, so far, I have a lingering doubt that without more detail this is not shining through powerfully enough in the preferred option. I understand that the 'spokes' may be more homely and that journeys to them may be shorter and less arduous for customers and be seen as improvements. I am glad that customers were consulted over that activities offered in the pilots and they chose ones they enjoyed however it seems a very limited offering thereby reducing the ability to personalise the service. Safeguarding in shared facilities is a greater challenge as well as being objectively safe it is important for customers to feel safe as well. I would welcome the use of multidisciplinary teams in line with the integration of health and social care which is not heralded in the proposal here. Finally, I would be impressed if the NHS vehicle for valuing patients time was time was adopted (in relation to Day Offer customers) called "The Last 1000 Days" so older people using some of their last 1000 Days in Day Care Live their best lives on those days too.

76. Not a lot, just another way to close a village facility so it can be sold for development

Q2a Do you think all options have been correctly evaluated? If no, please state which one(s) and why you think it should be evaluated differently.

1. As per previous answer
2. No, in light of my previous answer. Firstly in terms of improved quality of facilities/services for Ampthill Day Centre, I would question has the Council let these run down over time again to facilitate this proposal of closure. It would have been a helpful to see a typical calendar showing the typical usage of the Centre as compared to a few years ago. At the moment the 28 respondents seem largely quite satisfied with the services on offer. Why for example aren't you offering the Centre for greater use by the voluntary sector for the benefit of those residents and carers in need. Secondly, how were the figures in terms of value for money calculated and in light of my previous answer have figures been inflated to make one option appear better than the other. Thirdly, in terms of the key components and Principles of the enhanced offer, I can't see that see that Ampthill Day Centre fails on the 4 elements as this has clearly been assessed by someone with little knowledge of Ampthill. In terms of promoting independence the evaluation talks about 'due to a lack of facilities and access to the community it is difficult to offer a flexible service. Activities are limited to on-site facilities'. Is the lack of facilities due to a lack of investment overtime and clearly they don't know what an active community Ampthill has! For example we have a local Library just a short distance away and a very activity packed community hall, namely Parkside Community Hall. Plus have local community groups been asked to engage and be involved to give a better offer to users. Again, this seem to point to a lack of investment over time and also a lack of interest/imagination with the site. Furthermore in terms of partnerships with the local community where is any evidence that overtures have been made to the local community, as I'm sure local voluntary groups and indeed the Town Council would have been more than interested in forging these alliances for the benefit of users. The last point is laughable as the Centre is in the centre of Town right by doctor's surgeries and a short walk from the library. This is no more inaccessible than the favoured site of Silsoe Horticultural Centre. Indeed I would contend that the fact Silsoe has passed on all these measures is very subjective and worded to meet the Council's desired outcome on a very small evidence base, namely 5 Ampthill Day Centre users. Indeed the questions asked in Appendix 3 of the Evaluation show only one example of the questions asked at Wingfield Court. Were the same questions asked with regards all other locations and how were the questions framed. This is not apparent from the consultation documents. It is very telling that in the evaluation of Wingfield Court that it states in the last paragraph 'One further comment was that the decision to continue [with the proposed hub and spoke approach] had already been taken and there was no point to the survey', a point I'm inclined to share.
3. VIEWS OF RESIDENTS NOT BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT
4. for a full evaluation people currently in the system should be included in the survey ie those assessed as needing day centre services but not yet attending
5. The building is up for sale so the two options that state it could be redecorated etc are false options and never really up for evaluation.

6. I disagree with the hub and spoke being the best option
7. [TCX] believes that the refurbishment costs have been overstated. [TCX] successfully refurbished Parkside Hall and Ampthill Football Club recently with a total spend of between 500k – 600k.
8. costing for options 3 - 5 is incomplete - please provide per customer per day estimated costs for each option All options no environmental impact survey has been produced. No explaination is provided about how each of the options meets, does not meet the key components and principles. Option 5 should meet the "Principles and components" and "Improved Quality of facilities and services" criteria. Otherwise, a Commission should not be offered as part of the tendering process. It has not been explained how options 3 - 5 distrupt customers less than the hub and spoke arrangement
9. Have you fully investigated using a range of sites for spokes? It seems odd that sites such as Parkside hall weren't considered. What were your criteria?
10. I care for my [relative], the change will affect her
11. More imaginative use of Ampthill Day Centre. See comments on previous page.
12. CBC have given a 4 out of 4 for the answer they were trying to get, when answer 4 is the best for Ampthill

Q3b Are there any other options listed that you think the Council should investigate in more detail? If yes, please state which one(s).

1. Could do more to try them out the places.
2. Building a new centre in a cheaper location.
3. Yes, as where is there evidence of an impact study, into the impact the proposed changes will have on users and their carers? I see little or no evidence of engagement with carers. I believe it was premature to put this out to consultation without that engagement included in the consultation documents. Indeed with regards carers it would have been interesting to see the thoughts of 'Carers in Bedfordshire' about the proposals as the needs of carers seems to have been ignored. In terms of impact I would argue that a change of a venue (that they have come used over time) can be traumatizing to some. In addition such a change could lead to the break of friendship circles, to greater travel times and could be more inconvenient to carers. Such an assessment would likely have favoured Ampthill over Silsoe and may have been why it was omitted.
4. Look into rennovating existing property and have a variety of visiting individuals on a range of activities.
5. Costing are vague and inpact on customers re staffing
6. The idea of utilising this building more. An example could be having a nursery at the day centre.
7. I would like Ampthill to be refurbished.

8. Look at building a new purpose built, well designed Day Centre which attracts more people and charge a reasonable rate for a day/part of a day.
9. I believe the Council should conduct a survey of people across the area to promote interest and use of the Day Centre.
10. I think on the refurbishment of Ampthill the council could of wrote more about the cost and explained how that would be spent.
11. The hub and spoke should have been investigated in more detail as to how this will affect people who have dementia.
12. The hub and spoke option needs to be looked at a lot closer as in "What are the benefits for people living with dementia?" What if they need personal care and theres no space at the hub? Suddenly their choices are taken away from them.
13. Using prudent and stringent budgeting, [TCX] believes that refurbishment is the best option.
14. Commissioning a new provider - Does a provider actually exist? Refurbishment
15. The users of the day centre change over time so a snap shot investigation does not reveal the future trend. Once the day centre has gone from the town it will be too expensive to re-instate.
16. Retain the use of the ampthill day centre site for alternative use. Every time a site is sold the council looses options for the future whatever they may be. The money from the sale does not belong to social care services but to the corporate council for whom windfall reciepts are valued at this time of austerity.
17. Ampthill
18. See previous
19. Option 2 uses less 'miles' the people who go there are more likely to know other users. They would spend long in company as will get to Ampthill quicker.

Q4a Are there any other options listed that you think the Council should consider that are not in the document? If yes, please explain what these option(s) are.

1. More outings and going out in the community
2. Going out on more trips
3. As suggested
4. As mentioned in the previous answers they has been a clear lack consultation outside the 35 users of the Centre. Why for example has the Centre never been actively promoted for usage by the wider community? Also how do residents in need get referred to the Centre as this is not made clear? Indeed, have referrals diminished in the past few years due to lack of promotion with the ultimate goal of leading to the closure of the Centre.

5. Retain the existing centre. To make the existing centre more attractive to its customers (re look at how it was run about 25/30 years ago when Mid Beds was interested in the service it provided for its customers.
6. If you are going to go to Silsoe transport would need to be costed in
7. Give more trips out in the summer
8. Looking at utilising the space more.
9. Redevelop a well thought out Centre which attracts a wide range of people with a coffee shop/parking where people can meet friends, have activities.
10. Ampthill population is growing and the Day Centre should be promoted to capture more customers.
11. A full time day service offering 3 days a week to everyone who wants to remain in their own homes and needs support with an attached 8 bed respite unit
12. A seperate dementia unit or a larger building that can accomodate a dementia unit for 5 days in a row.
13. A new purpose built centre within the catchment area.
14. The Council could look at hiring the centre out and making money from it this way.
15. [TCX] believes that the building could be refurbished to provide a multi-use community centre. This would benefit the wider community and could be promoted for greater use by the voluntary sector.
16. Commissioning an external provider to provide services at the existing center.
17. Dementia is a horrible thing, mum doesn't cope with any change, she got to know and trust the staff and can confide in them, confusion to any change affects my [relative] in a big way
18. Leace out rooms for community café
19. Have you seen old people's home for four year olds? Why are we not looking at doing more services to bring generations together?
20. Make more use of the Dial-A-Ride service who run out of the day centre to carry your users around rather than large vans who's drivers just sit around during the day

Q5 Throughout the process we will be conducting individual meetings with customers and their relatives and providing advocates where necessary. What else could the Council do to minimise the impact of any changes on the existing customers and their relatives at Ampthill Day Centre?

1. I think there could be a trial period where all customers could go to a different venue for a period of time before any decision is made. This would give everyone an opportunity to see if they like the alternative offer.
2. Arrange travel to new places

3. Support me if changes happen by explaining things.
4. Meetings are helpful and having the team in the day centre to answer questions.
5. Continuous and regular communication, even when there's 'nothing to say'.
6. If it aint broke dont fix!
7. Small outings to proposed site for all customers
8. The suggestion would offer a slightly worse services in the short term in the old premises; spending as little as is reasonable with the promise of an upgraded service in 2 years.
9. This question rather confirms that the decision has already been made and is certainly premature to be asking this in this consultation exercise.
10. I think trying out the new places is a good idea.
11. A move would be stressful for some people and not for others. Ampthill for me is the preferred option and is very pleasant. It is also easy for me to get to.
12. Looking at shorter distances for people would be less stressful.
13. I don't think it would effect her if my [relative] moved someone else. Trying the new venues out is a good idea.
14. I don't think the council could do any more.My 1-1 meeting was very good.
15. Open discussions,involved in planning.
16. See above.
17. Help with travel expenses if an alternative location is proposed
18. Meet with the existing customers regularly during the process to ensure they understand the process fully
19. Can"t think of anything.
20. Probably a very simple presentation/drawings showing outline of how it will work.
21. Should not think so,staff very supported
22. I'm not too worried as long as the bus picks me up and takes me home and it's not too far. I also need to keep to the same days as my [relative] works on those days.
23. We have been informed and thats good. Having the meetings are helpful to understand what is going on as my [relative] can get confused.
24. Keep us informed. The meeting has helped me to fill in the form.
25. I think continuity of venue is important for my [relative] - going to different venues during the pilots could make him quite confused.
26. Ensure there is still transport
27. It wouldn't worry me.
28. No

29. No - I think I would find it quite interesting and exciting.
30. I wouldn't be worried
31. I would like to go with my [relative] on the first day to help him settle him in or the Council run both places simultaneously. Visits to the new centres.
32. No have been really pleased with what support you are already giving.
33. No don't think you need to do anymore than you already are.
34. The meetings are good.
35. Would still need a shower and transport.
36. Don't know
37. No
38. To minimise the impact of the changes, I think it would help to inform people as soon as final decisions are made and perhaps organise another visit, this time to bring familiarity to customers regarding their changed circumstances.
39. Be more imaginative in the provision, target a wider range of customers.
40. I doubt whether existing customers will be able to comment on the proposals, meeting with relatives would be more productive. Day Centres are closing down across the UK due to cost.
41. I wouldn't be stressed.
42. It is nice to have 1-1 meeting as it keeps us upto date on what is happening.
43. I don't think there's anything else.
44. I don't think so.
45. No I wouldn't be nervous to move
46. Keep us updated.
47. The most important thing is to be picked up by the bus and to be with my friends.
48. It would be nice to have music playing at the new venue.
49. I don't really know.
50. Not make the changes which are cost cutting and not putting people at the centre of the decision. This decision will increase your demand for care home places. It is another foolish economic decision, ill thought out and full of discrimination
51. I can't think of anything really.
52. I'm not sure
53. Consider the impact this will have on people that currently attend. These people have dementia and the moving around will not benefit them, also how will you staff these hubs and spokes? The meal that they currently receive, where is their choice on what they eat at these spokes? If a person requires personal care and

this cant be delivered at a spoke and theres no space at the hub, Do they then have the service taken from them purely because they have needs that were once able to be catered for and now because the council wish to save money, they cannot be offered this?

54. I am worried about losing my friendships. As you get older it's important to feel comfortable with your surroundings. Keeping my friendships will be important to me. I would also need to make sure transport is arranged if I move to a new centre and would like the quality of the dinners to remain the same.
55. I don't think so
56. No
57. No. I appreicate the work the council do.
58. CBC should consult with their customers, relatives and carers to see what they require if changes are made to the day service.
59. I don't want to be too far from where I live.
60. Difficult, there are bound to be some disruptions, including temporary breaking of friendship groups, may I suggest WiFi facilities and assistance provided including laptops with cameras so that groups broken up can communicate with each other, this need only be a temporary fix.
61. The population of the country is raging and around the Ampthill area the increase in population over the next few years significantly alters the numbers wishing to use the Day centre. Short term money saving maybe a false economy. The council needs to consider future needs and give the local people a procedure to force the council in the future to return the day centre back to Ampthill.
62. Very little, families will be anxious, possibly with good reason, periods of upheaval and change are known to have a negative impact on people with dementia. Level of support need to be increased at the point of change and service users as well prepared as possible. Not every one with a dementia has a positive view of people with a learning disability and not every one with a learning disability takes change well or indeed passively.
63. Will have no place to go
64. Continue to keep me informed
65. Listen to what customers/relatives have to say. Dementia patient doesn't understand if you was to talk to them. I have spoke to my mum and she gets upset and worrys whats going to happen, who's going to be with her. Will the staff be the same, also said she will be lonely, she wants to know where she is. The staff have got to know my mum when she has good or bad days. Most of all mum knows her way around Day Care, ie toilets, different rooms, lunch times etc
66. All seems fine
67. Consider more the needs of your future customers

68. The use of independent advocates would be beneficial in every case. Sensitive language and sympathetic body language in meetings would put customers and relatives at ease.

69. Remember that these are elderly people who do not want to be carried off to other side of the County nor to their family want to think of them going miles in all weathers, Ampthill DC has a good kitchen and reputation. Advertise it as a venu for weekend sales/weddings/ clubs.

Q6 Do you have any further comments about the proposals?

1. I think the staff should also be asked on what they want as it will have an impact on them, for example, relocation, hours etc.

2. If we move to new places the Council haven't said where they could be

3. I think it is good because you have to move forward.

4. Don't change - I can't fault Ampthill Day Centre

5. No.

6. I feel the evidence base on which the recommendations have made for the closure of Ampthill Day Centre is too small. It seems that it is also premature in that it should have included input from relatives/carers. It is equally disappointing that Central Beds Council actually omitted initially to include [Town Council X] in the consultation process from the outset. Indeed has the result of the consultation exercise has all the hallmarks of been predetermining from the start and this current exercise is just playing lip service to wider community engagement. It is what the consultation and evaluation documents don't say that makes this exercise seem part of a decision that has already been made with little regard to the impact on users. Indeed to emphasize the point that the decision has already been made to close the Centre it is notable that both [Organisation B] and the [Organisation A] have already been told that they need to find new premises for their activities. In addition, from a Town Council perspective it would be good if we were paid the courtesy of been privy to Central Beds Council's plans for the site post closure of Ampthill Day Centre. At least be honest that this is part of a wider future plan for the Central Beds Council owned area of Houghton Close and not dress this up as a consultation that will enrich the lives of users of Ampthill Day Centre through your proposals.

7. I don't mind where I go as long as I can get there and meet other people.

8. I would like to have more educational options in the day centre such as talks about local history.

9. Not at the moment.

10. I think this is to do with the Council saving money.

11. I'm happy enough coming to the day centre as it is.

12. Positive it will all be ok

13. Good going forward to have more activities, social and outings.

14. Horticulture is a lovely activity but perhaps provisions for it could be made on a small scale in Ampthill Day Centre
15. None
16. Not really as long as I get out and I am picked up by transport.
17. Not at the moment.
18. None
19. I like the day centre. The people are friendly and I don't think it's overcrowded.
20. I would like more activities that we could join in with more pottery and entertainment would be good.
21. For my [relative] he will find change confusing however I think he would get used to it.
22. I wouldn't want the new places to be too far.
23. No
24. No
25. I like the day centre as it is.
26. Ampthill day centre has a lot of potential for expanding the services that's offered- eg a dementia café could run from there.
27. You rather stop at Ampthill Centre but do understand that if you do have move then we will and its nice to know staff can come too.
28. Ampthill centre is important to me as I have been attending for nearly 30 years.
29. The Council would be better adapting Ampthill day centre.
30. As long as there is provision for care, food, transport and stimulation.
31. The centre is very good as it is
32. I find the Council's approach and consultations very reassuring.
33. The [Organisation A] started in 1976 has over 50 members and helpers, all voluntary who use the DAY CENTER alternative Thursdays. If we can attract so many so could you. We were very disappointed to be told we had to leave the centre by Nov 1st. The [Organisation A]was started by Social Services who still allow us to use the centre free. We will now need to find a new venue which will cost us rent. Disappointing since we target people with disabilities in Cbeds. We are fulfilling the needs of our target group with a variety of interesting activities. As chairman of the [Organisation A] using the Ampthill Day Centre regularly I was surprised to have notice of this consultation from one of your clients not from you. I do not consider this to be a 'consultation'. A decision has been made to move/close/demolish the Ampthill Day Centre. If the centre is no longer fit for purpose, build a new better one with targeted activities THEN relocate. Silsoe is not the centre for an Ampthill facility, nor is it totally suitable.

34. I would like to see more activities such as walking started for the customers also more liaison with charities such as the Azheimers Society to increase Day Centre numbers.
35. No
36. I hope the final outcome is not based on the money it will save.
37. I would not mind moving to an alternative centre.
38. No
39. No
40. I'm excited about the proposed changes
41. No
42. I've got used to being at Ampthill and it might not be the same in a smaller place. But it might be nice to meet new people.
43. No.
44. No other than the decision to close will be fought
45. No
46. I think that needs of the older people have not been looked at. We are an aging society and this has not been taken into account when looking at the hub and spoke as not all needs can be met at the spokes.
47. No.
48. None
49. We hope that consideration can be made for a multi-use facility as it could be an amenity for all age groups in the town.
50. If I have to go to another venue, I'm okay with it as long as I can still sit with the men and the men and women are separated.
51. None
52. Most councils are cash strapped these days and trying to find ways of cutting costs to divert money to other essential services but I feel the day centre has to be considered as one of those essential services that needs to be preserved.
53. No
54. No
55. How it's going to deal with the impact of care that the people who have only know Ampthill Day Care
56. More could be done to utilise the day centre
57. If Silsoe is the preferred option for 'hub and spoke'. Whilst appreciating the hard work and commitment by many during this consultation there are still concerns especially about winter - time when the learning disability clients will sometimes be indoors all day. This could be challenging for the elderly, learning difficulties and staff. Perhaps a solution to some of the problems could be a separate

building with integration where appropriate. This would enable the elderly to: have their own space in a nice environment, have peace and quiet, have the full attention of their specially trained staff and this would enable the learning disability customers and their specialist staff to concentrate on their activities.

58. Consider kindness over expediency in all that you are doing. Keep people very well informed throughout. Be transparent always.

59. If you go ahead with this closure it will just be the start I can see Leighton Buzzard being next, so this is why you must stop and think because once these places have gone they cannot come back.

Appendix C: SUMMARY OF AMPTHILL DAY CENTRE CUSTOMER MEETINGS

Responses from customers who did not want to record their views through the consultation questionnaire at the consultation meeting.

Customer A: Did not want to give a response through the formal questionnaire but happy to share their view: "The most important thing is the people not the venue"

Customer B: Completed a joint questionnaire with their relative prior to the consultation meeting. At the meeting the customer said they would like to go to a venue near where they live and does not want to travel more than an hour. The customer said they like the centre as it is currently.

Customer C: Did not want to give a response through the formal questionnaire but was happy to share a view. The customer said they were not keen on Silsoe Horticultural Centre when they visited but would still attend if the proposals are agreed.

Two customers did not consent to sharing a view wider.

Appendix D: RESPONSE FROM AMPTHILL DAY CENTRE CUSTOMERS WHO LACKED MENTAL CAPACITY TO CONSENT TO SHARING THEIR VIEWS

A Social Worker met with Ampthill Day Centre customers who it was felt may lack the mental capacity to understand the consultation fully. The Social Worker carried out a Mental Capacity Assessment (MCA) for each of these customers. It was felt that eight of the customers she met with lacked capacity to participate meaningfully in a full consultation. However, six of those customers were able to express a view. After speaking with relatives/representatives it was felt to be in their best interests to share their view as part of the consultation.

1. Customer 1: "I liked the visit to Silsoe. I would like to play drafts, darts and card games at the day centre".

2. Customer 2: "I like smaller groups and looking out of the window".

3. Customer 3: " I'm happy at this day centre".

4. Customer 4: " I like attending the day centre and I don't want it to close".

5. Customer 5: "I would be happier in a smaller venue".

6. Customer 6: " I would not mind moving to a new venue as long as I get transport".

Appendix E: BRIEF SUMMARY OF SILSOE HORTICULTURAL CENTRE RELATIVE/REPRESENTATIVE FEEDBACK

Feedback from relatives/representatives of customers at Silsoe Horticultural Centre shared during the consultation period. This information was collated following a range of engagement activity including telephone calls to understand the views of the relative / representatives, prepared by the Day Offer project team.

Relative/Representative Questions

- Will the Silsoe Horticultural Centre customers have to attend fewer days?
- Will Silsoe Horticultural Centre customers lose their service?
- Can customers join in with activities?
- Will the older people coming to Silsoe Horticultural Centre affect what the customers who already attend do?
- When would the older people start to attend Silsoe Horticultural Centre?
- How many days would they attend?
- How will the kitchen be used?

Relative/Representative Concerns

- Silsoe Horticultural Centre customers may lose out on days due to space
- Customers having different lunchtimes - they should eat at the same time.
- Silsoe Horticultural Centre customers may not understand that they have to do skills-based activities whilst the older people get to do other leisure activities which may cause conflict.
- It is important to keep a younger customer group at Silsoe Horticultural Centre as well as older people.

Relative/Representative Comments

- There will be mutual benefits for both sides and it sounds like a great idea.
- Nice to hear that others will go there
- It's a wonderful idea
- It's good for [my relative] to meet new people
- [My relative] will enjoy other people coming
- Customers could learn a lot from each other, it is nice to integrate customers together.
- The customer groups seemed to get on well when I was there.
- They don't mind older people coming as long as this does not affect Silsoe customers.
- There will be something to gain on both sides
- [My relative] has mentioned it and seemed happy about the older people coming to Silsoe.
- Change is good as it is good for [my relative] to meet new people.

- Perfectly happy and think [my relative] will love the older group of customers going to the centre.
- A lovely place and they could learn a lot from each other, it is nice to integrate them together.
- [My relative] is getting older now and it would be good for them.
- Don’t see it as a problem and I would like [my relative] to interact more with others.
- No concerns as having seen the customers at the pilot it seemed like everyone got on well.

Appendix F: REPORT PRODUCED BY AN ADVOCATE

An email was received with the content below. This is a copy of the full content of a report written by an advocate from POhWER regarding the outcome of her meetings with customers from Silsoe Horticultural Centre and customers from Ampthill Day Centre:

Feedback on Improving the day offer from Silsoe centre clients.
September/October2018.

Pohwer were asked by Central Bedfordshire council to obtain the views of service users of the Silsoe day centre in relation to recent pilots that that been held at the centre involving people from the older peoples day centre n Ampthill.

I have worked with Silsoe centre for a number of years and all who attend the centre know who I am and that my role is to get their voices heard.

I have met with all service users that use the centre as groups and individually to gain their thoughts on the pilot.

Most enjoyed having the older people with them for a day but none realized the older people would be there every day. When they were informed that the older people would be there every day their sentiments changed.

Their comments are below:

I like helping old people.

Lots of old people in wheelchairs. They will take up a lot of room.

They have got a nice new room but we can't use it.

There is a posh toilet but its only for old people to use.

I got a bit fed up of them

They got in my way.

I don't want to spend my day with people like my Gran.

I would really like younger people to come here.

I feel too young to be stuck with old people

Cant the biggleswade centre people come here instead.

What can we do if we don't like it?

Are they (the council) doing this to save money?

No one told me they would be here every day.

I am not happy about this at all.

The old people get dinners, we don't.

I like to be myself, now I will have to behave well all day, too much.

Whilst meeting with an individual at Ampthill day centre on a different matter I was asked by some of the centre users if I to come and talk with them about the Ampthill day centre and potential changes

I came to the centre on 7th November and met with 8 people who use the centre. Their comments are as follows:

Cant fault Ampthill centre at all, the staff are fantastic.

Ridiculous idea to shove us with backward people.

No one explained what would be happening.

Backward people, I don't think it will do our girls any good, will the backward people laugh at them?

Not enough toilets.

Where will I get a bath?

I would rather stay at home.

There were no different activities at Silsoe.

Silsoe was awful, no atmosphere.

Modernise this centre. I love it here.

Sandra Pearce [Advocate for POhWER]

Please note the above information was not produced by the Council.

Appendix G: STATS FROM THE AMPTHILL DAY CENTRE CONSULTATION PUBLICITY ACTIVITY

An e-bulletin was sent out to notify of the consultation on 30th August 2018. This was successfully delivered to 11,680 recipients and was opened 5,749 times.

A second e-bulletin was issued on 5th November 2018. This was successfully delivered to 13,248 recipients and was opened 6,098 times.

Between 20th August 2018 and 12th November 2018:

Ampthill Day Centre Review webpage (http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/health-social-care/adults-older-people/day-opportunities/ampthill-review.aspx) - There were 1,102 page views (885 unique page views) and 158 clicks on the button to the questionnaire.

Referrals to the Ampthill Day Centre Review webpage came from the following sources:

- GovDelivery (i.e. ebulletin) – 533
- Google – 256
- Direct (i.e. links in emails that aren't CBC e-bulletins) – 136
- Facebook – 87 (As this information is produced by Google Analytics, not Facebook, we're unable to identify which specific posts these relate to)
- Bing - 8

The Future Day Offer for Older People and Adults with Disabilities webpage (http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/health-social-care/adults-older-people/day-opportunities/improving-day-offer.aspx) – There were 422 page views (163 of which then clicked through to the Ampthill Day Centre Review webpage) and 300 unique page views.

Consultations are promoted generally on the Central Bedfordshire Council Facebook page. There have also been 86 clicks from Twitter posts about the consultation.

Staff and councillors were also made aware of the consultation via articles in different newsletters including Staff Central, Connect and the Members' Information Bulletin.

Central Bedfordshire in contact

Find us online: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Call: 0300 300 8303
Email: customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Write to: Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

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Central Bedfordshire Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 6

The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Duty requires public bodies to have ***due regard*** to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Protected Characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (elimination of discrimination only)
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Due Regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Duty as part of the process of decision-making. For example:

- How they act as employers
- How they develop, evaluate and review policy
- How they design, deliver and evaluate services
- How they commission and procure from others

Advancing equality of opportunity involves considering the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people because of their protected characteristics
- Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
- Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low

Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed in discrimination law. This could mean making use of an exception or positive action provisions in order to provide a service in a way that is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic.

Officers should:
Keep an adequate record showing that the equality duties and relevant questions have been actively considered.
Be rigorous in both inquiring and reporting to members the outcome of the assessment and the legal duties.

Central Bedfordshire Equality Impact Assessment

Final approval of a proposal, can only happen after the completion of an equality impact assessment. It is unlawful to adopt a proposal contingent on an equality impact assessment

Title of the Assessment:		**Pilot day opportunity services in the Ampthill area**	**Date of Assessment:**	July 2018
Responsible Officer	**Name:**	John King (Lead Commissioner – Lead and Prevent)		
	Title:	John.king@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk		
	Email:	EIA prepared by Jo Bellamy, Policy and Performance Officer		

Stage 1 - Setting out the nature of the proposal and potential outcomes.

Stage 1 – Aims and Objectives

1.1 What are the objectives of the proposal under consideration?

The overall Day Offer project will review the provision of Day Services across Central Bedfordshire to create more personalised solutions that meet the needs of a range of care and support needs (e.g. dementia, profound and multiple learning disabilities).

In developing the offer to all people who currently use day services, there will be a detailed review of the options for older people who receive day services at Ampthill Day Centre for Older People.

Stage 2 of the review will see the evaluation of pilots in spring 2018 that were set up as potential alternatives to the current day centre in Ampthill and the launch of a formal consultation on proposals for the future of Ampthill Day Centre for Older People.

The proposal is to introduce a 'hub and spoke' model where it is envisaged that the 'hub' for customers with all needs would operate on five days a week, and the 'spokes' for those with lower needs would operate across the five days between them. Thus, on any given weekday the same number of customers that currently attend Ampthill Day Centre, could attend either a hub or a spoke depending on their needs or preferences or the activities on offer.

Pilots have been running at two sheltered housing schemes and are running at Silsoe Horticultural Centre.

During stage 1, the Council co-produced with customers, carers and families and other stakeholders a set of key components and principles that should direct the development of the day offer.

<u>Key Components</u>
These have been identified as important outcomes that should be achieved through a future day offer both for customers and their carers.
A. Meet customer outcomes for social interaction and physical and mental stimulation.
B. Meet carer outcomes for respite and peace of mind.
C. Meet care and support needs.

<u>Principles</u>
1. Promote and maintain independence in a way which is personalised, flexible and responsive
2. Promote learning in a stimulating and supportive environment
3. Greater integration and partnership with local communities

4. Maximise the use of community facilities that can be accessed by older people and adults with disabilities.

1.2 Why is this being done?

The Social Care, Health and Housing Directorate operates eight day centres for adults. Six are larger units – four primarily for older people and two for people with learning disabilities. All were originally built in the 1970's and 1980's and in many ways no longer reflect the needs and aspirations of their customers. This is reflected in their usage. All of the sites are in the ownership of the Council, and some co-located with other council facilities.

The older people's centres support some 325 older people and adults with a physical disability, with an average of 120 daily attendances. Occupancy levels have been declined in many centres with the older people centres generally operating at about 70% of their original capacity, and learning disability centres about 30%.

Since the inception of Central Bedfordshire Council, it has been recognised that the provision of day services to all customer groups needs to be modernised. This has been part of the core strategy set in terms of improving outcomes for vulnerable people and moving from institutional to personal solutions.

Implicit in the transformation of services from the current to the new Day Offer is the need to effectively manage Council resources and deliver improved value for money whilst achieving the transformation objectives.

Following initial engagement activities, it was agreed that the eligibility requirements to access day opportunities could be widened beyond those customers who have been assessed as having eligible care and support needs. Instead the new Day Offer could also appeal to people who do not meet eligibility criteria and, so long as there was an appropriate charging regime in place for such customers, this could offer opportunities for both expanding the range of activities available whilst being cost neutral.

1.3 What will be the impact on staff or customers?

The hub and spoke model would meet the needs of people with disabilities as there would be at least one option appropriate for all customers regardless of their care needs.

The hub option would be primarily for customers with the highest needs and for whom care and support needs would need to be delivered within a building base. The hub option would also be appropriate for customers with lower care needs.

The hub option would be an improvement on the current provision because it would be delivered out of a smaller building which improves opportunities for social interaction and reduces anxiety for customers with dementia that prefer a more homely space. The delivery of the service 5 days a week would ensure consistency and continuity of care which reduces stress, especially for customers with dementia. The range of activities available would be wider than that currently offered and based on customers' preferences.

The buildings used during the pilot for the spoke options were most appropriate for people with

lower care needs due to the facilities available. Other options are being sought to improve the range of services for people with higher care needs but there is no guarantee that spoke services at this stage could meet these needs.

Spoke services provide the opportunity for customers to attend less formal services run by a wide variety of providers and delivered locally in existing community facilities. There is also the option for customers to seek their own bespoke day opportunities through the use of direct payments.

Many of the existing day centre users are vulnerable either due to frailty or their disability and have been using services for a long time. Carers also benefit from these services as respite. Potential changes to the service could therefore cause concern to users, carers and their families. To reduce the impact of this concern the first phase of the project to develop the offer had a strong element of involvement and co-production with the customers, relatives, carers and staff.

For Ampthill specifically, the anticipated impact of the hub and spoke model are:
Existing customers

- The five day a week hub provision to cater for those with greater care and support needs would ensure that an option is available for customers that require specialist changing facilities with hoists and larger toilets. This provision would also benefit customers with dementia or other cognitive impairments who may require the consistency of the same venue each day.
- Customers with higher care needs may not be able to access all spoke day opportunities as the equipment and adaptations required is not normally available in other community settings. This may reduce the opportunity for these customers to maintain friendship groups with other customers that prefer to meet in spoke services. However, whilst the pilots in Spring 2018 were not set in fully accessible venues, efforts are being made to identify spoke opportunities that would be available to all customers.
- Customers' choice would be the same as currently experienced at Ampthill Day Centre, as one hub option is guaranteed to meet all care and support needs. The offer within the hub however would be improved with fully accessible buildings in a more homely environment and an improved range of activities.
- Due to the increase in day opportunities in spoke venues, customers with lower care needs would have more choice than those with higher care needs.
- The location of spoke services will be based on the results of mapping the location of existing customers, to check where services are best located to meet demand from the local area. As a result, some customers will benefit from shorter journeys to the pilot day services as there will be options spread around the Ampthill area, rather than one base in Ampthill as is the current case. This would aid the development of local community and friendship groups.
- The venues for the spoke services will provide a more homely, comfortable, and less institutional setting.
- Some services that are currently available at Ampthill Day Centre may not be available in every spoke service, such as a hairdressers, bath and laundry. The council will seek to enable these within the spokes where possible or signpost customers to alternative options where required. For example, extra care schemes such as Lavender Court have assisted bathrooms where baths can be provided, and the day service uses peripatetic hairdressers who are able to come to where individuals are.

Wider community

- There is the opportunity to develop work experience schemes for people with learning disabilities who could work at the schemes.
- As the spoke services may be based in sheltered housing schemes, where scheme tenants can also join the session, there will be a wider mix of ages accessing the service. Customers will also benefit from the establishing community at the scheme.
- There are more opportunities to embrace local community resilience and social assets through local spoke services.

Staff:

- Staff have been engaged throughout the process to understand and mitigate adverse impacts where possible.
- In the development of future services, an assessment will be carried out on whether the building and staffing levels meet the needs of customers to ensure the safety of staff, e.g. lifting customer without a hoist.

1.4 How does this proposal contribute or relate to other Council initiatives?

The proposed action supports all the Council's priorities, listed below:

- Great resident services
- Protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing
- Creating stronger communities
- A more efficient and responsive Council.

The other projects and processes that the Day Offer project relates to are:

1. Houghton Regis Central
2. MANOP (Meeting the Accommodation Needs of Older People) project wider developments of care homes and extra care facilities
3. Dunstable Leisure Centre
4. Biggleswade Integration Project
5. Independent living offer for vulnerable people
6. Integrated Services Review
7. Direct Services Review.
8. Sheltered Housing Review

Central Bedfordshire Equality Impact Assessment

1.5 In which ways does the proposal support Central Bedfordshire's legal duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Eliminate unlawful discrimination harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act

Services provided and commissioned by the Council must follow equality legislation to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and there are existing training, policies and procedures in place to support this which will continue and/or be extended to any new services which may result from this review.

A component of the Day Offer is 'Meet care and support needs'. Those entitled to care will still have their needs met. The service may also be extended to those who do not meet eligibility criteria through an appropriate charging regime.

A hub and spoke model ensures that all customers will be able to access a day service. Customers with higher care needs that require specialist equipment or facilities will initially have the choice of one hub option (as they do currently) but this is anticipated to improve as the day offer is developed to include fully accessible spoke services and other hub options in other area of Central Bedfordshire.

An assessment would be carried out before a customer can access a service to check that the building and staffing levels are appropriate to meet the client's care needs. Customers are involved in making decisions about activities at the centres to ensure they are appropriate. The client's support plan also includes details around the client's preferences such as any culturally specific meal requirements.

Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Current day services are based on a model that is difficult to personalise and meet the specific needs of individuals. An aim of the project is that at its completion there will be a better 'match' between the needs of the people using day services and the service(s) they are using. This will give customers a better opportunity to access services that meet their individual needs.

A key principle that will advance equality is to 'promote and maintain independence in a way which is personalised, flexible and responsive'. This will ensure people can have a choice, make decisions, feel involved and valued and able to make a meaningful contribution where able and recognise and respond to current and changing care and support needs.

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The current day offer model can be seen to segregate customers from the wider community. The

review has the opportunity to consider how services can be better provided to foster improved relations between people who do not share a protected characteristic.

A key principle is to 'Aim for integration and local community cohesion', specifically to:

- encourage involvement of a wider range of people including across generations and the community
- develop opportunities that bring people together with a variety of needs and interests where possible and desirable.

The Ampthill pilots showed that there are a range of benefits for the wider community such as work experience schemes for people with learning disabilities, volunteering opportunities for local residents and an opportunity for a wider age range of tenants and service users to engage and enjoy day centre activities together.

1.6 Is it possible that this proposal could damage relations amongst groups of people with different protected characteristics or contribute to inequality by treating some members of the community less favourably such as people of different ages, men or women, people from black and minority ethnic communities, disabled people, carers, people with different religions or beliefs, new and expectant mothers, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities?

Carers and service users have raised the concern that changes to services could lead to the loss of existing friendships leading to social isolation and loss of support networks. Older people and people with disabilities are at increased risk of isolation and so a change in service that impacts on service users' opportunity to maintain existing friendships could have a disproportionate effect on those with these protected characteristics.

Specifically, for Ampthill, the project recognises the importance of maintaining friendship groups. The project will aim to maintain friendship groups where possible. However as customers with higher care needs may not be able to access all spoke services in the Ampthill area, it is possible that customers with lower care needs may choose to access a spoke service and therefore not meet in their established friendship group as frequently. Lower care needs customers would however be able to access hub services, subject to capacity and prioritising customers with higher care needs.

Stage 2 - Consideration of national and local research, data and consultation findings in order to understand the potential impacts of the proposal.

Stage 2 - Consideration of Relevant Data and Consultation

In completing this section it will be helpful to consider:

- **Publicity** – Do people know that the service exists?
- **Access** – Who is using the service? / Who should be using the service? Why aren't they?
- **Appropriateness** – Does the service meet people's needs and improve outcomes?

Central Bedfordshire Equality Impact Assessment

- **Service support needs** – Is further training and development required for employees?
- **Partnership working** – Are partners aware of and implementing equality requirements?
- **Contracts & monitoring** – Is equality built into the contract and are outcomes monitored?

2.1. Examples of relevant evidence sources are listed below. Please tick which evidence sources are being used in this assessment and provide a summary for each protected characteristic in sections 2.2 and 2.3.

Internal desktop research			
	Place survey / Customer satisfaction data	x	Demographic Profiles – Census & ONS
	Local Needs Analysis		Service Monitoring / Performance Information
x	Other local research		
Third party guidance and examples			
x	National / Regional Research	x	Analysis of service outcomes for different groups
x	Best Practice / Guidance		Benchmarking with other organisations
	Inspection Reports		
Public consultation related activities			
x	Consultation with Service Users	x	Consultation with Community / Voluntary Sector
	Consultation with Staff	x	Customer Feedback / Complaints
	Data about the physical environment e.g. housing market, employment, education and training provision, transport, spatial planning and public spaces		
Consulting Members, stakeholders and specialists			
x	Elected Members	x	Expert views of stakeholders representing diverse groups
	Specialist staff / service expertise		

Please bear in mind that whilst sections of the community will have common interests and concerns, views and issues vary within groups. E.g. women have differing needs and concerns depending on age, ethnic origin, disability etc

Lack of local knowledge or data is not a justification for assuming there is not a negative impact on some groups of people. Further research may be required.

2.2. Summary of Existing Data and Consultation Findings: - Service Delivery Considering the impact on Customers/Residents

- Age: *e.g. Under 16 yrs / 16-19 yrs / 20-29 yrs / 30-44 yrs / 45-59 yrs / 60-64 yrs / 65-74 yrs / 75+*

Current profile

Ampthill Day Centre user age profile (May 2018)

Central Bedfordshire Equality Impact Assessment

Age groups	Count of customers accessing services	% customers
Under 65	**0**	**0**
65-74	9	20%
75-84	15	33%
85-94	17	38%
95+	4	9%
Grand Total	45	

Key findings from stage 1 engagement

- All five of the principles set out in the original day offer will benefit older people most in need of the service and younger people who find age-appropriate services difficult to access.
- There are likely to be concerns about the perceived loss of particular services or centres and this could have a disproportionate effect on people that are vulnerable due to their age.
- There are concerns that changes to provision could disperse friendship groups, which could increase a sense of loneliness, which older people are at most risk from.
- No 16-24 year old customers took part in the consultation; therefore the views of those services users recently transitioning from Children's Services to Adult Social Care have not been captured.

Key issues affecting people with protected characteristic

As people live longer at home the prevalence of dementia and other long-term conditions increase.

For older people there are likely to be concerns about the perceived loss of particular services or centres.

Assumptions are sometimes made that it's natural for older people to have lower expectations, reduced choice and control and less account taken of their views (DOH).

In 2006, 63% of people aged 65 to 74 reported having a longstanding illness and 38% said longstanding illness limited their ability to carry out daily activities. 70% of people aged 75 and over reported having a longstanding illness and 50% said longstanding illness limited their ability to carry out daily activities (Office for National Statistics – ONS).

Scores of three or more depressive symptoms were more likely among older respondents (of both genders) and higher scores were more prevalent in those reporting LLTI and mobility problems. Around 25% of those over 65 had significant depressive symptoms in 2005. The comparable figure in the general population is around 10%.

Strategic commissioning - Research undertaken for the Department of Health looking at age equality in Health and Social Care highlighted that good information on health, care and wellbeing needs was seen as an essential first step in ensuring that service planning and delivery are fair and proportionate. People who can experience multiple discrimination such as older people from minority ethnic groups can be overlooked. Commissioning must be informed by data that is broken down and analysed by age and other factors. Public involvement in commissioning decisions is crucial. Representatives of patient, service user and public groups

observed that their role needed to cover planning and design stages and also the delivery and evaluation and review stages. LAs needed to use age appropriate means of engaging different groups, especially different communities of older people.

The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities carried out desktop research in 2010 for an Equality Scoping Study to understand the how Valuing People Now, the government's LD strategy, had improved the fairness of services (with a focus on the protected characteristics). In relation to age, the study found that "some of the issues raised highlight a dilemma: to what extent should older people with learning disabilities be included in older people's services? And what reasonable adjustments would be needed to such services in recognition of the different life experiences that people with learning disabilities may have had? It seems likely that the policy of some councils (moving people at age 65 from learning disability services to older people's services, with a resulting reduction or change in support) will be open to challenge on grounds of age discrimination. Other key issues include the importance of planning ahead with older families and ensuring that policy on older people (including dementia care and future funding of social care) is sensitive to the specific needs of older people with learning disabilities and older family Carers."

Joseph Rowntree Foundation published *Older people with high support needs: how can we empower them to enjoy a better life* in 2010. This found that the group of older people with high support needs is growing, becoming increasingly diverse and changing, as new sub-groups emerge and the prevalence of some conditions, such as dementia, increases. There is limited evidence about what older people with high support needs want and value and ageism acts as a key barrier to hearing their voices. Improving quality of life for this group is often about making simple changes to how existing services are run. Personalisation, assistive technology, and the development of user involvement in commissioning present opportunities as well as challenges.

Age UK published *A summary of Age UK's Index of Wellbeing in Later Life* in 2017 which showed that the factors that have the highest level of impact on wellbeing in later life are:

- Creative and cultural participation
- Physical activities
- Thinking skills

The report concluded that "the most striking finding from this Index is the importance of maintaining meaningful engagement with the world around you in later life – whether this is through social, creative or physical activity, work, or belonging to some form of community group. Taken together, these forms of participation contribute in excess of 20 per cent of wellbeing".

Stage 2 - Pilot evaluation feedback

Wingfield Court tenants

81% of the 21 Wingfield Court sheltered housing scheme tenants and local residents that responded to the evaluation survey stated that would be happy for the pilot to continue. Eight respondents regularly took part in activities and four occasionally and the activities were judged to be good by six respondents, excellent by four and two did not answer this question. Three people who took part regularly said that they enjoyed the day and meeting other people. Two people commented that it made the scheme feel like a residential / nursing home and it was not what they agreed to when signing their tenancy.

Wingfield Court pilot service users (all respondents aged 75+ and all consider themselves

disabled)

- 5 of the 8 respondents felt that there had been more physical activities at the pilot service
- All 8 felt that there had been more social activities,
- All 8 had made more friends,
- 3 (38%) felt that they had been able to take part in activities that promote learning new skills, the other respondents felt it had not made a difference.
- All felt that the facilities met their care and support needs,
- All 8 felt that the pilot was flexible and took their needs and choice in to consideration.

A respondent said: “more socialisation due to smaller group”. A carer said: “Due to X’s hearing the smaller environment is beneficial. X has settled and interacts much more than at the [Ampthill Day] centre.”

Gale Court pilot service users (all respondents aged 75+ and all consider themselves disabled)

- 3 of the 5 respondents felt that there had been more physical activities at the pilot service
- All 5 felt that there had been more social activities,
- 4 had made more friends,
- 3 felt that they had been able to take part in activities that promote learning new skills
- Of the 4 that responded to this question, all felt that the facilities met their care and support needs,
- All 5 felt that the pilot was flexible and took their needs and choice in to consideration.

A response on behalf of a service user stated “x has enjoyed the small space, due to his hearing and dementia the space and environment is better”, the service user’s carer also said that “x has settled really well, very convenient to bring him”.
Some tenants were unhappy as their room is usually used every day for a coffee morning and some tenants felt that they can not use the space freely now.

- Disability: *e.g. Physical impairment / Sensory impairment / Mental health condition / Learning disability or difficulty / Long-standing illness or health condition / Severe disfigurement*

Current service user profile

The primary support reasons for Ampthill day opportunities customers to receive care and support are below.

Variety of disabilities/ support reasons of customers using Ampthill older people day centre (May 2018)

Primary support reason	Ampthill Day Centre count	Ampthill Day Centre %	All OP day centres%
Mental health support	3	7%	5%
Learning Disability Support	1	2%	2%
Memory & Cognition Support	6	13%	13%
Physical disability	26	48%	62%
Sensory disability	1	2%	1%
Social - Social Isolation/Other Support	8	18%	11%
Other	0	0%	4%
Grand Total			**100%**

The table[1] below shows the number of customers that have dementia (in 2015) at each centre. In Ampthill 49% of service users have dementia, compared to 46% overall.

Centre	Number of attendees	Number of attendees with dementia
Ampthill	72	35
Biggleswade	82	34
Houghton Regis	80	38
Leighton Buzzard	72	35
Totals	306	141

Data from 2015.

Key findings from stage 1 engagement

- All five of the principles set out in the original day offer will benefit people with disabilities.
- A higher proportion of customers with physical disability support needs will be impacted by a change to CBC day centre provision as 96% of day services in day care establishments are met by CBC day centres, compared to 69% of customers with LD support needs.
- There are likely to be concerns about the perceived loss of particular services or centres and this could have a disproportionate effect on people that are vulnerable due to their disability.
- Changes to service provision can have a disproportionate impact on people with dementia, autism, those suffering from depression, anxiety, impaired eyesight and/or hearing and reduced mobility.
- There are concerns that changes to provision could disperse friendship groups (especially among LD customers). This could increase the risk of social isolation, which disproportionately affects disabled people.

Key issues affecting people with protected characteristic

Disabled people do not always have the same opportunities or choices as non-disabled people. They can experience discrimination, lack of respect and unreasonable barriers to participation in society on an equal basis.

Around 1 in 5 people in Britain have an LLTI/disability (over 10 million), which is strongly associated with self-reported poor general health

The proportion of people with Limiting Long-Term Illness (LLTI) or disabilities rises with age, so that a large proportion of people over 75 report these conditions.

The likelihood of having such impairment is not evenly spread across the population. Women are more likely than men overall, and people from some ethnic and religious groups – especially some Asian Muslims – appear more likely to report an LLTI or disability. In both cases, the differences tend to become more accentuated at older ages, so for example nearly 2 in 3 Pakistani and Indian women over 65 had a LLTI or disability in 2001.

[1] Day Opportunities Vision Paper 160605

Central Bedfordshire Equality Impact Assessment

15% of those with a learning disability reported their health as not good. The rates were highest for those who were unemployed, socially isolated, older and from an ethnic minority community.

Social care services are vital in order to progress equality for disabled people. If these services are not part of the solution in actively removing the barriers to living independently that disabled people face, they can become part of the problem in creating barriers to equality (The then Commission for Social Care Inspection, now Care Quality Commission.)

Disabled people said they experienced the following barriers to equality in social care services:

- Physical barriers were the most common barriers to disability equality addressed by sample of services (24% of 400 services). Environmental barriers, such as poor access to or within buildings, can be significant, but they were experienced by the lowest number of disabled people (17% of the 307 disabled people taking part in our survey and 37% of people with physical or sensory impairments).
- Communication barriers were experienced by a majority of disabled people responding to the survey, with only 38% agreeing that all staff communicated well. These barriers were not always related to the disabled person's impairment, for example providing information in accessible formats, but could be due to the communication skills of staff.
- Social inclusion barriers - only 29% of disabled people living in care homes felt that the service had helped them to challenge disabling barriers in the community, e.g. transport or inaccessible community facilities, compared to 43% of people using home care and 44% of people using Direct Payments.
- Attitudinal barriers were the most common barriers that people faced. 55% of all disabled people, and 65% of people living in care homes, had experiences of social care staff who did not respect their right to be treated equally with non-disabled adults; for example patronising attitudes or a lack of regard for the disabled person's rights to make choices about how care was delivered.

Disabled people are more than twice as likely to be out of work as non disabled people. (Family Resources Survey - 2006/07)

Only one in two disabled people are likely to be in employment compared with four in five non disabled people. (Government Equalities Office).

Disabled people travel one-third less than non disabled people and physical access to public transport can be difficult. (Disability Rights Commission)

The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities 2010 Equality Scoping Study found that "despite some examples of good practice, efforts to improve opportunities [to reduce loneliness and encourage friendships] are being hindered for many people by the lack of clarity about whether it is the job of services to support friendship and tensions with approaches to safeguarding. There will also be concern that one effect of the public sector recession may be to limit support for activities seen as 'optional'. Addressing these issues will be vital if the 'social capital' component of personalisation is to be taken seriously."

Stage 2 - Pilot evaluation feedback

See age section.

- Carers: *A person of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without this help due to illness, disability, mental ill-health or a substance misuse problem*

Current profile

The table[2] below shows the number of customers that attend the service in older people centres that also provides respite for their carer:

Centre	Number of attendees	Respite	% carer support
Ampthill	72	39	54%
Biggleswade	82	29	35%
Houghton Regis	80	39	49%
Leighton Buzzard	72	52	72%
Totals	306	159	52%

Based on 2015 data.

Key findings from stage 1 engagement

- BME customers will especially benefit from a day offer based on:
  - Principle 1 - Promote and maintain independence in a way which is personalised, flexible and responsive
  - Principle 3 - Aim for integration and local community cohesion
  - Principle 4 - Maximise and support existing community capacity
- Further research is required to understand why BME customers are not using day centres to relieve social isolation and whether changes can be made to future services to remove any barriers.

Key issues affecting people with protected characteristic

Over 2 million people become carers every year (Carers UK). Every day, another six thousand people take on a caring responsibility and 3 in 5 people will become a carer at some point in their lives.

By 2026 more than 10% of the population will be over 75 and significant numbers of the workforce age 45+ will have caring responsibilities.

Over 65's account for around a third of those carers providing more that 50 hours of care a week, including many who provide informal care for grandchildren. Many also look after older relatives as well (Department for Work and Pensions).

Only 25% of carers receive a Carers Assessment and only 14% say that it has led to a change in support. 33% of local authorities are providing services to less than 6% of the carers within their area (The Princess Royal Trust for Carers).

1 in 9 carers are looking after someone with dementia (National Carers Strategy).

One in five carers report that their health suffers as a direct result of caring. (Carers UK)

[2] Day Opportunities Vision Paper 160605

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BME carers in England:

- There are 503,224 BME carers in England;
- 10% of carers are from a BME background;
- Indian carers are the largest BME group (2.2% of all carers)
- Black Caribbean carers represent 0.9% of all carers), or 44,402 carers;
- Every year, 180,000 BME people become carers.

BME carers and health:

- 60,120 BME carers in England are in poor health;
- This is slightly higher (by 0.6%) than white British carers.

BME carers and employment:

- The majority of BME carers are of working age;
- Nearly a quarter of a million BME carers (241,320) juggle work and care;
- This is 9.74% of all carers in England.

England's half a million black and minority ethnic (BME) carers save the state a staggering £7.9 billion a year which is 41% of local authority total spend on social care – in stark contrast to the investment that is there to support them. Research by Carers UK shows that BME carers provide more care proportionately than white British carers, putting them at greater risk of ill-health, loss of paid employment and social exclusion. Certain groups also experience greater levels of isolation, namely Pakistani and Bangladeshi carers. Some of the key challenges identified in the research include:

- language and literacy barriers, which continue to be a challenge for some BME carers, especially for older and new immigrant communities of BME carers;
- Cultural barriers which hinder access to services because they can place huge restrictions on BME carers coming forward to receive services, for example, notions of duty to care for relatives;
- Lack of incorporation of BME carers' voices, and as a result of which, services may not be commissioned in the right way, or BME needs can be overlooked.

Three of the principles set out in the day offer will specifically benefit the carers of those receiving the services, through better access to services and support to maintain independence:

- Promote and maintain independence in a way which is personalised, flexible and responsive
- Maximise and support existing community capacity
- Maximise the use of community facilities that can be accessed by older people and adults with disabilities

- Gender Reassignment: *People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex*

Key issues affecting people with protected characteristic

- 1 in 10,000 people suffer from the recognised medical condition known as gender dysphoria,

generally referred to as being transgender or transsexual.

- Recent research estimates that 7% of the trans population are aged 61 or over (Equalities Review).
- Research undertaken in the areas of employment, health provision, social exclusion and hate crime indicates that Transgender people experience disproportionate levels of discrimination, harassment and violence. This includes bullying and discriminatory treatment in schools, harassment and physical/sexual assault and rejection from families, work colleagues and friends.

Social attitudes towards trans people - Although social attitudes have become more accepting towards trans people, there is a persistent assumption that there are only two genders (female and male) and that one's gender is assigned from birth and cannot be changed. Trans people still face prejudice. This continues to limit their employment opportunities (despite legislation prohibiting discrimination); their personal relationships; their access to goods, services and housing; their health status; their safety in both public and private spheres; and their access to health and social care. (Department of Health Guidance).

Mental Health:

- Trans people are susceptible to depression and at risk of suicide. (Department of Health)
- 33% of Trans Adults in the UK attempt suicide at least once. (Press for Change)
- Localised and small-scale survey data suggest that levels of poor mental health may be higher in the transgender population. One 2006 study of 819 LGBT people in Brighton and Hove indicated higher levels of the following disorders in the transgender population as compared to the LGB population over the past five years: insomnia, fears and phobias.

- Pregnancy and Maternity: *e.g. pregnant women / women who have given birth & women who are breastfeeding (26 week time limit then protected by sex discrimination provisions)*

No identified impacts.

- Race: *e.g. Asian or Asian British / Black or Black British / Chinese / Gypsies and Travellers / Mixed Heritage / White British / White Irish / White Other*

Current service user profile

Ethnicity of Ampthill Older People Day Centre users (unknown removed)

Ethnicity	Ampthill Day Centre count	Ampthill day centre %	All OP day centres %
White British	38	84%	93%
BME	7	16%	7%

16% (7) of customers using Ampthill Older People day care centre, where ethnicity is known, have black and minority ethnic backgrounds (all OP centres 7%). In 2011 the Central

Bedfordshire population had 10% BME population.

Key findings from stage 1 engagement:

- BME customers will especially benefit from a day offer based on:
  - Principle 1 - Promote and maintain independence in a way which is personalised, flexible and responsive
  - Principle 3 - Aim for integration and local community cohesion
  - Principle 4 - Maximise and support existing community capacity
- Further research is required to understand why BME customers are not using day centres to relieve social isolation and whether changes can be made to future services to remove any barriers.

Key issues affecting people with protected characteristic

BME people are twice as likely as the overall population to have no savings at all, and are less likely to own their own homes.

BME people are less likely to have a private pension. For example, Bangladeshi, Chinese and Pakistani people are roughly half as likely to have a private pension as white British people.

All BME groups experience higher rates of pensioner poverty than the rest of the population. For instance nearly 1 in 2 Bangladeshi and Pakistani pensioners live in poverty compared to 1 in 6 white pensioners.

The experience of black and minority ethnic people using social care services is still very variable. Whilst the majority of BME people say that they would recommend the service to another black or minority ethnic person and that staff were suitable, only around 50% felt that their needs as a black and minority ethnic person were adequately considered at their last assessment. 25% said that they had faced prejudice or discrimination when using services, with over half the people aged under 60 reporting this.

Examples included both direct discrimination such as verbal abuse and indirect discrimination such as the failure of services to provide information in the person's preferred language or assumptions being made on assessment.

Many, particularly older people, had low expectations of services, were uncertain whether discrimination had occurred or were reluctant to report concerns - so providers are not necessarily getting the feedback that they need to improve.

- Religion or Belief: *e.g. Buddhist / Christian / Hindu / Jewish / Muslim / Sikh / No religion / Other*

Current service user profile

Data not available.

Key issues affecting people with protected characteristic

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- A lack of awareness about a person's religious or other beliefs can lead to discrimination. This is because religion can play a very important part in the daily lives of people. In addition there is often a perceived overlap between race and religion which needs to be taken into account:
- Discrimination can occur if specific requirements are not taken into account for example:
    - Diet / fasting, e.g. some groups are vegetarian; others require animals for consumption to have been slaughtered in a particular way, e.g. Muslims and Jews.
    - Dress / Jewellery
    - Religious observance / prayer and festivals
    - Customs and practices to be followed in the case of birth and bereavement
    - Cultural stereotypes for maleness and femaleness

There is evidence of a disparity in effectiveness of social care services for people of different ethnicities:
- 54.8% of Asian people and 60.4% of Black people said that equipment they had received from services had "made their quality of life much better", compared to an average of 68.5% across all ethnicities;
- 69.2% of Asian people said they were "very happy" with the way people who discussed their needs had treated them, compared to an average of 87.1% across all ethnicities;
- older Asian people (including Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and other Asian groups) are less likely to live alone: while among White men aged 85 and over the proportion living alone was 42%, it was only 16% among Asian people and 23% among the Chinese or Other group;
- among African Caribbean men over 50, the risk of a potentially life threatening ailment is more significant than other groups. Yet the frequently present at a time when the chance of preventative intervention is too late.
- the Health and Social Care Information Centre Personal Social Services Adult Social Care Survey, England 2010 -11 found that services from the White ethnic group reported having a higher quality of life than users from the Mixed, Asian and Black groups (Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework Equality Analysis, DoH, 2010).

- Sex: *e.g. Women / Girls / Men / Boys*

Key findings from stage 1 engagement:

- The following principles will specifically help deliver services that meet the needs and preferences of men and women:
    - Principle 1 - Promote and maintain independence in a way which is personalised, flexible and responsive
    - Principle 2: Promote learning in a stimulating and supportive environment (especially for men)
    - Principle 3 - Aim for integration and local community cohesion
- The feedback shows that whilst the similar proportion of men and women access all day centre services, they do so for different reasons and outcomes. Men and women appear to value different elements of what a day centre can offer and thought should be given to when designing services how these different needs can be met in a group environment. Older people day centres deliver to a higher proportion of female customers than male and vice versa for LD day centres, again understanding this preference will be important in designing future services.

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Current service user profile

The sex of CBC Older People Day Centre users (2015)

	Female		Male	
CBC OP day centre	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**
Ampthill Social Centre (Day Care Establishment)	46	22.12%	31	29.81%
Biggleswade Day Centre (Day Care Establishment)	44	21.15%	18	17.31%
Houghton Regis Social Centre (Day Care Establishment)	69	33.17%	23	22.12%
Leighton Buzzard Day Centre (Day Care Establishment)	49	23.56%	32	30.77%
Grand Total	**208**	**100%**	**104**	**100.00%**

Key issues affecting people with protected characteristic

Women's level of reported LLTI was statistically significantly higher than men's in the Health Survey for England (22% of men and 25% of women)

There is evidence across a range of health services that patterns of access, uptake and treatment diverge between women and men. The patterns are, however, complex, so that both men and women appear to be disadvantaged in some areas of healthcare.

Isolation: the emerging crisis for older men - A report exploring experiences of social isolation and loneliness among older men in England published by Independent Age found that:

- A growing generation of older men is facing a future of increased isolation.
- The number of older men aged 65+ living alone is projected to rise by 65% between now and 2030.
- Older men are more socially isolated than older women.
- Older men have significantly less contact with their children, family and friends than older women.
- The number of older men outliving their partners is expected to grow.

The report recommended that men approaching later life need to make efforts to retain and build their social network among friends, families and interest groups and that befriending and support services should be designed with older men's interests in mind.

- Sexual Orientation: *e.g. Lesbians / Gay men / Bisexuals / Heterosexuals*

Key issues affecting people with protected characteristic

- It is estimated that 5 to 7% of the population in the UK is LGB (Stonewall)
- Some older people choose to self-exclude and are likely to continue to do so even after civil partnerships legislation: they may have lived their whole lives discreetly, even secretively, and therefore feel unable to make what would be a very public declaration of their sexual orientation.
- Older people are overwhelmingly perceived to be heterosexual; consequently, older lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people have often been invisible in-service provision for older people. Older LGB people's needs may be, in some respects, no different from those of other older people: for example, their safety and physiological needs may be addressed by physical adaptations to their home.

However, other needs are often overlooked in planning care, such as opportunities for maintaining social networks. Older LGB people may have a greater need for health and social care services because, compared with their heterosexual contemporaries, they are:

- two-and-a-half times as likely to live alone;
- twice as likely to be single; and
- four-and-a-half times as likely to have no children to call upon in times of need.

- Other: *e.g. Human Rights, Poverty / Social Class / Deprivation, Looked After Children, Offenders, Cohesion, Marriage and Civil Partnership*

Socio-economic status and carers

There is a strong socio-economic dimension to caring. People from lower socio-economic groups are more likely both to need care and to provide it, at any age.

One underlying issue is the extent to which they are able to meet this extra need by drawing on family help when conditions are not great enough to trigger local authority support, and the consequences this reliance on family may have on economic and social prospects.

The provision of informal care in later life is associated with socio-economic status: people aged 55-69 from lower occupational groups are more likely to be caring for a spouse than those from higher ones. This is linked both to a higher incidence of disability among those in lower occupational groups, and to the inaccessibility of support for those without the resources to pay for it.

2.3. Summary of Existing Data and Consultation Findings – Employment
Considering the impact on Employees

- Age: *e.g. 16-19 / 20-29 / 30-39 / 40-49 / 50-59 / 60+*

- Disability: *e.g. Physical impairment / Sensory impairment / Mental health condition / Learning disability or difficulty / Long-standing illness or health condition / Severe disfigurement*

- Carers: *e.g. parent / guardian / foster carer / person caring for an adult who is a spouse, partner, civil partner, relative or person who lives at the same address*

- Gender Reassignment: *People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex*

- Pregnancy and Maternity: *e.g. Pregnancy / Compulsory maternity leave / Ordinary maternity leave / Additional maternity leave*

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- Race: *e.g. Asian or Asian British / Black or Black British / Chinese / Gypsies and Travellers / Mixed Heritage / White British / White Irish / White Other*
- Religion or Belief: *e.g. Buddhist / Christian / Hindu / Jewish / Muslim / Sikh / No religion / Other*
- Sex: *Women / Men*
- Sexual Orientation: *e.g. Lesbians / Gay men / Bisexuals / Heterosexuals*
- Other: *e.g. Human Rights, Poverty / Social Class / Deprivation, Looked After Children, Offenders, Cohesion, Marriage and Civil Partnership*
2.4. To what extent are vulnerable groups more affected by this proposal compared to the population or workforce as a whole? Broadly, the main protected characteristics that define users of day services in Central Bedfordshire are age and disability. Any change to Ampthill Day Centre services will therefore have more of an impact on these groups – especially older people and people with a physical disability. 1. The current day services model can be seen to segregate customers from the wider community and seen to provide a one size fits all service. 2. The pilot spoke services were not accessible to customers with high support needs or appropriate for customers with wandering dementia and so it is not guaranteed that future spoke provision would be accessible to those with higher care needs due to the adaptations and space required. The hub and spoke model could therefore deliver the same level of choice (one venue) for customers with high support needs, whereas those with lower care and support needs would enjoy a wider choice. This could have an impact on friendship groups if customers with lower care needs choose to access services in spoke venues, away from friends that can only access the hub service. 3. Change is likely to cause a level of anxiety for those currently accessing Ampthill Day Centre.
2.5. To what extent do current procedures and working practices address the above issues and help to promote equality of opportunity? 1. A principle of the day offer is to *Promote and maintain independence in a way which is personalised, flexible and responsive*. A review of the services provided will create the opportunity to develop new services that meet the needs of individuals that share a protected characteristic. The hub service would be set in a smaller venue than Ampthill Day Centre, which ensures that care staff and customers are closer to the customers and this engenders more social interaction. The 5 day a week service will also provide consistency to customers that may be adversely impacted by having to access services in

a variety of settings such as those with dementia or other cognitive impairments.

2. A) The hub and spoke model aims to improve the current provision by providing more choice and flexibility through smaller spoke services. Potential options for future services have been tested as pilots and these were developed with service users, carers, staff and other potential users of future services and evaluated against the outcomes established in stage 1.

   B) The piloted spoke services were delivered in communal rooms at sheltered housing schemes. The use of existing facilities in established communities has a number of benefits for the spoke service users and local community. Once a decision has been made on future service provision, options for long-term investment to enhance facilities would be considered to improve the accessibility of the venues and enable customers with higher care needs to access a wider range of services. Improving the accessibility of buildings will be proportionate to the demand for services in the area.

   C) Whilst customers with high level needs may only be able to access hub services, the offer within the hub service would be an improvement on current provision as the building would be better able to meet care needs, the homely environment would be better for social interaction and there would be a better range of activities on offer that are based on customer preference.

   D) An assessment criteria has been developed to ensure all buildings for future services meet standards and specification for customers with typical care needs. Staffing levels would also be assessed to ensure that there is sufficient staff to deliver a safe service that does not put customers or staff at risk.

3. Effective, appropriate and timely communication and engagement to plan and eventually implement any changes to provision will help to relieve the anxiety felt by customers, especially those vulnerable due to their age and disability. The day offer project has two key stages involving communication, engagement, consultation and co-production to come to a decision on the changes required to meet the outcomes of the project.

2.6. Are there any gaps in data or consultation findings

Evaluation of Silsoe Horticultural Centre pilot.
Feedback from stakeholders on the proposed day offer model.

2.7. What action will be taken to obtain this information?

Feedback is being collated during the Silsoe Horticultural Centre pilot and an evaluation report will be produced at the end of the pilot.
A consultation is planned for August 2018 to gain feedback on the hub and spoke model.

Stage 3 - Providing an overview of impacts and potential discrimination.

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Stage 3 – Assessing Positive & Negative Impacts					
Analysis of Impacts	**Impact?**		**Discrimination?**		**Summary of impacts and reasons**
	(+ve)	(- ve)	YES	NO	
3.1 Age	x			x	The overall project will affect older people most in need of the service and younger people who find age-appropriate services difficult to access. There are likely to be concerns about the perceived loss of particular services or centres and this could have a disproportionate effect on people that are vulnerable due to their age. There are concerns that changes to provision could disperse friendship groups, which could increase a sense of loneliness, which older people are at most risk from.
3.2 Disability	x			x	A higher proportion of customers with physical disability support needs will be impacted by a change to CBC day centre provision. There are likely to be concerns about the perceived loss of services or centres and this could have a disproportionate effect on people that are vulnerable due to their disability. Changes to service provision can have a disproportionate impact on people with dementia, autism, those suffering from depression, anxiety, impaired eyesight and/or hearing and reduced mobility. There are concerns that changes to provision could disperse friendship groups. This could increase the risk of social isolation, which disproportionately affects disabled people. The hub and spoke model would maintain the level of choice for customers with high care needs but with a better offer within the hub. There would be an increase the choice for those with lower care

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					needs.
3.3 Carers	x			x	Carers needs as direct customers of the services have been included in the overall offer.
3.4 Gender Reassignment				x	
3.5 Pregnancy & Maternity				x	
3.6 Race				x	
3.7 Religion / Belief				x	
3.8 Sex	x			x	Older people day centres deliver to a higher proportion of female customers than male. Services are designed with a person-centred approach to ensure individual preferences are understood and where possible catered for.
3.9 Sexual Orientation				x	
3.10 Other *e.g. Human Rights, Poverty / Social Class / Deprivation, Looked After Children, Offenders, Cohesion Marriage and Civil Partnership*	x			x	There is a strong socio-economic dimension to caring. People from lower socio-economic groups are more likely both to need care and to provide it, at any age.

Stage 4 - Identifying mitigating actions that can be taken to address adverse impacts.

Stage 4 – Conclusions, Recommendations and Action Planning

4.1 What are the main conclusions and recommendations from the assessment?

The day offer's key components and principles provide a good basis for the development of personalised services that meet both carers and customers' needs. This places the individual's needs and preferences at the centre of planning for future services and thereby will take account of people's protected characteristics.

The main protected characteristics that define users of day services in Central Bedfordshire are age and disability. Any change to existing day centres and day services will therefore have a disproportionate effect on these groups – especially people that are older, have a physical disability, have a learning disability, dementia, autism and those suffering from anxiety or depression.

A higher proportion of customers with physical disability support needs will be impacted by a change to CBC day centre provision as 96% of day opportunities in day care establishments are met by CBC day centres.

There are concerns that changes to provision could disperse friendship groups and increase a sense of loneliness, which older people, disabled people and men are at most risk from.

The hub and spoke model has the following benefits:

1) Hub service would be delivered in a fit for purpose building with appropriate facilities that can meet higher care needs. The current setting of Ampthill Day Centre does not have an adequate changing place and the building is too large and institutional. The hub service would be delivered from a smaller setting that enables a more personalised service on several levels. The current hub pilot that is being tested at Silsoe Horticultural Centre has a more suitable and more comfortable environment, plus the care staff and customers are closer to the customers and this engenders more social interaction. The pilot also has a wider range of activities on offer.

2) The hub and spoke model would deliver services accessible to customers with higher care needs and provide consistency to customers that may be adversely impacted by accessing services in a variety of settings such as those with dementia or other cognitive impairments.

3) The spoke services would be smaller, locally based services that aids community cohesion and development of friendship groups and social assets. The spoke pilots were based in sheltered housing schemes and as some scheme tenants joined the session, there was a wider mix of ages accessing the service. Customers also benefited from the established community at the schemes.

4) Between them the hub and spoke services offer a wider choice and a more flexible and

personalised offer.

The disadvantages to the hub and spoke model are:

1) The hub service will be the only option in the area that guarantees a venue accessible to all customers. This therefore limits choice to those that have a disability who require additional facilities or support to meet their needs. This could also have an impact on friendship groups as some customers will have a wider choice than others. However many customers are expected to mix and match spoke and hub opportunities so the impact on friendship groups should be limited. Further spoke options that are fully accessible are also being sought to seek to increase the choice of venues.

4.2 What changes will be made to address or mitigate any adverse impacts that have been identified?

The equality duty (Equality Act 2010) have been considered throughout the development and evaluation of pilot services as the principles and components of the day offer agreed with key stakeholders at stage 1 of the process, all link to the different elements of the equality duty. The principles and components will continue to guide future development of the day offer and the EIA is reviewed before key milestones to ensure that equality issues are highlighted and where possible mitigated throughout the development of the offer.

Communication, engagement and consultation activity ensures that customers, carers, staff and their families are involved in the development of proposals and the final offer. This ensures that personalised services meet the needs of key stakeholders.

Ampthill Day Centre is the first older people's day centre to be reviewed. As other day centres are reviewed, officers should consider the wider needs of customers that could potentially use hub services in all areas (should this model be approved). This would increase the choice for customers needing venues suitable for customers with higher care needs. In addition, in the development of spoke services (again, should this model be approved) opportunities for services to be delivered in fully accessible venues should be investigated, or the potential for venues to have facilities upgraded to meet the needs of those with higher care needs. This would increase the level of choice for all customers.

4.3 Are there any budgetary implications?

No.

4.4 Actions to be taken to mitigate against any adverse impacts:

Action	Lead Officer	Date	Priority
Consultation on the impact of the hub and spoke model	Engagement and Consultation Officer	November 2018	H
Investigate further options to deliver day opportunities in fully accessible buildings in the Ampthill areas.	System Redesign Officer	December 2108	H

Include all customers with higher care needs, throughout Central Bedfordshire, their carers and families as stakeholders of future day centre reviews so that their views are heard in the development of additional hub services (subject to the approval of the hub and spoke model).	Engagement and Consultation Officer	Ongoing	H

Stage 5 - Checking that all the relevant issues and mitigating actions have been identified

Stage 5 – Quality Assurance & Scrutiny:
Checking that all the relevant issues have been identified

5.1 What methods have been used to gain feedback on the main issues raised in the assessment?

Step 1: Engagement activity took place to inform phase 1 which led to the development of the pilots. Feedback was sought from customers that took part in the pilots to understand how well the components were delivered to each individual.

The EIA was discussed at the Day Offer Co-production meeting on 18th July 2018. This group involves carers, family, representatives from charities supporting customers and carers, the Older People's Network as well as officers planning and delivering the services. The feedback was:

- The pilot at Gale Court may not continue as some tenants were unhappy that their communal space was being used for other purposes. To foster good relations between the younger tenants and older day service customers, another venue would be considered.
- Data on non-users of the pilots was not included in the EIA or evaluation reports so we do not know why some customers chose to opt out of the pilots. Was it due to the accessibility of the venue or that the activities were not of interest?
- Are there opportunities to delivery day services with integrated care hubs?
- Is there flexibility to expand offer in future?
- Silsoe Horticultural Centre is a work place and it is important to keep this identity as there are not many opportunities for people with learning disabilities to work and we do not want this lost. Is there capacity in the building to meet the needs of both customer groups? If the pilot is successful and becomes permanent service in the future, the transition to a 5 day a week older people's day centre services there should taken slower and over a period of time so as not to disrupt Silsoe. Is it possible to add another building to Silsoe to increase capacity?
- The Alzheimer's Society provide a service to help with transition for people with dementia as change can be disruptive to this group of people.

Has the Corporate Policy Advisor (Equality & Diversity) reviewed this assessment and provided feedback? *Yes*

Summary of CPA's comments:

18/07/18 The EIA is comprehensive.

On page 4 it states that Some *services may not be available in the spoke services that are currently available at Ampthill Day Centre, such as a hairdressers, bath and laundry. Instead customers will be signposted to alternative options.* Please provide further detail on what the alternative options are and how accessible they are. These issues can be very important for

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elderly and disabled people. Action – EIA updated.
Step 2:
5.2 Feedback from Central Bedfordshire Equality Forum **N/A**

Stage 6 - Ensuring that the actual impact of proposals are monitored over time.

Stage 6 – Monitoring Future Impact
6.1 How will implementation of the actions be monitored? Through the Day Offer project.
6.2 What sort of data will be collected and how often will it be analysed? Demographic data of service users and their views at the end of the pilots.
6.3 How often will the proposal be reviewed? There are various stages to the delivery of project which are reviewed against how well the components are delivered.
6.4 Who will be responsible for this? Day Offer Project team
6.5 How have the actions from this assessment been incorporated into the proposal? N/A

Stage 7 - Finalising the assessment.

Stage 7 – Accountability / Signing Off
7.1 Has the lead Assistant Director/Head of Service been notified of the outcome of the assessment **Name: Tobin Stephenson Date: 18/7/18**
7.2 Has the Corporate Policy Adviser Equality & Diversity provided confirmation that the Assessment is complete? **Date: _18/07/18_____**

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Appendix 7

Executive – 4 December 2018

Comments from the Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 26 November 2018

The Future of Ampthill Day Centre for Older People

The Committee:-

1. **Acknowledges there has been an acceptable consultation with a mixed response to the preferred option.**

2. **Asks that cognisance is taken of those concerned about retaining friendships and travel distance.**

3. **Needs reassurance that the facilities at Silsoe are sufficient and the interaction with horticulture service users is well managed.**

4. **Notes there has been a mixed consultation response, looks to the result of the pilots and recognises that the hub and spoke approach will be more flexible to meet modern day client's needs and improves the Council's offer.**

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive **4 December 2018**

Discharge of Homelessness Duty to a Suitable Private Sector Home Policy

Report of: Cllr Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations (carole.hegley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director(s): Julie Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing (julie.ogley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a decision that is Key

Purpose of this report

1. To present the draft Discharge of Homelessness Duty to a Suitable Private Sector Home Policy for Executive approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. **consider Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations concerning the draft Discharge of Homelessness Duty to a Suitable Private Sector Home Policy and provide recommendations for Executive; and**

2. **approve draft Discharge of Homelessness Duty to a Suitable Private Sector Home Policy.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

2. On 17th September 2018 Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Discharge of Homelessness Duty to a Suitable Private Sector Home Policy to the Executive be fully endorsed.

Issues

3. The Council's current Discharge of Homelessness Duty to a Suitable Home Policy was approved by Executive in August 2014.

The policy included a review date of August 2017 but at that time, it was clear that the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (2017 Act) would bring new duties and requirements including suitability of accommodation for homeless applicants.

4. Statutory guidance was issued in February 2018, shortly before the 2017 Act was implemented on 3rd April 2018. The 2017 Act introduced the Duties to Prevent and Relieve homelessness. The "main" re-housing duty is retained where homelessness cannot be relieved and where applicants are in priority need, eligible for assistance, and not intentionally homeless.

5. At all three stages (Prevention, Relief, Main Duty), the Council has opportunity to discharge duties to a suitable home although the statutory requirements vary according to the exact status of the homelessness applicant. This has made the situation more complex for Officers. The intention of this revised policy is to provide clarity to Officers and customers in terms of the statutory requirements and how suitability is considered.

6. The draft policy is clear that for homeless applicants at prevention or relief stages, the Council will seek to make a suitable Private Sector Housing Offer (PSO). Over recent years, most of the private tenancies facilitated by the Council through Let's Rent have been preventing homelessness. These were not PSOs but prevention (before it became a duty). Where the "main" duty was owed, the Council discharged that duty with a PSO for 19 cases in 2017/18. In 2015/16 there were 14 and 2016/17 there were 9. To date this year there have been 2 cases where a PSO was made at main duty.

7. The aim of the 2017 Act was to significantly reduce rough sleeping through the introduction of new duties (prevention and relief). The policy clarifies the legislation to consider for applicants at different stages and whether they have a priority need. A non-priority household can have a PSO made but a 6 month tenancy will meet legal requirements. There is a risk of a return to homelessness if the tenancy is not extended by the landlord and the Council has to process a new application.

Options for consideration

8. The draft policy includes suitability criteria for the main rehousing duty that is consistent with the existing Council policy. In respect of the suitability criteria for the new duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the policy mirrors statutory guidance and the Suitability Order. Whilst there is the option for the policy to have higher suitability standards, this would restrict the accommodation that the Council could use for PSOs and would prevent move on from Transitional Accommodation (TA). It is considered that the policy provides the right balance.

9. The draft policy is clear that each case will be considered on it's merits so any particular issues that might make a particular property unsuitable should be considered. The comprehensive assessment required under the 2017 Act should mean that any risks or issues are recognised at an early stage.

10. The suitability criteria provides safeguards to homeless households in terms of accommodation that their homelessness duty could be discharged to. The Housing Service wants to see homeless applicants create successful and sustainable tenancies but at the same time the pressure of homelessness means that absolute choice is not possible.

Reason/s for decision

11. The draft policy is considered to strike the right balance in providing safeguards to homeless applicants whilst not being too onerous on Housing Officers when trying to discharge the various homelessness duties. Consequently, it is recommended that Executive approve the draft, revised policy.

Council Priorities

12. The draft policy most closely aligns with the Council priority; protecting the vulnerable; improving well being. The suitability criteria provides safeguards to homeless households in terms of accommodation that their homelessness duty could be discharged to.

13. Discharging homeless duty to a PSO can also be cost effective for the Council in terms of reducing TA costs. The policy also aligns with being an efficient Council.

Corporate Implications

14. The suitability criteria looks to ensure the health of applicants is not put at risk. There are safeguards built in to help prevent ill health and injury.

Legal Implications

15. The draft policy (section 5) contains the significant legal and regulatory framework. Reference is made to the legislation throughout the draft policy, indicating complaince. The policy has been subject to external expert and LGSS review to ensure compliance with legislation. Local Authorities have four primary accommodation and assistance duties under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), these are:

    - The duty to prevent homelessness (section 195)
    - The duty to secure interim accommodation (section 188)
    - The duty to help secure accommodation (section 189B)
    - The Main duty – to secure ongoing accommodation (section 193)

16. The draft policy is also clear that homeless applicants have right of review (appeal) to the various discharges of duty and the Council has to be prepared for these review requests. Having a clear, published policy provides additional guidance and clarity to all homeless applicants. This might also be helpful in instances where a customer take a complaint to a higher authority, for example the local government ombudsman.

Financial and Risk Implications

17. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, which sets out what the Council considers suitable in terms of properties that homelessness duties are discharged to. The size and type of property will be considered against the household make up to help ensure that the property is affordable based upon household income. In many cases, Housing Benefit (or Universal Credit) will have to be applied for and this assistance is capped at what the need is. By getting a PSO "right" for the household, the Council avoids future costs.

18. Facilitating lets into the private sector helps relieve some pressure on demand for social housing accommodation. In most instances, however, there needs to some financial assistance to help the applicant (new tenant) access and establish the tenancy. The Council has a Homelessness Prevention budget of approximately £0.19M, provided mainly through the Let's Rent scheme that was approved by Executive in August 2017. In many cases applicants will establish repayment plans with the Council so that payments of rent in advance can be recycled.

19. The main financial benefit of facilitating a PSO is that the applicant can move out of transitional accommodation, which might be expensive Nightly Let accommodation. Consequently, this policy can help towards TA cost avoidance.

Equalities Implications

20. 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.

21. Whilst homeless applicants are often vulnerable due to the nature of their housing situation, the Council has to take into account any particular additional issues when considering how to discharge its homelessness duty. The draft policy is clear (4.3.6) that each case must be considered separately and that this must arise from the assessments undertaken. The suitability criteria looks to safeguard applicants' welfare and health but should also take account of any particular needs associated with any of the nine protected characteristics.

22. An equality impact assessment was completed for the 2014 policy. Although the 2014 policy has not changed in respect of the main rehousing duty, it was considered appropriate to refresh the equality impact assessment, provided as a background paper. A targeted engagement was focused on key equality issues and the outcome report, which outlines the comments and the Council's response, is attached at appendix B.

Conclusion and next Steps

23. The draft policy (appendix A) is considered by Officers to provide an appropriate and legally compliant level of safeguard to ensure the health and well-being to homeless applicants where their homelessness duty is being discharged. At the same time, the policy does not overly restrict the Council from making use of private rented accommodation. Not every applicant will be happy with a property considered to be suitable but there are clear review mechanisms available to help judge what is reasonable.

24. It is recommended that Executive Committee approve the draft policy, which can then be published to provide clarity as to the Council's policy position.

Appendices

Appendix A: Draft Discharge of Homelessness Duty to Suitable Private Sector Home Policy

Appendix B: Engagement response report

Background Papers

The following background papers, not previously available to the public, were taken into account and are available on the Council's website:

Equality Impact Assessment, 180801 Discharge of Homelessness Duty EIA Not Protected.doc (company only)

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Appendix A

Discharge of Homelessness Duty to a Suitable Private Sector Home Policy

Directorate:	Social Care, Health, and Housing (SCHH)		
Division & Service:	Housing Service		
Author:	Joanne Bellamy, Policy & Performance Officer		
Owner	Nick Costin, Head of Housing Solutions		
Issue date:	May 2018		
Approved By:	LGSS	**Approved Date:**	24th August 2018
Version No.	2.6		

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

1.0 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need'.

1.1 Local Authorities have four primary accommodation and assistance duties, these are:

- The Prevention duty (section 195)
- The Interim accommodation (section 188)
- The duty to help secure accommodation (section 189B)
- The Main duty – to secure ongoing accommodation (section 193)

1.2 This policy outlines the process through which the Council will offer private sector accommodation to any applicant to whom it owes an accommodation duty under any of the duties listed above

1.3 The Council can discharge their homelessness duties through securing suitable, available accommodation for the household. The property can be either social housing or a property in the private rented sector which complies with the relevant suitability orders. It is the Council's policy that it will always look to find suitable private sector accommodation for any applicant in the first instance where this accommodation is suitable.

1.4 Statutory regulations require the Council to take several matters into account in determining the suitability of accommodation.

SECTION 2. PURPOSE

2.0 Private rented accommodation can be used to prevent or relieve homelessness, or to bring the Main housing duty to an end. This policy covers the use of the offer of a private rented sector tenancy to discharge any homelessness duty towards those households accepted as homeless.

2.1 The policy sets out the circumstances under which private rented sector tenancies may be used in discharging any accommodation duty owed to those households accepted as homeless or threatened with homelessness by the Council.

2.2 The Council's suitability criteria are set out in this policy.

SECTION 3. SCOPE, DEFINITIONS AND RELATED POLICIES

3.1 The policy covers the use of private rented accommodation to prevent or relieve homelessness, or to bring the Main housing duty to an end.

3.2 It covers the utilisation of the powers granted to local authorities by the commencement of the Localism Act 2011 and requirements of the Housing Act 1996 Part VII and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

3.3 This policy is supported by the practice guidance, which sets out the information that officers should consider when determining the suitability of a property.

3.4 Definitions

3.4.1 Private Rented Sector Offer – is defined by the Localism Act 2011 as an offer of an assured shorthold tenancy made by a private landlord to an applicant. To end the Main Duty, the tenancy must be for a period of at least 12 months. The council must have arranged the availability of the property to discharge its homelessness duty.

3.4.2 Homelessness applicant – This is a person who completes an application to be assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. This policy refers to a homelessness applicant as 'the applicant'.

3.4.3 Prevention and Relief - The duty on a local housing authority to take reasonable steps to help applicants secure suitable accommodation that remains available or becomes available to them, regardless of whether they are in priority need or not.

3.4.4 Suitable Final Offer of Accommodation - Referred to in this policy where an offer of accommodation is made to an applicant under the Relief duty.

3.4.5 The Main Duty – This is a duty on local housing authorities to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless people in priority need. The duty is set out in the Housing Act 1996 Part VII Section 193 and this policy refers to this as 'the Main duty'.

SECTION 4. POLICY DETAILS

4.1 Overview of the homelessness duties

4.1.1 **Assessments and personalised housing plans -** The Council has a duty to carry out an assessment in all cases where an eligible applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness. Following this assessment, the Council must work with the person to develop a personalised housing plan, which will include actions (or 'reasonable steps') to be taken by the Council and the applicant to try and prevent or relieve homelessness. As part of this plan, the Council will outline the steps required to access the private rented sector, this will include the steps that the applicant should take and the steps that it will take. The Council will have regard to the Homeless Code of Guidance 2018 when discharging this duty.

4.1.2 **The Prevention duty -** The Council has a duty to take reasonable steps to help prevent any eligible person (regardless of priority need status, intentionality and whether they have a local connection) who is threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. This means either helping them to stay in their current accommodation or helping them to find a new place to

live before they become homeless. The prevention duty continues for 56 days unless it is brought to an end in another way, for example by an event such as accommodation being secured for the person, or by their becoming homeless. The Council will have regard to the Homeless Code of Guidance 2018 when discharging this duty.

4.1.3 **The Relief duty -** If the applicant is already homeless, or becomes homeless despite activity during the prevention stage, the reasonable steps in the personalised housing plan will be focused on helping the applicant to secure accommodation. This relief duty lasts for 56 days unless ended in another way. If the Council has reason to believe a homeless applicant may be eligible for assistance and have a priority need they must be provided with interim accommodation. The Council will have regard to the Homeless Code of Guidance 2018 when discharging this duty.

4.1.4 **The Main housing duty -** If homelessness is not successfully prevented or relieved, the Council will owe the Main housing duty to applicants who are eligible, have a priority need for accommodation and are not homeless intentionally, unless they have refused a suitable final offer of accommodation or Part VI offer at the Relief stage, or have been issued with a decision that they have deliberately and unreasonably refused to cooperate. Certain categories of household, such as pregnant women, families with children, and households that are homeless due to an emergency such as a fire or flood, have priority need if homeless. Other groups may be assessed as having priority need because they are vulnerable as a result of old age, mental ill health, physical disability, having been in prison or care or as a result of becoming homeless due to domestic abuse.

4.1.5 Under the Main housing duty, housing authorities must ensure that suitable temporary accommodation is available for the applicant and their household until the duty is brought to an end, usually through the offer of a settled home. The duty can also be brought to an end for other reasons, such as the applicant turning down a suitable offer of temporary accommodation or because they are no longer eligible for assistance. A suitable offer of a settled home (whether accepted or refused by the applicant), which would discharge the Main housing duty, includes an offer of a suitable secure or introductory tenancy with a local authority, an offer of accommodation through a private registered provider (also known as a housing association) or the offer of a suitable tenancy for at least 12 months from a private landlord made by arrangement with the local authority.

4.2 Options to Discharge the Council's Homelessness Duties

4.2.1 Central Bedfordshire Council has the following options available to discharge its accommodation duties:

a) Social housing through a direct let
b) Social housing via Choice Based Lettings (CBL)
c) Suitable Private Sector Accommodation

4.2.2 A social housing property is suitable if:

a) the Council considers the property to be affordable following an assessment of the household's circumstances,
b) it meets the social housing provider's lettable standard and
c) it meets the suitability criteria (see appendix A).

4.3 Private Rented Sector Offers at Prevention, Relief and Main Duty Stage

4.3.1 Officers need to be mindful that accommodation that is suitable for a short period, for example accommodation used to discharge an interim duty pending inquiries under section 188, may not necessarily be suitable for a longer period, for example to discharge a duty under section 193(2).

4.3.2 Where it is appropriate to do so officers should make a suitable final offer of accommodation at the relief stages under S189B (2) rather than leaving it to the Main Duty.

4.3.3 A Private Rented Sector Offer (PRSO) is suitable for all duties except the Main duty if:

a) It is an assured shorthold tenancy of at least 6 months but not exceeding 12 months,
b) It is made with the approval of the Council,
c) The Council considers the property to be affordable following an assessment of the household's circumstances, (practice guidance will help define how to assess "affordable"),
d) The suitability criteria are met (see Appendix A),
c) The property is not unsuitable (see Appendix B or Appendix C for non-priority need applicants) and,
d) The applicant is suitable for the accommodation (see 4.3.5).
e) The applicant has the right to request a review on the suitability of the accommodation and of appeal to the county court unless they are not in priority need.

4.3.4 A Private Sector Offer (PRSO) is suitable for the Main duty if:

a) It is an assured shorthold tenancy of at least 12 months,
b) It is made with the approval of the Council,
c) The Council considers the property to be affordable following an assessment of the household's circumstances, (practice guidance will help define how to assess "affordable"),
d) The suitability criteria are met (see Appendix A),
c) The property is not unsuitable (see Appendix B) and
d) the applicant is suitable for the accommodation (see 4.3.5).
e) The applicant has the right to request a review on the suitability of the accommodation and of appeal to the county court.

4.3.5 Officers will consider the following when deciding if to make a PSO:
a) A PRSO would not be made if the property does not meet the accessibility needs of the household and significant disabled adaptations would be required to make the property suitable. Advice will be sought from Occupational Therapists in terms of the applicant's needs and disabilities.

b) The Council would not usually make a PRSO if the applicant was previously a social housing tenant and who has fled domestic violence; other violence; or harassment.
c) The Council would not usually make a PRSO to the following groups of people:
    - If the applicant is unable to meet the affordability criteria.
    - If the applicant requires supported accommodation or unlikely to be able to sustain a private rented tenancy.

4.3.6 The Council is required to assess whether accommodation is suitable for each household individually, and case records should demonstrate that they have taken the statutory requirements into account in securing the accommodation, including general duties such as the Public-Sector Equality Duty.

4.3.7 The Council has a continuing obligation to keep the suitability of accommodation under review, and to respond to any relevant change in circumstances which may affect suitability, until such time as the accommodation duty is brought to an end.

4.4 Making the offer to discharge the homelessness duty

4.4.1 Where possible, the Council will seek to make a suitable PSO during the prevention or relief stage of an application.

4.4.2 Any offer of accommodation made by the Council during the prevention or the relief stage to an any applicant who is in priority need will be for a minimum of 6 months (although 12 months would be aimed for), and will conform to the suitability standards outlined in Article 3 of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012.

4.4.3 Any offer of accommodation made by the Council during the prevention or the relief stage to an any applicant who is not in priority need will be for a minimum of six months, and will have regard to the suitability standards outlined in Article 3 of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012.

4.4.4 Applicants that self-identify a private sector property they wish to move to must seek the approval of the Council that it is a suitable property before entering into a contract. Whilst a property identified by an applicant does not have to conform to the suitability standards, the Council will offer guidance to enable the applicant to consider the standards and will have regard to Article 3 of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 in determining its suitability. Where an applicant identifies the property, and is helped to secure it, this will not constitute a PSO. Therefore, once the property is secured the application will close and the two-year re-application period (see 4.5) will not apply if the applicant moves to a property not arranged by the Council regardless of whether they would have been owed the Main Duty.

4.4.5 Officers will send a letter to the applicant when making an offer, setting out the following:

a) the duty under which the offer is being made
b) possible consequences of refusal or acceptance
c) the right to request a review of the suitability of accommodation
d) that the Council is satisfied that the accommodation is suitable
e) that the Council regards itself as ceasing to be subject to the duty.

4.4.6 During the first year of a PRSO tenancy, the Council will endeavour to provide some level of support to the applicant to help sustain the tenancy, subject to resources available and competing demand for services.

4.4.7 Where an offer of accommodation is made under a prevention duty and the offer is refused, this will not affect any further duties that may be owed to the applicant. However, it may be the case that the same accommodation may then be offered to an applicant as a relief duty where this is appropriate and suitable.

4.4.8 Where a final accommodation offer of a private sector tenancy is made (S189B) to discharge the Relief Duty, the application will close and the main duty will no longer be owed if the applicant refuses the property and a review is not requested. The Council will provide the applicant with reasonable notice to vacate any temporary accommodation.

4.4.9 Where a PRSO is made to discharge the Main Duty, the application will close if the applicant refuses the property and a review is not requested. The Council will provide the applicant with reasonable notice to vacate any temporary accommodation.

4.4.10 What is considered 'reasonable notice' would depend on the facts of the case, taking into account the circumstances of the applicant and allowing time for them to consider whether to request a review of the decision. Usually 28 days' notice will be given but in some cases the length of notice may be shorter or longer than 28 days depending on the circumstances of the case and the need for the accommodation for other homeless applicants.

4.4.11 The Council will notify the receiving local authority where a suitable PSO is in another area. The receiving authority should receive written notification within 14 days (s208 of the Housing Act 1996) of the accommodation becoming available.

4.5 Re-application to a housing authority within two years of acceptance of a private rented sector offer under the Main Duty

4.5.1 The section 193(2) duty will apply regardless of whether the applicant has a priority need where:

a) a person makes a re-application for assistance within 2 years of accepting a private rented sector offer
b) the applicant is eligible for assistance and has become homeless unintentionally.

4.5.2 The date from which the 2 years begins is the date of acceptance of the private rented sector offer, not the date when the tenancy was granted or when the applicant moved in.

4.5.3 If, following the expiry of the initial 12 month assured shorthold tenancy, an applicant secures their own accommodation and then subsequently becomes homeless within 2 years of the original private rented sector offer then the re-application duty will still apply.

4.5.4 Given the 2-year re-application duty, the Council will aim to keep the household circumstances under review as they approach the expiry of the 12 month tenancy so they can help actively prevent homelessness wherever possible.

4.5.5 If the applicant is found to have become homeless intentionally but does have a priority need, the housing authority must secure short-term accommodation for the applicant under section 190(2)(a) for such period as they consider will give them a reasonable opportunity of securing accommodation.

4.6 Right to review of suitability

4.6.1 With an offer of accommodation in the private sector under this policy, applicants will be required to confirm their decision whether or not they will accept the offer within a reasonable period of time, usually at the viewing. Where an applicant is in priority need, they will also be advised of their right to request a review of the suitability of the offer of accommodation. There is no right of review on suitability grounds for an applicant that is not in priority need.

4.6.2 An applicant in priority need can request a review of the decision that a property is suitable and that the duty owed to them under the homeless legislation is discharged within 21 days of being notified of the decision. An applicant can accept the accommodation offer and still request a review. Review requests received later than this will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.

4.6.3 Once a review request is received, the Council will write to the applicant to acknowledge receipt of the request. Regulation 9 of The Homelessness (Review Procedure etc) Regulations 2018 provides information on the period within which the applicant (or the applicant's authorised agent) must be notified of the decision on a review.

4.6.4 The review will be carried out by a senior officer who was not involved in the original decision or by an independent reviews service commissioned by the Council for this purpose.

4.6.5 The review may be unsuccessful (that is, the original decision is upheld) or successful in which case the original decision is amended. The Council will write to the applicant to advise of the decision. The letter will be sent to their address and where this is not known, a copy will be available for collection at the Council's offices. The decision letter will give reasons for any findings. It will also set out the limited right of appeal to the County Court.

SECTION 5. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Legislation

- Housing Act 1996 Part VII - Duties on local authorities to assist people who are homeless.
- Homelessness Act 2002 – An Act outlining the functions of local housing authorities relating to homelessness and the allocation of housing.
- The Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) Order 2002 provided updated information on priority need groups.
- Housing Act 2004 – Provided details on housing conditions and the regulation of Houses in Multiple Occupation, among other housing issues.
- Localism Act 2011(Part 7, s148 and s149)) – Enabled local authorities to discharge their duty towards homeless households in priority need by using privately rented housing irrespective of whether the household is in agreement with this.
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 - Updates the Housing Act 1996 Part VII and places additional duties on local authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- The Homelessness (Review Procedure etc) Regulations 2018
- The Equality Act 2010 - Places a general duty on all public bodies to have due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people.

Regulations

- The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order 1996 (SI 1996/3204).
- The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 (SI 2012/2601).
- *Supplementary Guidance on the homelessness changes in the Localism Act 2011 and on the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012* – explains the changes section 148 and 149 of the Localism Act make to the homelessness legislation.
- Article 3 of the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 concerns the suitability of privately rented accommodation offered to certain applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (2018)
  Local housing and social services authorities must have regard to this guidance when exercising their functions relating to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

SECTION 6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

6.1 The potential impact of this policy on the various protected characteristics has been identified and addressed through an Equality Impact Assessment.

SECTION 7. MONITORING AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 Monitoring will be included within the performance framework of the Social Care Health and Housing Directorate, officers will monitor the outcomes of PSOs to help assess the success of the policy.

SECTION 8. INFORMATION AND TRAINING

8.1 Appropriate staff will receive training on the policy principles and the practice guidance prior to implementation of the policy.

SECTION 9. RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 The Head of Housing Solutions is responsible for overseeing the delivery and monitoring the impact of the policy.

SECTION 10. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

10.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years unless a review is required prior to the end of the three-year period.

Appendix A

Suitability of property location for a Private Sector/Section 193 Offer

In determining whether the property location is suitable, Central Bedfordshire Council will consider:

1. The significance of any disruption caused by the location from employment, caring responsibilities, or education of the household

1.1 The PSO location must be within a reasonable travel to work area for employed members of the household. Transport links must be frequent enough to enable this. Employment is usually taken to be at least 16 hours per week. A PSO could still be suitable if it is further away from the place of work than the applicant's current location.

1.2 The location of a PSO will need to be of sufficient proximity to enable an applicant to continue with their caring responsibilities. Officers must verify that the applicant is a carer for another person, who cannot readily withdraw this care without serious detriment to the well-being of the other party.

1.3 If any members of the household have special educational needs, i.e. as identified in an Education, Health and Care Plan or attend a special school, or are undertaking GCSEs or A levels at school (Years 10 to 13), then they should not be required to change schools.

2. The proximity to and accessibility of medical facilities and other support, which are used by, or essential to the well-being, of the household

2.1 If the applicant or any member of the household requires specialist medical treatment or support then the location will need to be of sufficient proximity to enable this. The Council will also have regard to other medical treatment or support required by the applicant or any member of the household where it will be detrimental to change provider or location.

3. The proximity and accessibility to local services, amenities and transport

3.1 Regardless of location, the Council will seek to offer a home that is reasonably accessible to local services and amenities, especially for people on low incomes, and those reliant on public transport.

3.2 Due regard will be given to issues related to the Equality Act protected characteristics.

4. PRSO outside the Central Bedfordshire area

4.1 The Council, where reasonably practicable, will seek to offer private sector accommodation within the Central Bedfordshire area, except:

a) When it considers it beneficial to move the household out of Central Bedfordshire, for example, to reduce the risk of domestic violence, other violence, or harassment; or to assist persons in breaking away from detrimental situations, such as drug or alcohol abuse, or

b) When the household requests to move away from Central Bedfordshire, or
c) When the applicant consents to move away from Central Bedfordshire, or
d) When a person has a very limited / no local connection to Central Bedfordshire (for example, they may have approached having fled violence from another area).
e) When moving to a property in a neighbouring local authority will satisfy the suitability criteria set out above.

4.2 If a suitable home is not available within Central Bedfordshire, a suitable private sector offer can be made in a neighbouring authority, normally an area in close proximity to Central Bedfordshire. This location must have reasonable facilities and transport links.

4.3 A record will be made of how a decision to place an applicant out of district has been reached, taking into account the household's collective and individual needs.

Appendix B

Accommodation unsuitable for a Private Rental Sector Offer – Priority Need

The Council will give due regard to Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018 Chapter 17 - Suitability of Accommodation when considering whether a property is unsuitable for a PRSO. Suitable size of a property according to the family make up is set out in the Allocations Policy. Supplementary to this, Central Bedfordshire Council will also use the following criteria to consider whether a property is unsuitable:

No.	Unsuitability criteria	Evidence
1	The accommodation is not in a **reasonable physical condition.**	Central Bedfordshire Council officers will either: • physically inspect all PSO accommodation before it is offered; or • require a letting agent to physically inspect a property (usually requiring that agent to be a member of a suitable trade body); or • request another local authority or agent to undertake an inspection on its behalf (usually for out-of-area property). Inspectors will record the condition of the property using broadly similar categories to those used by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to ensure consistent quality. Housing staff will usually undertake the inspections, but a qualified HHSRS assessor will carry out a further inspection if possible HHSRS category 1 or more serious category 2 hazards are found.
2	**Electrical equipment** does not meet the requirements of Schedule 1 of the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regs 2016.	All landlords/ agents will be asked to supply a satisfactory Electrical Safety Certificate from within the last five years. Any moveable electrical items in the property will require evidence of a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) within the last year. The inspection of the property will seek to identify any broken fittings or obvious electrical defects, such as loose wiring, or electrical faults.

3	The landlord has not taken reasonable **fire safety precautions** with the accommodation and any furnishings supplied with it	The inspection of the property will check that it is fire safe. Landlords should provide working smoke detectors (battery or mains) in all properties. The landlord should provide a copy of a Fire Risk Assessment if there are additional fire safety provisions, e.g. where a building has common parts. All furniture and furnishings supplied by the landlord must also be shown to comply with the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended).
4	The landlord has not taken reasonable precautions to prevent **carbon monoxide poisoning**	The Council will provide a carbon monoxide detector if the property has an active gas supply (for heating or cooking) and a recent detector is not supplied by the landlord. The Council will provide appropriate advice and assistance to ensure the detector is fitted properly. Landlords should provide a Gas Safe certificate for gas fires.
5	That there is not a current **gas safety record** for the property	All landlords/ agents of properties with a gas supply must supply a current Gas Safety Certificate before a letting starts.
6	That the accommodation does not have a valid **Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).** That the EPC states the rating is below an E (i.e. it is an EPC rating of F or G).	All landlords/ agents should supply a valid EPC Certificate for the property, which shows that the energy efficiency rating for the property is E or above.
7	Where the local housing authority are of the view that **the landlord is not a fit and proper person** to be a landlord	Private Sector Housing colleagues will check their records for evidence that could indicate whether a landlord or agent is not a 'fit and proper' person. When placing applicants outside of CBC area officers will liaise with the receiving district to check whether that authority has taken any enforcement activity against the landlord.
8	That the accommodation is a **House in Multiple Occupation or HMO** (inc subject to additional licensing) and is not licensed.	HMO properties will not usually be used for PSO's. Where they are, Private Sector Housing Officers will check that the property is properly licensed and compliant, particularly in respect of fire safety and management.
9	That the landlord has not provided a **written tenancy agreement** that the local	The Council offers a model Assured Shorthold Tenancy (AST) agreement for landlords to use. Where this is not used, officers will ensure that an acceptable, written AST is used, clearly setting out

	authority considers adequate.	the tenant's and landlord's obligations, rent and charges, and is free from any unfair or unreasonable terms. Officers will also inform landlords of the requirements to use Tenancy Deposit Schemes prior to sign-ups.

Appendix C - Accommodation unsuitable for a PRSO – Where there is no priority need or where the accommodation was identified by the applicant

1.0 The requirements above (Appendix B) do not apply to accommodation secured for households that do not have priority need, or to accommodation that the authority helped the applicant to secure (for example through a bond guarantee or financial assistance) but which the applicant identified themselves. However, the Council will have regard to the requirements when considering accommodation for these groups.

1.1 The Council will make reasonable efforts to ensure private rented accommodation secured for applicants who do not have priority need is safe, and in reasonable condition; and that all applicants looking for their own accommodation have sufficient guidance to enable them to consider standards by having regard to the standards in Appendix B when considering whether the accommodation is unsuitable. Where a property may have been considered unsuitable under one of the criteria in Appendix B but it is considered suitable by the applicant for their needs, it will be clearly recorded in the case file along with the reason why the property was deemed to be suitable by the applicant.

- All applicants will be given a copy of How to rent: The checklist for renting in England.
- Applicants will also be provided with a locally produced information leaflet providing advice that aligns with Appendix B.

Appendix B - Response to Discharge of Duty Engagement comments

Could the Policy have a negative impact or put a particular group at a disadvantage on the grounds of Age?

Response -

Yes (1)

No (3)

Please explain your answer

Those clients unsafe to remain within CBC area will have to live outside the area where there is no support. A safeguarding form should be submitted to vulnerable adult, ELT are other agencies as part of the policy

CBC Response – The Council's Housing Options team will liaise with the relevant agency/service from the time of the initial assessment where support needs have been identified. If a safeguarding referral is required it will be made (all Officers have been trained), however, these are issues to understand and resolve before a duty is discharged.

Could the Policy have a negative impact or put a particular group at a disadvantage on the grounds of Disability?

Response -

Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Yes (2)

No (2)

Disability: Please explain your answer

They may be overlooked for properties due to support they require to live their not being in place i.e. for example, a private landlord is less likely to accept a nomination for someone who requires extensive support

Could have a negative impact if the property offered is not suitable for their mental or physical needs and should state in the policy that an OT should assess a property as suitable before discharge and that impact of noise, communal noise level and surrounding noise levels of traffic, etc should be taken into consideration when considering suitability of a property for a person with mental health.

CBC response – para 4.3.5 is clear that a PSO would not be made where the applicant has needs that require adaptations to be made. An OT will often be requested to make an assessment but this will be made more explicit in 4.3.5.

Could the Policy have a negative impact or put a particular group at a disadvantage on the grounds of Gender reassignment?

Gender reassignment - People who are transsexual, where their gender identity is different from the gender assigned to them when they were born

Yes (1)

No (2)

Gender reassignment: Please explain your answer

It could but depends on the person on how they wish to express their gender difference so the suitability criteria should take into account the persons view on this and whether they wish to live in rural or town locations if there is a risk of harm by living in a town where there is a chance that person could be victimised.

CBC response – if there is a risk of harm within a particular location this will be considered at the assessment stage but there would need to be some evidence to verify such a claim.

Could the Policy have a negative impact or put a particular group at a disadvantage on the grounds of Marriage and civil partnership?

Yes (-)

No (2)

Don't know (2)

Could the Policy have a negative impact or put a particular group at a disadvantage on the grounds of Pregnancy and maternity?

Yes (2)

No (2)

Pregnancy and maternity: Please explain your answer

At what point is housing need assessed? When someone is pregnant they still only have a 1 bed need but it becomes a 2 bed after baby born. Are properties allocated due to what housing need will be and even if it is offered HB won't be in place for a 2 bed until baby is born. Only if it has not been taken into account that the client needs to be registered with a hospital and Medical services and has access to these services. They could be disadvantaged if they cannot claim child tax credits until the child in born and they cannot afford to pay the rent while they wait for benefits to be awarded. Most are on SMP and therefore have very little income to afford private rented accommodation.

CBC response – for a pregnant woman, the need is assessed as two-bed. Whilst the housing benefit issue is recognised, that issue is outside of the scope of this draft policy. It is possible that discretionary housing benefit might be available.

Could the Policy have a negative impact or put a particular group at a disadvantage on the grounds of Race?

Yes (1)

No (3)

Race: Please explain your answer

again, only if the suitability criteria has not been met and taken into account any areas where there could be racial tension

CBC response – If there is evidence of an area with racial tension, this would be considered as the applicant might be not considered lively to sustain a tenancy in such an area (4.3.5).

Could the Policy have a negative impact or put a particular group at a disadvantage on the grounds of Religion or belief?

Yes (1)

No (3)

Please explain your answer

Only if the property discharged into is not situated near their religious practice and they are unable to attend or they live in an area where there is religious tension

CBC response – If there is evidence of an area with religious tension, this would be considered as the applicant might be not considered likely to sustain a tenancy in such an area (4.3.5). However, if the immediate area does not contain a place of worship, that would not itself make the placement unsuitable unless there were identified transport issues to prevent reasonable travel to a place of worship.

Could the Policy have a negative impact or put a particular group at a disadvantage on the grounds of Sex?

Yes (1)

No (3)

Please explain your answer

Only where there could be communal living which should be considered under the suitability criteria

CBC response – the policy is clear (4.3.6) that the Council is required to assess whether accommodation is suitable for each household individually. This is part of the initial assessment.

Could the Policy have a negative impact or put a particular group at a disadvantage on the grounds of Sexual orientation?

Yes (1)

No (3)

Please explain your answer

in cases where there could be communal living, Sex offenders would need to be checked with the police to ensure area is a suitable one.

CBC response – this is undertaken, as part of 4.3.6

Overall what is your view on the draft policy?

It is good and gives an understanding of how people are matched for properties and who that property is offered to

I feel there are some well needed policy amendments and some which I would consider extra barriers for the complex clients I currently work with who already struggle with policy and procedures. I would personally, like to see less private sector tenancies for any person being deemed as vulnerable

and the categories of meaning in the term vulnerable revisited. I think private sector tenancy offers a lot less security for our complex individuals who are usually the ones who become street homeless and then entrenched. I believe if the LA are able to effectively screen need and allocate where possible appropriate tenancies based on the need identified then the policy changes should not restrict our vulnerable people.

CBC response – para's 4.3.5 and 4.3.6 provide some safeguards for some vulnerable groups and a general requirement to assessment whether accommodation is suitable for each household individually.

EPC should state grade E and above in line with new legislation. The policy should clarify what happens if a person wants a review when refusing an offer. What is our stance? Our offer letters say they have 24 hours to accept the tenancy and move in the new property whilst undertaking a review.

CBC response – the policy will be amended to state grade E and above

We have a Fit and Property Landlord form we send the landlord to complete to confirm they have no convictions. I have a tenant guide for those renting for the first time with useful links and phone numbers and budget sheets etc 4.4.4 states that those who have found their own accommodation, - this will not be a PSO. The application is to be closed. Some clarity please. Is this a not homeless decision then? Please also clarify those with a rent deposit offer. If CBC offer a property that we have found, we would need to do formal PSO offer even though we are offering rent deposit and rent in advance and suitability check? Do we need to identify areas of risk for vulnerable client groups and have certain criteria to ensure that their needs have been met under the Equality Act?

CBC response – in the case referred to it is not a homelessness decision. If there were obvious areas of risk concerning a property that the client had found themselves, then these would be discussed with the client but there is also an element of choice here and responsibility on the Council is less.

I believe that the policy is sound and brings some welcome changes.

Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive **4 December 2018**

Using Compulsory Purchase Orders to bring Empty Homes back into Occupation

Report of: Cllr Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations (carole.hegley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

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Responsible Director(s): Julie Ogley, Director Social Care, Health and Housing, (julie.ogley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a decision that is Key

Purpose of this report

1. The report presents a case to use compulsory purchase order (CPO) powers to bring empty homes back into occupation. The report recommends the use of CPO for a particular long term empty home but also seeks delegated authority to take all necessary steps to complete the process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. **approve in principle the acquisition of Empty Property A, either voluntarily or using a compulsory purchase order (CPO);**

2. **approve in principle the disposal of Empty Property A following a successful acquisition and renovation to a habitable standard, and delegate to the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing in consultation with the Executive Members, authority to dispose of property A.**

3. **if required, authorise the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing, in consultation with the Executive Members and Interim Monitoring Officer, to make a compulsory purchase order to be known as "The Central Bedfordshire ([full postal address of property to be inserted]) Compulsory Purchase Order 201x" under Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 and any other relevant legal powers, in respect of Property A; and**

4. **if required, authorise the Interim Monitoring Officer, in respect of Property A:**

   a) **To take all necessary steps in connection therewith including the making and serving of the Order, the signing, publication, and serving of all notices, the submission of the Order to the Secretary of State for Housing (and if any objections are received) the making of arrangements for a Public Inquiry, including the appointment of Counsel.**

   b) **To either serve a Notice to Treat under the Compulsory Purchase Act 1965 or make a General Vesting Declaration under The Compulsory Purchase (vesting declarations) Act 1981 so as to acquire all necessary interests in the land and property included in the confirmed Compulsory Purchase Order.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. The item has not been presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Council's Empty Homes Strategy, which was presented to the Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24 July 2017, includes proposals for the use of CPOs and that approval is required from Executive for proposed cases. The Empty Homes Strategy was approved by Executive on 10 October 2017.

Issues

2. Empty homes are a wasted housing resource and have a negative effect leading to a decline in the neighborhood. They can cause a nuisance to adjoining properties by attracting fly tipping, infestation of rodents, vandalism, unauthorised entry and other anti-social behavior.

3. The total number of empty homes in Central Bedfordshire in April 2018 was 2,072 and of these 289 have been empty for two years or longer, which are the focus of the Housing Service and which would be considered for CPO. The Council, at 1st April 2018, has a housing waiting list with a two bedroom need of 442 with 92 being registered for Dunstable.

4. The Council has a successful record of using Housing Act legislation to bring empty homes back into use with Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO). EDMOs allow the Council to acquire management, undertake refurbishment, and use the property to meet local housing needs for a period of seven years. Upfront costs are recovered through rental income. This enforcement action is suitable where the costs of refurbishing the property can be recovered in the seven years that the EDMO is in force.

5. There are cases where EDMOs are less suitable, due to size, location, cost of refurbishment, or other factors that make the property less able to meet housing need. In 2016, the Council agreed, through the budget setting process, the provision of additional capital resources (through reserves) to increase empty homes activity and to test the use of CPO's through the appropriate approval process.

6. Housing Services instructed LGSS Law, who have expertise in supporting local authorities to successfully obtain CPOs for empty homes. This case has been reviewed with LGSS Law and they believe there are grounds for use of CPO. The use of CPO's is new to the Council and can pose a significant financial risk, particularly if a public inquiry is held.

7. The Council's Empty Homes Strategy, refreshed in 2017, concludes that a balanced approach to tackling empty homes is maintained with a co-ordinated approach between incentives and enforcement. Significant advice, information, and assistance is offered to the owners of empty homes before the use of enforcement is considered. The Empty Homes strategy clearly sets out the Enforcement Protocol, which is followed by officers pursuing EDMO or CPO action.

8. The details and rationale for recommending a CPO in favour of any other enforcement action in respect of property A are set out in Appendix A. The address of property A is provided in exempt Appendix B. It is intended that this one property is initially subject to CPO action as this is a new course of enforcement action for the Council. It is an option of last resort with the aim of bringing the property back into use where no other option will suffice. This action will allow the Council to gain experience, quantify the success, and consolidate its stance in the use of CPOs. The action will also send a message that the Council is intent on bringing long term empty homes back into use.

Options to bring property back into use

9. The first option available to bring empty homes back into use is an enforced sale. The Council would seek such an option where there is a considerable debt, typically Council tax debt, in excess of £1,000 and where a final charging order has been made by a Court. This option might be considered where the property is not suitable for Empty Dwelling Management Order or Compulsory Purchase Order and where all negotiations and offers of assistance with the owners have failed. This option carries the risk in terms of future use that either the debt will be repaid by the owner and the property remains empty, or that the enforced sale does not result in the property being renovated and re-occupied. This option does not apply to property A, where Compulsory Purchase offers the Council a stronger option to bring the property back into use.

10. The second option is to pursue an Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO). This action is normally only suitable if the costs of renovation can be recovered during the seven years the EDMO is in force. Although an application to extend an EDMO can be made, and the renovation costs attached as a legal charge to the property, excessive refurbishment costs should be carefully considered as the investment might be better made through making a CPO. EDMOs can be a more cost-effective option as there are minimal legal costs and no compensation payable.

The owner does not lose the value of the asset. This option does is not recommended for property A due to the estimated costs of the refurbishment. A Compulsory Purchase Order provides a better business case to reduce financial risks.

11. The third option available is a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). This would give the Council the benefit of acquiring full control of the property. A CPO is a strong enforcement action and sends a positive message to all owners of long term empty homes that the Council is committed to meeting housing needs through bringing empty homes back into use. Equally, the CPO allows the Council to tackle those properties whose refurbishment costs carry a significant element of risk, and provides more flexible options to recover their costs following the completion of the works. This is recommended as the best option for property A due to the high cost of refurbishment.

Reason/s for decision

12. The decision will enable Housing Services to progress a CPO in respect of property A and will provide delegated authority for the Director of Social Care Health and Housing to take all steps to complete the process in consultation with Executive Member and the Interim Monitoring Officer.

Council Priorities

13. The proposed actions support the Council's priority to Enhance Central Bedfordshire. Bringing empty homes back into use improves the quality of housing and enhances the immediate residential area. Empty Homes work contributes towards the Council's Five-Year Plan 2015-2020, the CBC Housing Strategy 2016-2021, Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2016, and is detailed and outlined in the Empty Homes Strategy 2017- 2022.

Community Safety Implications

14. Empty homes can be an attraction to criminal and anti-social behaviour. They attract fly tipping, damage, and unauthorised entry, which in turn can lead to arson. Neighbours of empty homes are often fearful of anti-social behaviour and the impact on their quality of life.

Legal Implications

15. The Council has the power under section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 to acquire land by compulsory purchase (land in this instance includes houses) for housing purposes. In February 2018, the Department for Communities and Local Government issued "*Guidance on Compulsory Purchase Process and The Crichel Down Rules for the disposal of surplus land acquired by, or under the threat of, compulsion".*

16. The Council's Constitution provides the Director of Community Services with delegated authority to exercise the powers and enforce requirements in relation to the Housing Act 1985 in consultation with the Assistant Director of Housing (Part 3E, paragraph 4.3.34). In addition, the Constitution provides the Director of Community Services delegated authority for the development and appropriation of land and buildings, subject to a maximum value in any single case of £200,000 per annum (revenue) or £500,000 (capital) in consultation with the relevant Executive Member and ward member(s) (Part 3E, paragraph 4.3.89). The Council's Empty Homes Strategy 2017, however, states that approval to progress a CPO would be made by Executive.

17. Part XVII of the Housing Act 1985 applies, with modifications, the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 (compulsory purchase procedure), the Compulsory Purchase Act 1965 (post confirmation procedure) and the Land Compensation Act 1961 (amount and assessment of compensation).

18. The Council, as part of the acquisition process is required to provide a supporting Statement of Reasons for the CPO. This should set the context for taking action and explain the need for the Order. It should explain that there are no legal impediments to the making of the Order, that funding is in place and the policy reasons behind the making of the order. It should also consider the proportionality of the Council's action in terms of the owner's rights. This document will be produced following the Executive's approval to make the CPO.

19. The Council is obliged to act in a way which is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. The rights within the Convention which are relevant to compulsory acquisition are Articles 1, 6, 8 and 14. These rights are qualified rights and may be interfered with provided such interference is prescribed by law, is pursuant to a legitimate aim, is necessary in a democratic society and is proportionate.

20. As with all empty homes work, the Council would prefer to bring property A back into use with the cooperation of the owner, however, the owner of property A is deceased. In such circumstances the Executor of the deceased's estate assumes legal responsibility for the property until the estate has been distributed and the property is either sold or transferred to the deceased's beneficiary in accordance with the deceased's will. The Executor has become the focus of negotiations and requests to agree a voluntary purchase of the property. Attempts to achieve this are ongoing.

21. It is also possible that the Executor may ask the Council to withdraw the CPO to allow her to complete renovations on the property and either let, sell or occupy it herself. This is considered unlikely given the Council believe the property has been empty for over 20 years. If this did occur, it is proposed that the Council will proceed with the CPO but give an undertaking not to enforce it on condition that steps towards occupation are completed within given timescales.

22. The process for making and confirming a CPO then taking ownership of the property and selling it to achieve future occupation requires a series of detailed and prescribed steps.

23. A CPO is seen as a measure of last resort and it is important that those authorising a CPO have full information. The case for the making of a CPO must identify the acquiring powers, the financial ability and the extent of the land to be acquired. The case should ensure that the action is proportionate in terms of the owner's human rights and that there is no breach of the public sector equality duty arising under the Equality Act 2010.

Legal Process

24. The owner of Property A is deceased. The Council is aware of an Executor and has procured a copy of the Will and associated Grant of Probate in order to deal with the estate effectively. There is no evidence from the Executor to date that they wish to deal with the property or indeed if the property has been brought under their control, however, they are registered to pay council tax, which is currently up to date. When making the Order to acquire the property, the Council will need to serve on the Executor, who has a power of sale but will also adopt procedures that apply to situations when owners of land cannot be traced. This also involves notice at the property as well as serving the Executor along with local newspaper publications.

25. With regard to compensation, the monies for the acquisition (if the CPO is confirmed) can be paid to the Executor for the benefit of the estate. Following confirmation of the Order full title to the property can be taken by serving the appropriate notice on the Executor. The Compensation, which should be based on a surveyor's valuation, can be claimed later up to three years from taking possession.

26. The Compulsory Purchase Process and Crichel Down Rules (28 February Circular 2018) gives guidance on the application of the Crichel Down Rules. These rules provide that for certain bodies, there is a mandatory requirement for the acquiring authority to offer any property acquired by, or under threat of, compulsion back to former owners or their successors if not required for the purpose it has been acquired.

27. As the Council is a Local Authority, these rules are not mandatory. The Guidance states that "previous practice among such authorities (for whom compliance with the rules is discretionary) has been very variable, but the government would like there to be a high level of compliance".

28. In this case the Councils purpose for acquiring the land is to restore the property to beneficial use and whilst the original owner has not taken steps to refurbish the property, the Council's aim to sell the property into the market will be consistent with bringing the dwelling back into occupation and consistent with the reason for making the CPO.

Financial and Risk Implications

29. The financial aspects of undertaking a CPO are included in Appendix A. There are greater costs associated with CPO in comparison to alternative enforcement action. This is due to the significant impact of the action including the cost of purchasing, the cost of renovations, and compensation. In addition, there are legal costs that have to be met by the Council.

30. It is anticipated that renovation works to the property will increase the value, creating a surplus element following a sale, which can be used to cover the legal and compensation costs of the Compulsory Purchase Order. Undertaking refurbishment works would be an additional cost to the Council's capital programme but should be recoverable through the re-sale of the property. The aim is that property A, acquired with CPO, will increase in value following renovation works, making the action cost neutral.

31. There is the risk that if the Council is unsuccessful at the public inquiry, the Council becomes liable for the objector's costs, which might include legal costs. However, if no objections are received, the CPO can be confirmed by the confirming authority without the need for a public inquiry.

32. The Council's Empty Homes capital programme provides £0.354M gross in 2018/19 and £0.3M gross for the remainder of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) period, with a reserves amount of £0.2M in each year of the MTFP (paragraph 5 above), and slippage, where agreed. Whilst a "back to back" sale might be conducted within one financial year, it would not, however, provide the opportunity to refurbish and increase value of the property, which should cover legal and compensation costs. For these reasons, a "back to back" sale is not recommended. This plan, is likely, therefore, to result in overspend within the year that the property is acquired.

33. There are risks that the anticipated costs/values outlined in Appendix A could eventually be higher or lower. These are indicative best estimate costs at this stage and will be firmed up before a CPO is made.

34. If the CPO is not confirmed by the Secretary of State, the associated legal costs, and potentially the objector's costs, would have to be met from revenue funds, not capital, as there would be no capital project.

Equalities Implications

35. Compulsory Purchase Process and Crichel Down Rules (28 February Circular 2018) advises acquiring authorities that CPO should only be made where there is a compelling case in the public interest. The purposes for which the order is made should justify the interference with the human rights of those with an interest in the affected land. In this case officers have considered the relevant factors and are satisfied that the benefits of acquiring the property provide a compelling case in the public interest for the use of CPO powers and outweigh the impact on the existing owner.

36. It is acknowledged that the service of a CPO may cause stress, however, there have been numerous communications with the Executor between 2014 and the present date (detailed in Appendix B), none of which have resulted in a response. The Council's Empty Homes officer has offered advice and assistance towards voluntarily bringing the property back into occupation. Property A is a two-bedroom end terraced house, which would be desirable and suitable for families in Central Bedfordshire.

37. The beneficiary of this estate will not lose financially on the value of the property, which will be professionally determined, and there is basic loss payment at 7.5% of the value. The Executor of the estate has opportunity to appeal against the Order if it is felt it is not justified. There is a separate right to challenge the value offered by the Council if considered insufficient.

38. It is acknowledged that this proposal will have an effect on the human rights of the beneficiary of the estate, however, on balance, given that the property has been registered as empty on the authority's council tax system since 1993. The public benefit of the proposal outweighs the impact on those affected. Regard has been taken, in particular, to the provisions of Article 1 of the First Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights and to Articles 6 and 8.

39. Article 1 of the First Protocol provides that: *"Every natural or legal person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions. No one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and subject to the conditions provided for by law and by the general principles of international law. The preceding provisions shall not, however, in any way impair the right of a State to enforce such laws as it deems necessary to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest or to secure the payment of taxes or other contributions or penalties".*

40. The order will affect the Article 1 rights of the present owner if confirmed by the Secretary of State. However, whilst rights are interfered with, the Council believes that this is justified in this case as officers are content that the steps taken are in the public interest and lawful as required by the first protocol. Those directly affected by the order will be entitled to compensation as provided by law, such compensation to be settled in absence of agreement by the impartial Upper Tribunal.

41. Article 8 of the Convention provides as follows: *"(1) Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence (2)There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic wellbeing of the Country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others."* Article 8 is a qualified right and interference can be justified in appropriate cases with reference to Article 8(2).

42. The Order will be made pursuant to section 17 of the Housing Act 1985, which authorises the Council to acquire land compulsorily subject to following the procedures laid down in the Acquisition of Land Act 1981. The Council would argue that a property unoccupied since before 1993 does not provide its owner benefit from protection under this right, and that there is a compelling case in the public interest to acquire the Order Land (property A) and the public benefit will outweigh the private loss. In the circumstances, the compulsory acquisition of the Order Land will not conflict with Article 8 of the Convention.

43. Article 6 of the Convention provides as follows: *"In the determination of his civil rights and obligations…… everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law".*

44. The Order, when made, will be publicised and all those affected by the Order will be notified and have the opportunity to make objections or representations and to be heard at a public inquiry before a decision is made on whether or not the Order should be confirmed. A right of legal challenge exists to this process in accordance with section 23 of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981. Any dispute as to compensation payable is determined by the Upper Tribunal, a court established by law. All of those whose Article 1, Article 6 and Article 8 rights would be affected by the Order will have an opportunity to object to it and to have their objection considered at an independent and Public Hearing/Inquiry.

45. The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics namely: age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Council under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers. In particular, the Council must pay due regard to the need to:

    - eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
    - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
    - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

46. Having paid due regard to the provisions of the Equality Act and how they may relate to this case, it is considered that the proposal is fully compliant with the legislation. The Order required to facilitate the proposal is not anticipated to have any additional effects. The requirements of the Empty Homes Strategy Enforcement protocol are met, which was subject to an Equality Impact Assessment before being approved by Executive.

Conclusion and next Steps

47. There are a significant number of long term empty homes in Central Bedfordshire at a time of continued high housing need. The Council has been pro-active in progressing Empty Dwelling Management Orders, where properties are suitable. Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) can be used, however, for more intransigent cases where the opportunity to negotiate with owners has been exhausted and where the property is causing social problems; the compulsory acquisition is a measure of last resort. The application of these powers can send a message of intent to all empty property owners, demonstrating that the Council is committed to bringing empty homes in the worst condition back into occupation.

48. The CPO process can be lengthy, complex and costly in comparison to alternative courses of action. The service of a CPO can, however, lead to a voluntary sale of the property by the owner, which provides the same desired result at little cost.

49. It is recommended that the Council progresses the CPO for property A and if successful, renovate the property to a habitable standard before resale. This plan will help ensure that the costs associated with the CPO are covered by the increase in value resulting from complete renovation. Whilst this lengthens the process, it reduces financial risks to the Council and has the added benefit that the Council are in control of the process to bring the property back into use, which is not the case where there is a back to back sale.

50. As part of the CPO process, delegated authority should be provided to the Director of Social Care Health and Housing in consultation with the Executive Members, to dispose of property A, regardless of the resulting value.

Appendices

Appendix A: Property A Case Details

Exempt Appendix B: Cost Implications of CPO and Full postal address of Property A

Appendix B is exempt under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 6 as it contains information relating to any individual, information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information which reveals that the authority proposes:

(a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or

(b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.

Background Papers

None

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Appendix A – Property A Case Details

History

The property has been recorded as being empty since 01/04/1993, although this is when historical Council tax records were merged from an older IT system and it is likely that the property has been empty for longer. The property is owned by a deceased person, with the Executor residing in Kentucky, USA.

Description

The property is a two storey, two-bedroom end of terraced house. The condition of the property is very poor with structural dilapidation throughout. It is in a residential area that comprises a wide mix of properties, both older and newer construction. The property is in a popular area of Dunstable close to schools, parks and shops. The majority of the other properties in the area are in a good condition and well maintained. Dunstable is a desirable and popular area to live in. The negative impact of this property to the immediate neighbourhood is clear.

The property is in a seriously run-down condition with visible structural cracking to the exterior brickwork. The property has only a rudimentary kitchen and bathroom and there is further dilapidation to the walls and ceilings internally. The property has been bricked up internally at the rear ground floor windows and door and a supporting wall between the living rooms has been part demolished. The rear garden has a negative impact on the neighbouring properties, both visually and in terms of it being overgrown and providing harbourage for pests.

There is evidence of vandalism and criminal activity with paraphernalia indicating the existence of a previous cannabis factory.

A warrant to enter the property was approved by Luton Magistrates Court and this was executed on 2nd November 2016, during which a full survey of the property was undertaken and a schedule of dilapidations was compiled.

A formal valuation of the property has been procured from HM Valuation Office Agency, the details are in exempt appendix B

The property has two living rooms, a kitchen, two bedrooms and a bathroom. Due to the length of time empty, the property will need the basic amenities and services refurbished, including heating, rewiring, bathroom, kitchen, and extensive repairs to the structure (walls, floor, and ceiling).

The roof appears to be sound, but has not been inspected. There does not appear to be subsidence to the external walls but there is extensive structural cracking to both external and internal walls, probably due to the effects of the weather over time, and a considerable sum has been estimated for the repair of these defects as at present the extent of the works cannot be fully confirmed.

Actions to date

The Council's Empty Property Officer has written to the Executor in USA several times between 2012 and 2016, offering assistance and advice to bring the property back into use but also asking the Executor what their intentions are. The officer has received no response to any enquiries.

The council tax service confirms that the address in the USA is correct and that they have received correspondence from this address.

The officer was made aware of a third party who had been undertaking some minor works to the house and was believed to be a relative of the executor, however, this was not confirmed. A statement was received from this person, stating that he expected the property to be registered in his name within six months. The officer has checked the land registry again and found no change. This person's connection with this property remains unresolved.

The officer served a notice to enter the property under the Housing Act section 239, on the third party who did not attend site on the required date and has not responded to correspondence since.

The Executor has been informed of the third party's involvement and she has been informed that the property has been entered and surveyed under warrant.

Consideration for Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO)

Account must be taken of the cost to repair the property, the cost of managing the property (assumed for these purposes to be 12% of the rental value) and the cost of maintenance (assumed to be 2% of rental income) over the 7-year period the EDMO is in force.

All costs associated with serving and carrying out the functions of an EDMO are recoverable either via rental receipts or through a legal charge on the property or direct recovery from the owner if this is practicable.

Final Considerations

If the valuations are disputed and contested by the owner, the case would be heard by the Lands Tribunal. This would result in additional legal costs of between £4,000 and £7,000, depending upon the decision of the Lands Tribunal.

This makes it important to offer a realistic valuation to the property owner, in this case the higher value range suggested by the Valuation Office Agency has been used in this calculation.

If contested and the Council loses, all the objector's costs are payable by the Council. These are unknown.

Council costs may be applied for but are not guaranteed to be paid from the proceeds of the sale.

Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive **4 December 2018**

East West Rail Western Section (Phase 2)- Central Bedfordshire Council Formal Objection

Report of: Cllr Nigel Young, Executive Member for Regeneration (nigel.young@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director(s): Jason Longhurst, Director of Regeneration and Business (jason.longhurst@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a decision that is Key

Purpose of this report

1. The purpose of this report is for Executive to ratify the recently submitted 'Statement of Case' made to the Department for Transport by CBC relating to Phase 2 of the Western Section of East West Rail (Bicester to Bedford and Aylesbury to Milton Keynes). This Statement of Case outlines the CBC 'holding' objection to the proposals, through which concerns of further severance issues in Lidlington caused by closures of footpath crossings across the Bedford- Bletchley line are highlighted; along with further clarifications needed on timescales for detailed design, HGV and construction traffic routes. The omission of submitted Local Plan strategic allocations in the area which have not been factored into the assessment of impact has also been raised. This report also outlines the legal requirement for this Statement of Case to be ratified by Full Council should CBC wish to uphold their objection and reserve the right to verbally present it at the Public Inquiry in Spring 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. ratify the content of the CBC Statement of Case (Appendix A) to allow CBC to present evidence verbally at the Public Inquiry, should current issues remain unresolved;

2. recommend to full Council to pass a resolution to oppose the proposed 'Network Rail (East West Rail Bicester to Bedford Improvements) Order' to the extent as set out in this report to allow the Council to present evidence verbally at the Public Inquiry, should current issues remain unresolved.

3. ratify the Council's Statement of Case at Appendix A.

Background

2. The upgrade of the Oxford to Bicester line was the first phase of works on the Western Section of the East West Rail scheme. Works included a new one kilometre section of railway to connect the former Bicester Town station (now Bicester Village station) to Oxford line to the Chiltern main line, building the new Oxford Parkway station at Water Eaton, upgrading Bicester Town and Islip stations and installing a new signalling system. Construction work was completed between Oxford Parkway and Bicester Village in September 2015 and new services from Oxford Parkway to London Marylebone commenced in October 2015. The line between Oxford and Oxford Parkway is now complete and train services started operating from Oxford city centre to London Marylebone in December 2016.

3. This subject of this report is the application and related Public Inquiry for The Network Rail (East West Rail Bicester to Bedford Improvements) Order, which was submitted to the Secretary of State on 27 July 2018. If granted, it will give Network Rail the necessary powers to construct, operate and maintain a railway between Bicester and Bedford, Milton Keynes and Aylesbury and to facilitate the operation of new passenger services between Oxford, Milton Keynes, Aylesbury and Bedford. It will also authorise the reinstatement of the partially disused Bicester- Bletchley - Bedford and Aylesbury-Claydon Junction routes, together with the construction of a new station at Winslow, platforms at Bletchley and Aylesbury Vale Parkway; platform extensions at Woburn Sands and Ridgmont Stations; and other ancillary development.

4. For Central Bedfordshire, the construction works will consist of a construction compound at M1 junction 13 for vehicle storage, platform extensions at Ridgmont and a new overbridge on Marston Rd, Lidlington, along with various diversions and closures of footpaths, some of which currently cross the existing railway. If the scheme is approved, the works in the Central Bedfordshire area are due to commence in 2021 with a duration of 18 months. Diversion and HGV routes are under discussion and it is proposed that there will be a EWR liaison and communications officer who will keep all stakeholders updated. On opening, this phase of the scheme will result in an extra train each hour in each direction between Oxford and Bedford.

5. The objection period for the Transport and Works Act Order closed on the 7th September 2018, which resulted in 235 objections, 11 representations and 409 letters of support. CBC submitted a letter of support jointly with other members of the EWR Consortium and also a 'holding' objection, predominately raising serious concerns around the further severance of Lidlington due to the planned footway level crossing closures.

Past Consultation Responses

6. This phase of works has been subject to three public consultations, all of which CBC has fed into. CBC is also part of the EWR Consortium through which we have early and detailed involvement in all aspects of the development of the scheme. Whilst Network Rail have taken on board our concerns about closures of level crossings in the Lidlington area, the issue has not been resolved to the Council's satisfaction at any opportunity, either via formal consultation processes or through our negotiations via the EWR Consortium and so CBC has submitted a 'holding' objection in response to the draft Order. A summary of the issues raised is listed below, and the Statement of Case is available at Appendix A:

- Concern over the exclusion of submitted Local Plan strategic allocations in impact assessments, particularly SA2 (new villages at Marston Vale) and SE2 (M1 Junction 13 – Marston Gate Expansion)
- No offer of mitigation to deal with severance issues at Lidlington
- The requirement for localised traffic impacts is to be mitigated to CBC's satisfaction, to be agreed through a Construction Traffic Management Plan and considerate HGV and diversionary routing
- Confirmation is required that the new Marston Road overbridge facility is suitable for the shared use of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

Pre-Inquiry Meetings

7. The EWR Alliance are holding a series of meetings and workshops during November to seek to resolve some of issues raised in various representations and objections. The Alliance are due to meet with CBC to discuss their objections on 7th November 2018.

Benefits

8. The East West Rail scheme offers a number of local benefits including:

- Encouragement to new businesses to move into the area and the opportunity to help existing businesses to grow, supporting plans for job creation
- Creating local jobs during its construction phase
- Encouraging more people to travel by rail, thus protecting the environment and reducing the impacts of car travel on our local existing and potential new communities

- Providing higher quality infrastructure and better transport services which will improve local connectivity to destinations such as Bedford, Milton Keynes, Bicester and Oxford

Supporting the Western Section will also demonstrate to Government that the Council is willing to play an active role in collaborating with other local authorities and partners to deliver a significant infrastructure project of economic benefit across the Oxford- Cambridge corridor.

Options for consideration

9. The options for CBC's representation at the Public Inquiry are as follows:

- **Maintain objection with option to verbally present:** If CBC wish to reserve the right to verbally present a formal, valid objection to the Inquiry, the Statement of Case at Appendix A will need to be ratified by Executive and also by Full Council in January 2019

- **Written correspondence:** The correspondence already provided at Appendix A will automatically be considered by the Inspector as part of the Inquiry process, along with the other written representations submitted. If CBC decide that we no longer wish to present in person, this information can be supplemented with other written evidence in the run up to the Inquiry.

- **Withdrawal of objection:** If matters are resolved to CBC's satisfaction we are able to withdraw our objection at any time

Reason/s for decision

10. In view of the fact that CBC has not had any formal confirmation that the points of objection can be resolved, it will be necessary to pursue this at Public Inquiry. It is a legal requirement under section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972 for this to be ratified by Full Council before it can be considered as a formal objection at a Public Inquiry.

Council Priorities

11. **Enhancing Central Bedfordshire-** East West Rail is a railway connecting East Anglia with Central, Southern and Western England. The complete East West Rail scheme (of which the subject of this report is a key phase), comprises a rail route that will link East Anglia to Oxford via Cambridge, Bedford and stations in Central Bedfordshire. As such, the scheme will greatly improve connectivity by rail in Central Bedfordshire by providing an east-west route to these destinations. Ensuring CBC achieves the highest possible value from this scheme by participating fully in the Public Inquiry process is a corporate priority.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

12. Section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972 ('the Act') provides the Council with the power to oppose local or personal Bills. Where a local authority, are satisfied that it is expedient to oppose, any local or personal Bill in Parliament, the local authority may, but only in accordance with the procedure set out in section 239, oppose the Bill accordingly, and may defray the expenses incurred in relation thereto. Section 239 of the Act, although originally concerned only with local authorities promoting or opposing a Bill in Parliament, has been applied by section 20 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 to local authorities applying for, or objecting to, a Transport and Works Act proposed Order. This means that, for a local authority to make a valid objection, it has to have been endorsed by a majority of the authority's members present at a meeting of the authority, held after the requisite notice of that meeting has been given.

13. Prior to the full Council meeting that makes the decision, the requisite notice of the meeting and of its purpose must have been advertised in one or more local newspapers circulating in the area of the authority, such notice being given in addition to the ordinary notice required to be given for the convening of a meeting of the authority. The requisite notice is ten clear days' notice.

14. If full Council does not pass a resolution to oppose the proposed Order, the Council will be unable to present evidence verbally at the Public Inquiry and instead its written Statement of Case will be considered with all other evidence by the Inspector.

Financial and Risk Implications

15. Government funding for the Western Section of the route is conditional on a local financial contribution towards the scheme. Local transport authorities situated along the Western Section route (Central Bedfordshire Council, Bedford Borough Council, Milton Keynes Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, and Oxfordshire County Council) plus some districts have committed to provide up to £50m (at 2012 prices) as a local contribution.

16. The full cost of the scheme is likely to be £1.08bn.

17. Central Bedfordshire Council have agreed (Executive of 13/08/2013) to contribute £4.2m at 2012 prices. This is likely to be in the region of £5.2m when it is due. It is unknown when the first payment of this is likely to be requested, but it is expected it will be upon completion of the scheme in 2024.

18. The risk for the construction and delivery of the project is being borne by Network Rail. A risk assessment has been carried out and appropriate action will be taken to mitigate the identified risks. For the Council, failure to contribute towards the delivery of the scheme poses the following risks:

    - The potential failure to deliver the East West Rail project, of which the Western Section forms a critical part of the business case

- The potential for Government to view the Council's action as noncooperative, when judged against the 'Duty to Cooperate' on strategic planning matters, as set out in the Localism Act 2011.

19. Regarding the local contribution, risks identified include:

- Failure of the Council to secure adequate financing for its local contribution, undermining the deliverability of the scheme;
- Failure of other local authorities to secure adequate financing for their local contribution, undermining the deliverability of the scheme.

Equalities Implications

20. 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. Many disadvantaged groups in Central Bedfordshire have reduced access to a car. Improvements to the rail service should help improve access to jobs and services for those groups. In terms of improvements to services and physical infrastructure such as stations and crossings, new services and infrastructure will need to be delivered to the most up-to-date accessibility and equalities standards as required by law. The Council will work with Network Rail in the run up to the Inquiry and post approval to identify any equality issues associated with new services and infrastructure and ensure that the new facilities and services are accessible by all.

Conclusion and next Steps

21. If it is agreed to ratify the Statement of Case with a view to verbal presentation at Public Inquiry, a report will be presented to Full Council, which will allow for this approach should our concerns not be resolved by that time. CBC are free to withdraw their objection at any time in the run up to the Inquiry.

22. The next step in the process includes meeting with the EWR Alliance on 07/11/2018 to discuss highways issues in detail. Network Rail will also be offering the opportunity for further negotiation on areas yet to be agreed, such as ecology, landscaping and cultural heritage.

23. The EWR Consortium are proposing that all members of the group work towards signing a Statement of Common Ground to assist with the Inquiry, which CBC will be requested to sign.

24. If CBC uphold their objection and ratify their evidence for verbal presentation, a Statement of Matters will be issued to us along with confirmation of the location of the Inquiry. Further Proofs of Evidence (a prepared statement to read from at the Inquiry) will need to be submitted in advance of the Inquiry.

Appendices

Appendix A: CBC Statement of Case

Background Papers

None

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Principal Strategic Transport Officer

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Appendix A

Angela Foster
Transport and Works Act Order Unit
Department for Transport
Zone 1/14
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Your ref: TWA/18/APP/04/OBJ/241
Date: 22/10/2018

Dear Angela

Transport and Works Act 1992: Application for the Proposed Network Rail (East West Rail Bicester to Bedford Improvements) Order

This Statement of Case is made on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) in respect of Network Rail's application to the Secretary of State for Transport (DfT) for an order made under the Transport & Works Act 1992 ('the Order') for the Proposed Network Rail (East West Rail Bicester to Bedford) Improvements.

We have previously set out our concerns and ask that our representation be considered as our Statement of Case. An updated version of this response is appended, along with some supporting information (Appendix A).

We would like to reserve the right to present verbal evidence at the Inquiry should our holding objections not be resolved to our satisfaction in the coming months. We are aware that if we uphold our objection we will be required to satisfy the procedures of section 239 of the 1972 Act.

The Full Council meeting at which the matter will be discussed is due to be held on 17th January 2019.

Please contact me if you require any further information at this stage.

Yours faithfully

Connie Frost- Bryant

Head of Strategic Growth
Direct telephone 0300 300 4329
Email connie.frost-bryant@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Central Bedfordshire Council Statement of Case- Transport and Works Act 1992: Application for the Proposed Network Rail (East West Rail Bicester to Bedford Improvements) Order

Ref: OBJ/2140

1. CBC welcomes this next stage in the delivery of Phase 2 of the EWR Western Section and the opportunity to comment on the proposals, as outlined in the TWAO.

2. As a supporter of EWR and member of the EWR Consortium, we offer our representations as constructive input. It is part of our ongoing contribution to ensure the scheme achieves its full potential.

3. Our detailed comments are supplied as Appendix A. From these, we have summarised areas of interest /concern where further discussion is required. These follow below.

4. We expect our concerns to be satisfactorily resolved through an ongoing collaboration. However, that the Order does not take into account Local Plan Policies SA2 and SE2 (see paragraphs 9 and 10), nor offers mitigation to severance issues at Lidlington (paragraphs 24 and 25), is of sufficient concern to Members to constitute a 'holding objection' and we ask that this be registered as such.

Draft Order and Supporting Planning Documents

5. Many of the procedures within the order, pertaining to Highways, Rights of Way closures, detailed designs, etc. are subject to a further technical approval stage. Alongside other Local Authorities within the consortium, we require a written clarification as to how this will take place.

6. We note the 28-day approval period stated in the Order and for this 'reserved matters' approval to be secured via an appropriately worded condition, in addition to the supplied proposed conditions. We look forward to working collaboratively

with the Consortium to reach this point in the coming weeks and months.

7. A detailed commentary on specific sections of the order are recorded in Appendix A. We ask that these comments are taken on board.

Environmental Statement

Planning Policy

8. We note the Planning Policy chapter makes reference to the old NPPF, presumably because of the date it was drafted. We recommend that it is updated to reflect the current national planning policy viewpoint.

Planning Scope

9. We request that due regard is taken the CBC's Local Plan 2015 to 2035 submission, currently in the process of examination. In particular, we draw attention to the following EWR-related strategic objectives and policies:

    a. **Objective SO9:** Reduce the reliance on the use of the car by improving facilities at bus and train stations, delivering transport interchanges and by promoting safe and sustainable forms of transport, such as improved walking and cycling routes.

    b. **Objective SO10:** Ensure a reliable network of east/west and north/south public transport routes to improve access to local services and facilities, especially for those without a car, through well planned routes and integrated public transport. Encouraging the shift from road to rail freight to reduce demands on the highway network.

    c. **Policy SP1: Growth Strategy -** Outlines the Plan's objective to deliver 39,350 homes and a minimum of 24,000 new jobs between 2015 and 2035. It also identifies a number of growth location options being considered, including those of relevance to EWR such as Marston Vale New Villages.

    d. **Policy SA2: Marston Vale New Villages** - The land for Marston Vale New Villages, as shown in Appendix A, is allocated for a mixed-use development comprising of up to 5,000 dwellings and a minimum of 40 hectares of employment land. The associated planning application is

awaiting determination by CBC. The exclusion of this site from the assessment of the scheme presents several issues, namely:

- The full impact on the Lidlington Station Road level crossing has not been adequately assessed
- The opportunity to add value through a closer integration of the two projects has been missed. For example, the opportunity to create an alternative road crossing of the railway to the benefit of Lidlington residents has not been explored
- The opportunity to future-proof the works against an increase in line speed will be lost. The Marston Valley application provides the opportunity to share the investment cost and avoid a far more substantial future cost to the project, to the benefit of the public purse.

e. **Policy SE2: M1 Junction 13 – Marston Gate Expansion** - The Marston Gate expansion, shown in plan format at Attachment A-D, will provide up to 35 hectares of new employment land, delivering a mix of uses including B8 warehousing and distribution with associated B1 uses, A3 food and drink uses and a lorry park. CBC is currently reviewing a submitted EIA scoping opinion for this site.

f. **Policy T2: Highway Safety and Design** – states that new development must not have a detrimental impact on highway safety, patterns of movement and must provide appropriate access.

g. **Policy T4: Development and Public Transport Interchanges** – supports East West Rail by requiring those developments in close proximity to bus and rail interchanges to provide enhanced access, facilitating greater public transport use.

h. **Policy EE10: The Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Park -** the Council will expect development on the route of the Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Park to deliver the section of the Waterway Park within its boundary. Development should be designed to relate positively to the Waterway Park.

10. We draw attention to the above policies as 'reasonably foreseeable future projects', deserving of inclusion in the drafting of the Order. As a minimum, the **SA2** and **SE2** strategic allocations must be considered, given they inform the future assessment scenario within which EWR will operate.

11. Both of these allocations are progressing quickly, following the submission of our Local Plan. They will significant impact the local area, including crossing movements. For this reason, we would reasonably expect **SA2** and **SE2** to be explicitly referenced in the TWAO.

12. We are also concerned of the risk that the construction of **SA2** and **SE2** will 'clash' with EWR-related activity. Hence, we strongly encourage a direct and early engagement with the sponsors of **SA2** and **SE2** in regard to rail and highway issues.

13. With regard to **Policy EE10** The Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway, we require confirmation that the 'super canal planning exclusion zone'- shown on scheme drawing 58 - relates to the Waterway. We say this because of concerns that the Waterway scheme has received insufficient consideration in the plans for EWR.

14. We continue to stress the importance of not prejudicing the route and development of the Waterway and the need for engagement between officers of EWR and the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Consortium.

15. In light of the above, we are concerned that by excluding planned growth from the baseline assessment, we risk underplaying the benefits of EWR and draw attention to other adjacent developments in Milton Keynes and Bedford.

Transport, Traffic and Public Rights of Way

16. We note the agreed transport assessment methodology shows the operational and construction-related highway impacts to be of insufficient magnitude to warrant specific junction modelling and mitigation.

17. However, we stress that these impacts will be significant for our residents given the nature of the area, being semi-rural, small villages and hamlets.

18. We therefore require localised impacts to be mitigated to our satisfaction, to be agreed through a Construction Traffic Management Plan and considerate HGV and diversionary routing.

HGV routing, diversion routes and road closures

19. We are concerned that the scheme involves an extended temporary closure of the Marston Road level crossing, to allow for the construction of a new road bridge.

20. We stress that the length of this closure raises significant issues, not least matters of road safety. We highlight this as several junctions on potential diversion routes have received investment to reduce the incidence of injurious collisions. We note that diversion routes have not been specified in the TWAO documentation and stress the need for consultation when these routes are being planned.

21. We note that in the reverse situation, an intensification of the use of selected routes would constitute grounds for raising an objection. Hence, we stress the requirement for early and ongoing discussions with CBC Highways to ensure proposed diversionary routes are acceptable on capacity and safety grounds.

22. With regards to construction traffic routing, we must be consulted on proposed routes. We particularly wish to limit the number of HGVs routing via the staggered crossroads in the centre of Marston Moretaine, routing to/from the A421 – for further details see our comments in Appendix A.

23. We note the reference to two areas of 'temporary' highways works on Bury Ware. We presume these works are to provide a passing place and to improve visibility splays for HGVs exiting onto the A507. Before approving the schemes, we require further detail - see Appendix A – including sight of the assessment work undertaken to inform these proposals. We welcome the meeting on 7th November 2018 to discuss this further.

Lidlington School Crossing- 'mitigation' scheme

24. We remain gravely concerned for the impact of EWR on the community of Lidlington, whose village straddles the rail line. We have argued strongly for improvements to cement connectivity and cohesion, particularly in light of the Marston Valley planning application currently under consideration. As the TWAO proposals do not yet meet our aspirations to provide suitable crossing facilities for existing (and potentially new) residents in this area, we raise a holding objection on this issue.

25. At each consultation stage, we have stressed the risk that the EWR proposals will compound the problem of severance. As presented, the proposals offer no mitigation, affording the local community no positive benefit. We are concerned that EWR may request the closure of other Lidlington RoW crossings in response to the **SA2** planning application. In the absence of mitigating measures, this would be unacceptable.

26. We appreciate the efforts Network Rail have made to engage with Lidlington Parish Council on the matter of the School crossing. However, we are disappointed that the most recent proposal to improve the 'diverted' walking route is not referenced in the TWAO, or accompanying documentation. We request that this is incorporated within the order, not left to be separately negotiated.

27. We note that by closing the two adjacent level crossings, the usage of the Station Road crossing in Lidlington will intensify against a backdrop of significant additional potential vehicle and pedestrian and cycle movements as **SA2** is built out. We therefore request EWR to undertake and report on the options for:

    a. minimising barrier downtime, without impacting safety

    b. changing the layout and operation, to improve safety for vulnerable road users including for example an 'advanced start' to give pedestrians chance to clear the crossing before other traffic is released

    c. Consider options for a further crossing point of the railway to relieve pressure on this pinch point- given the potential impact of **SA2**.

Marston Road Overbridge

28. We require confirmation as to how the bridleway is to be accommodated, given this is not shown in the schematic plan for the Marston Road bridge. We are adamant that this facility is suitable for the shared use of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. We remain unclear as to the next stage in agreeing an acceptable design and draw attention to our previously submitted 'Form 6', a copy of which is included in Appendix A.

29. We reference your most recent response on this issue, in which you state:

    'a preliminary design level for the overbridge, which is not yet complete, and when it is this information will be shared with CBC in due course to invite comment. This work will then lead into a detailed design stage.'

Until such time as we have received a satisfactory design, our previous comments stand.

Public Rights of Way

30. Concerning Public Rights of Way, we note that temporary closure details are to be provided in the CEMP/CTMP in due course and await the further opportunity to comment. We are satisfied with the content of the framework CTMP.

31. We will take responsibility for PROW waymarking and signage, as we understand Buckinghamshire will also do and ask that this arrangement is referenced in the relevant documents. Other issues and clarifications are included in Appendix A.

Ecology and Land Use

32. We recognise that section 2D follows the existing rail line, with land take and impacts primarily limited to the new overbridge and ECS areas.

33. We acknowledge and applaud the siting of compensatory habitats (ECS) close to where mitigation is required. ECS 3 currently provides reasonable habitat value, being rough grassland and scrub. However, whilst acknowledging the beneficial addition of a pond, we believe there is a greater gain by siting this on arable land.

34. We are disappointed that the referenced net gain is an 'aspiration' and not integral to the scheme, as can be inferred from other documents. We would point out that the updated NPPF expects a net gain for biodiversity from development whereas currently, the ES does not look beyond mitigation.

35. Whilst ECS sites are identified, we note the lack of detail as to their layout. Hence, we require details of the process for compiling and approving the respective site specifications.

36. We query the flood storage areas shown on the plans, noting a lack of reference to how these enhance habitat connectivity for great crested newts. Further commentary on these issues is provided in Attachment A.

Landscaping and Visual Impacts

37. The approach and section 2D proposals are acceptable. However, we require the queries attached to be resolved within the detailed design.

Air Quality

38. We are satisfied with the methodology for assessing air quality issues and for dealing with the likely impacts. However, we draw attention to Attachment A, in particular likely changes to the landscape within which EWR operates as a result of the Marston Valley planning application.

39. We draw attention to a new monitoring station in Beancroft Road, Marston Moretaine as this will be of use for future monitoring.

Water Quality and Flood Risk

40. We are satisfied that the proposed planning conditions relating to flood risk and water quality as these will ensure the scheme is acceptable. We will continue to work with Network Rail on this matter, engaging in discussions as the design progresses.

Noise and Vibration

41. We note that nineteen properties in area 2D will experience negative residual operational night time impacts. On the basis of Volume 4 figures, our assumption is that these properties are in Aspley Guise and would appreciate this being confirmed. We also request confirmation that these are the only properties within CBC to be substantially impacted, on the basis of the modelling work undertaken.

42. We understand there is no legal obligation to mitigate the impact on these dwellings, given Network Rail is within its rights to intensify use of a rail line. However, there is a moral case for authorities to act, where this is reasonable and would request confirmation that a budget will be allocated for this purpose.

43. We request that all construction takes place between the hours of 8am to 6pm on weekdays and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays. No audible works should take place outside these hours, or on Sundays and Bank Holidays without first obtaining prior

permission. We ask for advanced liaison on the use of plant and the operation of 'Best Practicable Means'.

Geology, Soil and Contaminated Land

44. We are content with the undertakings received to date on this matter. We are party to the detailed investigatory work and are assisting Atkins by sourcing supporting information.

Cultural Heritage

45. We are satisfied that the proposed planning conditions provide an acceptable basis for undertaking the required archaeological investigations.

46. We have allocated a case officer to deal with the Listed Building Consent at Ridgmont Station, for which an internal consultation on the proposal is currently underway. The case has been referred to the National Casework Unit, as requested.

Conclusion

47. We remain supportive of the overall strategic case underpinning East West Rail Phase 2 and endorse the principles that underpin the proposal submitted under the Transport and Works Act. EWR will enhance the Central Bedfordshire's growth potential and directly supports the sustainability of strategic allocations in our Local Plan.

48. We understand the TWAO process constitutes legal, rather than technical approval. For this reason, we will be content to see the Order approved once the matters raised in this response have been resolved to our satisfaction. That many of these points were raised in previous rounds without resolution, is frustrating.

49. We look forward to the start of construction and the commencement of new East West Rail services from 2024 and would be pleased to be contacted on any of the points raised in this submission.

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Central Bedfordshire Council

EXECUTIVE 4 December 2018

Revised Policies for Travel Assistance for Children and Pupils Attending School and Post 16 Students and Post 19 Young People in Education

Report of: Cllr Steven Dixon, Executive Member for Families, Education and Skills (steve.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director(s): Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

This report relates to a decision that is Key

Purpose of this report

1. The Travel Assistance Policies for Central Bedfordshire have been reviewed following a public consultation. The purpose of this report is to seek the views of the Executive on adopting the revised Travel Assistance Policies and consulting on a post 19 Transport Policy

Recommendations:

The Executive is asked to:

1. **adopt the travel assistance policies for the academic year 2019/20; and**

2. **agree to consult on a post 19 Transport policy.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

2. The policies were considered at Children's services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 20th November 2018. Recommendations from this Committee are attached at Appendix E.

Issues

3. Central Bedfordshire Council provides transport assistance to entitled pupils of school age and those post 16 attending education.

4. The Council is required to have policies in place setting out how the statutory service will be delivered. The current Home to School Transport Policy was adopted by Executive in February 2014, a review was undertaken in April 2015 by the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Executive Member. The Post 16 policy was adopted by Executive in 2010.

5. On the 20th June 2017 Executive gave permission for a public consultation to be undertaken in relation to suggested changes to the policy and how Central Bedfordshire Council would provide assistance with home to school transport. The responses to this consultation are set out at Appendix C.

6. Central Bedfordshire Council Transports over 5,000 entitled children/students from home to school each year.

7. In 2017/18 the cost to the revenue budget was £9,608,223.

8. Currently, pupils are entitled to transport assistance for the following reasons:

   All children who are in reception year to the end of year 11 qualify for free school transport if they go to their nearest suitable or catchment school and live at least:

   - 2 miles from the school if they are under 8
   - 3 miles from the school if they are 8 or older. The statutory walking distances are measured by the shortest available walking route.

   If there is no available walking route, children may be offered transport.

   If the family is in receipt of the maximum Working Tax Credit or their children are entitled to free school meals, they will get free school transport if they are:

   I. aged 8 to 11 and the nearest suitable school is at least 2 miles away
   II. aged 11 to 16 and attend 1 of the 3 nearest schools between 2 to 6 miles from the home address
   III. aged 11 to 16 and attend the nearest school of their chosen religion or belief and it is between 2 to 15 miles from the home address.

   There is no automatic entitlement for pupils with an Education Health Care Plan. However, transport can be provided if they live further than the statutory walking distances mentioned in above and:

   - attend their nearest or catchment mainstream school.

- attend the nearest suitable special school, which has been agreed by us as being able to meet their needs.

If a child lives under the statutory walking distance but their needs would mean it was unsafe for them to walk even when accompanied by an appropriate adult, then transport may also be provided.

If a child has attends the nearest or catchment school and they have a medical condition which means they are unable to walk to school or access mainstream or public transport, then transport may be provided.

If a child is between 16 and 18 and in further education or sixth form, we may be able to help with transport. Transport is provided to pupils who attend the catchment or nearest school or the nearest establishment which offers the chosen course.

The distance from home to school or college needs to be between 3 and 20 miles (measured by walking distance up to 3 miles and motorised route after 3 miles) and:

- be from a low income family or;
- have a medical need or;
- be in the care of the authority.

Transport can be provided for pupils who have a Education Health Care Plan up until the age of 25.

9. The Council's policies have been reviewed to ensure that they meet the statutory requirements whilst making the most efficient use of resources.

10. The changes to the policy being considered are:

    - Transport will not be provided for children who are not of statutory school age (under 5) except in certain circumstances.

Reason/s for decision

11. To ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations.

12. To ensure that the Council adopts a fair, equitable and transparent policies to support all pupils and their families.

13. The Council does not have a policy to show how we exercise our judgement judiciously and in good faith when considering the necessity of transport provision for young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan, aged between 19 and 25 attending education.

14. To ensure that the Council adopts policies that can be implemented within the available resources.

15. In 2017 a public consultation was undertaken in relation to the home to school transport policies there were nine questions asked, the areas covered, and responses provided were:

    - Provide transport from home to nearest available school, rather than to the nearest catchment.

      58% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal to provide transport to the nearest available school, rather than to the nearest catchment school. With less than 28% supporting the proposal.

    - Provide transport for children who are aged five and above
      The majority (59%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to only provide transport for children who are aged five and above, with only 26.4% disagreeing.

      Students over 16 years old with a special education need (SEN) will be required to make a contribution towards the cost of their transport, unless they are from a low-income family.

      47% disagreed with the proposal to require post 16-year olds with SEN to contribute towards the cost of their transport, unless from a low-income family. Another 37% agreed with the proposal with a further 15% responding neither, indicating a wider split in opinions.

    - Offer a travel pass for a public bus or train for Middle and Upper school pupils (ages 9-16), rather than supplying private buses or taxis in the first instance.

      A significant majority (70%) disagreed with the proposal to offer a travel pass for a public bus or train to students (aged 9-16) rather than supply private buses or taxis in the first instance. Only 24% of respondents agreed with the proposal showing an overwhelming objection to the policy.

    - When a vehicle has been provided to the family by the national Motability Scheme, the council will provide parent/carers with a payment to cover the cost of mileage rather than provide additional transport.

39% of respondents agreed with the proposal to provide parents/carers with a payment to cover the cost of mileage of transporting their child to school with their Motability vehicle. 35% disagreed with the proposal whilst 26% responded neither, indicating no opinion which suggests the proposal may not affect them enough to comment either way.

- Proposal to charge concessionary bus passes at a variable rate that better reflects the cost of the journey rather than a universal fixed rate?

  Just under half of respondents (47%) disagreed with the proposal to charge concessionary bus passes at a variable rate rather than a universal fixed rate, with only 33% agreeing with the proposal.

- Provide a contribution to schools to run their own mini buses instead of commissioning private bus operators, in instances where this is more cost effective?

  The majority (54%) supported the proposal to provide a contribution to schools to run their own mini buses instead of commissioning private bus operators, with only 30% in disagreement.

- Rather than providing transport, the council will reimburse travel expenses to parent/carers whose children attend a boarding school.

  47.3% responded ‘Neither’ indicating no opinion, likely because of the very specific nature of the proposal. 28% disagreed with the proposal to reimburse travel expenses to parent/carers rather than provide transport in the first instance with 15% agreeing.

- Proposal to no longer provide travel assistance to parents/carers attending a Statement / EHC review whose children attend an out of council area boarding school.

  Again, a similar proportion of respondents (46.5%) responded ‘Neither’. 27% disagreed with the proposal to no longer provide travel assistance to parents/carers attending a Statement/EHC review at an out of area boarding school. With a slightly smaller percentage (26.5%) disagreeing with the proposal.

16. Based on the responses received the following decisions were taken:

- Until the School Admissions Policy changes to nearest school a change will not be made to the school transport policies as this will cause confusion for parents and carers.

- The change to transporting children 5 to 16 is reflected in the new policy. Where an application is received for a child under 5 consideration will be given on a case by case basis of the individual needs of the child.

- Given the significant costs to the local authority Post 16 SEN students will be required to contribute to the cost of their transport and this cost will be the same as the concessionary pass cost. A pilot independent travel training program has been undertaken over summer in 2018 and has achieved savings in excess of £50,000 for 6 students. We will look at how this can be further developed to allow this life skill to be provided to more of our students.

- Much of the disagreement here related to the age of the children, with many responders stating that the lower age range was too low. We will still look at providing bus passes to travel on public transport, where there is a suitable route for those aged 11 to 16.

- Mileage payments will be offered to all parents, from September 2018 we have also introduced Personal Travel Budgets for parents and carers of children with SEN and looked after children.

- The concessionary pass rate will remain as a fixed rate for all regardless of distance travelled. An in year change to the charge has been agreed so that it reflects the cost of an average mainstream route operated by Central Bedfordshire Council. From January 2019 the pass will cost £267/term which represents a daily cost of £4.20. The current cost is £162/term.

- Central Bedfordshire Council will reimburse travel expenses for parents to attend one EHCP review where their child is in boarding school outside of Central Bedfordshire.

Council Priorities

17. Enhancing Central Bedfordshire, by reducing the number of contracted vehicles and making better use of public transport routes this will reduce the number of vehicles on the roads, leading to a reduction in congestion and air pollution and will help support the commercial public transport routes within Central Bedfordshire.

18. Improving education and skills, by ensuring that those children who are entitled are provided with travel assistance from home to school safely and efficiently the pupils are more likely to be in their place of education.

19. Protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing, by ensuring that some of our most vulnerable residents are able to access education.

20. A more efficient and responsive council, changes to how travel assistance is provided will allow the Council to make the best use of its resources.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

21. The current Home to School Transport policies, agreed by the Executive on 9 March 2010 and 4th February 2014 ensured the Council is compliant with the relevant legislation.

22. The policy details the way in which the Council will exercise its powers and duties to provide home to school transport in accordance with Section 509 of the Education Act 1996 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006.Adopting the proposed policy will ensure that the Council is meeting its legal responsibilities.

23. The duty placed on the Council is to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to enable the attendance of “eligible children” within their area, at the relevant ‘qualifying school’.

24. The duty applies to ‘eligible children’ in the Council’s area who are attending their nearest ‘qualifying school’, where:

- the school is beyond the statutory walking distances of two miles for children below the age of eight and three miles for those aged eight and over; or

- the child is from a ‘low income family’ and is over age eight, but under 11years of age, and they are living more than two miles from the nearest school; or

- the child is from a ‘low income family’ and is of secondary age (aged 11- 16) and attending a qualifying school that is between two and six miles from the child’s home (as long as there are not three or more nearer suitable qualifying schools); or

- the child is from a 'low income family' and is of secondary age (aged 11-16) and attending their nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief, between two and 15 miles from home.

25. The Council must also make travel arrangements for those pupils who are unable to walk to school or college because of their special educational need (SEN), disability or mobility problems and children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk because the nature of the route is such that they cannot walk in reasonable safety.

Financial and Risk Implications

26. In 2017/18 the educational transport budgets were overspent by £2.8 million. This was due to an increase in the cost of mainstream transport £527,424 an increase of £1,892,831for SEN Transport, an increase of £232,197 for SEN colleges and an increased cost to the council of £209,624 for extended rights to travel and for SEN £777k. The cost to the Council for home to school transport in 2016/17 was £8million.

27. The MTFP Contains savings associated with changes to these policies. These savings were agreed as part of the budget agreed by Council in February 2017.

Year	Budget 16/17	Budget 17/18	Spend 16/17	Spend 17/18	Variance 16/17	Variance 17/18
Mainstream	£3,486,460	£3,392,460	£3,695,192	£3,919,884	£208,732	£527,424
Mainstream Colleges	£79,810	£81,810	£68,697	£70,747	-£11,113	- £2,178
SEN	£3,475,940	£3,026,949	£4,349,314	£4,829,771	£873,374	£1,892,831
SEN Colleges	£350,000	£346,000	£326,000	£578,197	-£24,000	£232,197
*Extended Rights	£167,500	£122,070	£552,500	£209624	£358,000	£209,624
Totals	£7,226,710	£6,969,289	£8,665,203	£9,608,223	£1,428,993	£2,859,789

* Extended rights to transport applies to families on low income

MTFP Efficiencies and Pressures

Existing Efficiencies	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	Total

Walking Routes	-100	0	0	0	-100
SEN Procurement	-180	0	0	0	-180
Transport to nearest school	0	-25	-50	0	-75
Voluntary mileage payments	0	-75	-125	0	-200
Existing Pressures					
Growth Mainstream	146	58	0	0	204
Growth SEN	91	38	0	0	129
Base Pressure	1200	0	0	0	1200
Base pressure unwind	-500	-350	-350	0	-1200
Accelerated saving					
Sub Total	937	-154	-250	0	533
Existing MTFP Total	657	-254	-425	0	-22
New Efficiencies					
Personal Travel Plans	-80	0	0	0	-80
SEN Procurement (additional)	-290	0	0	0	-290
Policy Changes post 16+ SEN	-60	0	0	0	-60

Changed geography of provision	0	0	-240	-240	-480
Sub-total	-430	0	-240	-240	-910
New Pressure					
Reversal of pressure unwind (as efficiencies now detailed)	146	58	0	0	204
Revised impact of growth: Mainstream	91	38	0	0	129
Revised impact of growth: SEN	1200	0	0	0	1200
Sub-total	-500	-350	-350	0	-1200
Total new Efficiencies & Pressures	219	573	440	60	1292
NEW MTFP	876	319	15	60	1270

28. Other processes have been put in place to mitigate these costs the move from a framework for letting the routes to a dynamic purchasing system.

29. Introduction of Personal Transport Budgets for parents/carers of children with SEN or looked after children.

30. Introduction of Independent Travel Training.

31. Increase in concessionary pass rate to the equivalent of the average cost of a mainstream route.

32. Full review of the local offer as it relates to transport.

33. Full review of information provided to parents /carers in relation to travel assistance.

34. Better engagement with the CCG regarding payment for transport on grounds of medical need.

35. The cost of transport is not sustainable with the resources we have so we must ensure that we are using the resource as efficiently as possible.

36. The post 19 policy will set out how Central Bedfordshire Council will decide if a young person aged 19 to 25 with an EHCP needs transport to access further education. The assessment will establish if there is a need for transport and if the transport should be provided by the council.

Equalities Implications

37. 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.

38. When the Home to School Transport policy was developed in 2010 a full equality impact assessment was undertaken in consultation with the Equality Forum. As part of the policy review and consultation process undertaken in 2013 the equality impact assessment was refreshed. A further refresh of the Equalities Impact Assessment has take place as part of this review.

Conclusion and next Steps

39. The Executive are asked to agree the draft policies.

40. The new policies will be implemented from September 2019.

41. Consultation is undertaken on a Post 19 Transport Policy with a view to implementing in September 2019.

Appendices

Appendix A: Home to School Travel Assistance Policy

Appendix B: Travel Assistance Policy for Post 16 Students.

Appendix C. Consultation responses

Appendix D. Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix E: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Comments

Background Papers

Executive 20th June 2017 – Request to go out to consultation
https://centralbeds.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g5369/Public%20reports%20pack%20Tuesday%2020-Jun-2017%2009.30%20EXECUTIVE.pdf?T=10

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Appendix A

Children's Services

Policy for Travel Assistance for Children & Young people attending School

2019/2020

November 2018

DRAFT

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Date agreed:	

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1. Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out who and in what way Central Bedfordshire Council (the Council) will help it's residents with the transport of children of compulsory school age between home and school It specifically relates to transport between home and school at the start and end of the school day and outlines the responsibilites that parents/carers and the Council have in this process.

1.2 It also explains the way in which the Council may help with the transport needs of those children who qualify for assistance as a result of specific special educational needs, disability or other mobility difficulties.

1.3 Details of travel assistance available under the Council's Post 16 Transport Policy are available on the Council's website (http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport)

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2. General Statement of Policy

2.1 This statement of policy sets out the way in which the Council will exercise its powers and duties to provide home to school travel assistance in accordance with Section 508B, 508C and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 (the Act), as inserted by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (the EIA 2006). It links to the Council's Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy for schools and colleges.

2.2 Generally the Council will provide travel assistance for pupils of compulsory school age (term after the 5th birthday to 16 years of age) who are registered pupils at their nearest suitable (qualifying) school and live more than the recognised (statutory) walking distance from it, i.e. 2 miles for children aged under 8 and 3 miles for children aged between 8 and 16. For most children this travel assistance is free, but there are charges for those who make use of the Council's school transport services but are not themselves entitled under the terms of this policy. The Council makes no general transport provision for children under or over the age of compulsory education, or for children of any age who attend private schools or colleges. Please see Section 10, for details on post 16 transport.

2.3 The Education and Skills Act 2008 has now increased the age at which young people are required to participate in education or training to 18 years of age. However, this is not a change in the statutory school age (reception to the end of year 11), which this policy is aligned with, so it does not extend the entitlement for the provision of free travel assistance beyond year 11.

2.3 The nearest suitable school includes the nearest qualifying school that is deemed by the Council as suitable to a particular child's age and needs. To be eligible for travel assistance the distance to the school must exceed the statutory walking distance, as mentioned in the paragraph above.

2.4 In all other circumstances the Council will not usually provide travel assistance or contribute towards the cost of transport

2.5 The above general statements are intended as a general guide and are without prejudice to the full policy set out below. A parent or carer may appeal against a transport decision through the Council's formal Appeals Process (Section 13).

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3. Roles & Responsibilities of the Parents and Carers

The law states that it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that a child gets to school, including accompanying them, if necessary. This includes the parent determining how their child will get to school and may include making appropriate arrangements such as with a friend or a childminder to ensure that the child is accompanied, as appropriate.

3.1 It is the responsibility of a child's parent or carer to:

i. ensure that a child of statutory school age receives appropriate full-time education;

ii. make necessary arrangements for attendance at an appropriate school or other setting, including submitting applications as necessary for admission to a school and for home to school travel assistance to the Council;

iii. ensure the reasonable safety of themselves and their child(ren) between home and the designated pick up point, and from the designated drop-off point and home;

iv. be aware of the provisions of the home to school transport policy;

v. pay for any wilful damage caused by their child;

vi. to make arrangements as necessary when not available themselves, for their child to be accompanied by a responsible person as necessary when walking to and from school or to and from a pick up point who will wait with the child until the vehicle arrives;

vii. ensure that the pupil is ready with a valid travel pass at the agreed time of pick-up when the vehicle arrives at home or at the pick-up point (transport staff are instructed not to wait over 5 minutes).

viii. ensure the child knows what to do should they lose their travel pass and thus be refused travel, or if for any reason the vehicle does not arrive: for example, this could be returning home, going to a neighbour or telephoning the parent/carer for assistance;

ix. ensure that the child understands the need for safety and that the wearing of a seat belt or harness is essential;

x. inform the Transport Team of any change of wheelchair, or equipment so that the risk-assessment may be reviewed;

xi. ensure that only wheelchairs certified as being successfully crash-tested will be permitted to have a passenger travel in their wheelchair on a vehicle. A full risk assessment will have to be undertaken by Council officers before transport can commence. The Council will produce a 'wheelchair passport' if applicable for transport.

xii. inform the Transport Team of any change of travelling requirements, or any change in medical needs

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xiii. notify the Transport Team of any change of address or telephone number in good time.

The Council will not be responsible for any interruption of service provided to a child or any other consequential difficultly from not having an up-to-date postal or email address or operational telephone number;

xiv. to understand that passenger assistants will not administer medication. They can transport it to school as long as it is in the original packaging and clearly labelled with the pupil's name;

xv. provide evidence of personal circumstances in support of any application or appeal for transport;

3.2 All parents/carers whose child/children are in receipt of travel assistance from the Council are agreeing to have read and understood the current Code of Conduct for parents/carers and pupils. (Reference document 1)

4. Principles, Roles & Responsibilities of the Council

4.1 Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to providing home to school travel assistance in order to meet its statutory obligations (Section 2, paragraph 1 and 2). In so doing the Council will:

i. provide equitable, safe, efficient and cost effective transport assistance for pupils entitled to transport assistance in accordance with the Council's duties and powers as provided for in legislation (Section 2 of this policy);

ii. ensure information is made accessible for parents and carers so that they are aware of their entitlement;

iii. regularly review eligibility for transport assistance to ensure that those who are receiving transport assistance are still eligible;

iv. monitor the take-up of services to ensure that access is fair and equitable and that hard to reach groups and those who are most vulnerable are aware of their entitlement;

v. support sustainable modes of travel to school: as well as helping to boost children's fitness and concentration levels, walking and cycling helps to reduce the congestion caused by the journey to school, together with the potential for associated accidents, pollution and carbon emissions.

4.2 The Transport Team is responsible for:

a. administering this and any other Council policies, which govern eligibility for travel assistance;

b. determining eligibility and identifying the transport needs of individual pupils;

c. commissioning all home to school transport

d. providing the overall budget for home to school transport, and budget management.

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e. planning and securing the most appropriate and cost effective home to school transport;
f. day to day management of all home to school transport provision;
g. establishment of operating standards
h. contract management and compliance with operating standards and policy objectives

Admission choices should not be made on the assumption that the same transport eligibility rules will apply throughout a child's education.

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5. Equality Statement

5.1 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 the 9 protected characteristics, which are; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

5.2 This policy is subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. This assessment will be integral to all future policy and guidance reviews. A copy of this assessment is available upon request.

6. Safeguarding Statement

6.1 The Council and its partners recognise that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. Whether their interest is in all young people 'staying safe' in all aspects of our services, or whether they are working in specific areas of vulnerability, all staff, including drivers and passenger assistants will undergo appropriate training and induction so that they understand their roles and responsibilities and are confident in carrying them out. Schools, settings, children, young people and their parents or carers, and any member of the community should feel confident that they can raise any issues or concerns about the safety or welfare of children and know that they will be listened to and taken seriously.

6.2 This will be achieved by maintaining an ethos of commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It is supported by: a clear child protection policy; appropriate induction and training as well as briefings and refreshed learning to ensure compliance with current legislation and guidelines.

6.3 The Council acts as a Corporate Parent for Children in Care. This means that the Council has a legal and moral duty to provide the kind of support that any good parent/carer would provide to his or her own child. This policy has been written to comply with these principles.

7. Status of This Policy

7.1 In accepting any offer of assistance made by the Council under this Policy, a parent/carer will be accepting all the provisions of this Policy.

8. Implementation and Monitoring of the Policy

8.1 The Transport Team will be responsible for the implementation of this policy through the development of their internal processes that will ensure the ability to monitor take up of service and regular reviews for those in receipt of the service.

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9. Eligibility & Entitlement

General Policy for ALL Children

9.1 A child of statutory school age who meets one of the following criteria will be provided with travel assistance to school as follows.

i. A child of compulsory school age (term after the 5th birthday to 16 years of age) who are registered pupils at their nearest suitable (qualifying) school and live more than the recognised (statutory) walking distance from it, i.e. 2 miles for children aged under 8 and 3 miles for children aged between 8 and 16, unless parents voluntarily make suitable alternative arrangements.

ii. A child who is from a low income family (as defined in section 9.3) aged over 8 and less than 11 years of age who attends their nearest qualifying school and lives more than 2 miles from the school, by the shortest available walking route. Travel assistance is not provided to children from low income families under the age of 8 as those who live over 2 miles from nearest qualifying school will have transport provided due to statutory walking distance (see point i above)

iii. A child who is from a low income family aged between 11 and 16 who attends his or her nearest qualifying schools and lives more than 2 miles but less than 6 miles from the school. The distances stated above are calculated by the shortest walking route if up to 3 miles or the shortest motorised route if over 3 miles.

iv. A child who is from a low income family aged between 11 and 16 years who attends his or her nearest suitable school preferred by his or her parents on grounds of religion or belief and lives more than 2 miles but not more than 15 miles from the school. The Distances stated above are calculated by the shortest available walking route if up to 3 miles or the shortest motorised route if over 3 miles.

9.2 A child aged 8 years of age who is entitled to transport under the above distance criteria will continue to receive free travel assistance until the end of the academic year in which he/she reaches the age of 8.

Low Income

9.3 Children from low-income groups or families are defined in legislation as those entitled to free school meals, or whose families receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit (the maximum level is defined by no reduction in the amount the family receives due to household income). Annual confirmation of low-income status is required. Assistance will usually be withdrawn if a family ceases to hold low-income status. To qualify for free school meals their parent/carer will receive 1 of these benefits:

- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance (income related)
- Child Tax Credit with income less than £16,190.00 (unless you claim Working Tax Credit) - form TC602(A)

- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit

Home Address

9.4 Mainstream children who live at more than one address, who fulfil the other criteria for transport assistance, will be provided with travel assistance from the primary home address registered with their school and the Council. The Council will not provide travel assistance to or from any other address.

9.5 For children who have a statement of special educational needs or an education health care plan (EHCP), permanent arrangements involving transport to an alternative address, other than the home address, may be considered if there is no additional cost to the Council, the alternative address is in Central Bedfordshire and there is no detrimental effect on children who may share the same transport route (e.g. extended journey time).

Walking Route - Distance Measurement

9.6 The walking distances between home and school, referred to in section 9.1, are measured by the shortest route along which a child, accompanied as necessary**,** may walk with reasonable safety (see Section 12 paragraph 10 to 14 for further details). As such, the route measured may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads.

Qualifying School

If parents choose to send their child to a school which is not the nearest qualifying school transport will not be provided by the Council unless the circumstances meet the discretionary transport criteria Parents will be responsible for arrangements and costs

9.7 A qualifying school is defined as a:

- Community, foundation or voluntary school;
- mainstream academy;
- selective school
- free school;
- community or foundation special school;

- special academy and free school;
- University Technical College or University Training School;
- Studio School;
- non-maintained special school;
- pupil referral unit;
- city technology college (CTC), city college for the technology of the arts (CCTA) or an Academy;
- an independent school if it named as the local authority's preferred placement in the pupil's statement of special educational need or Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP).

9.8 In relation to a child with Special Educational Needs (SEN), an independent school (other than a CTC, CCTA or Academy) will be a qualifying school if it is the only school named in the child's statement or EHCP, or it is the nearest of 2 or more schools named in the statement. In the case of special education, it will be the nearest suitable special school with places available that can provide an education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and any special educational needs that the child has as specified in his or her statement of special educational need or EHCP.

9.10 In individual exceptional circumstances, where an alternative form of education has been agreed, the term 'qualifying school' will be taken to include such agreed sources of alternative provision.

9.11 A school designated by the Council as the appropriate school for a particular pupil (e.g. a permanently excluded pupil, a pupil with a statement of special educational needs or EHCP, a child in the care of the Council and placed at a particular school or a child placed at a particular school under the Hard to Place Pupil Protocol, where normal admissions procedures have failed) will normally be deemed to be the nearest suitable school for the purposes of this policy.

Statutory Notices for Closures of Central Bedfordshire Schools

9.12 Statutory proposals to close a Council maintained school must be published with transitional arrangements for displaced pupils, as required by Department of Education guidance for decision makers. Arrangements for children already attending or expecting to be allocated a place at the school that is the subject of closure will, where necessary establish the arrangements for transfer and transport of these pupils to an alternative designated catchment area school. These proposals will determine the dates from which transferring children may become eligible for transport assistance to the alternative school.

9.14 In addition, and reflecting the need to be sensitive to the concerns of parents and carers of pupils who were due to join their nearest school at the school's point of entry, transport assistance may be provided to the alternative designated catchment area school in the event that the Council approves a statutory proposal to close the nearest school.

9.15 The Council may exercise its discretion to provide transport assistance for parents and carers of pupils who expressed a preference in the previous school admission round

for the next nearest school prior to the Council's approval of a statutory proposal to close the nearest school.

9.16 Transport to an alternative school will not be provided to pupils who are already registered at a school that the Council approves for closure, unless it is intended by the Council in its statutory proposals to be provided to implement the closure, as the move will be classified as parental preference.

Non Availability of a Walking Route

9.17 When determining whether the child's home is within the statutory distance, there must be an available walking route to the qualifying school that is 'reasonable'. If the nature of the route is such that the child cannot be expected to walk to school, even when it is reasonable to expect an adult to accompany the child, then the Council will deem it 'unsuitable for walking' and therefore not available. In determining what is 'reasonable', the Council will take into consideration national guidance on this issue from road safety professionals and apply national Road Safety GB standards in making such assessments (See section 12, paragraph 10 to 14).

The Courts have defined an 'available route' as one "along which a child accompanied as necessary can walk with reasonable safety to school. It does not fail to qualify as 'available' because of dangers which would arise if the child is unaccompanied." It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that a child gets to school, including ensuring that they are accompanied if appropriate; and to ensure that a child has suitable clothing and equipment for the journey (for example: boots, wet weather clothing, reflective bands, torch).

Individual circumstances as determined by the Council's Transport Eligibility Panel at appeal

9.18 Assistance with transport will be offered if, following an appeal by the parent/carer, the Authority's Transport Eligibility Panel decides that this should be provided in recognition of individual circumstances under the terms of this policy (Section 13)

1.1.1

Children at Boarding or Residential School

9.19 Where the Council arranges for a child to board at a school, travel assistance will be provided in accordance with the boarding arrangements where the usual distance criteria are also met.

9.20 Boarding arrangements for residential schools can be one of the following:

a. Termly boarding – travel assistance will only be provided at the beginning and end of each term and at the beginning and end of the mid-term holiday.
b. 12 day boarding – travel assistance will be provided on alternate weekends and at the beginning and end of each term.
c. Weekly boarding - travel assistance will be provided to school on Monday and from school on Friday each week.
d. 52 week placement – travel assistance will be provided up to a maximum of three return journeys each academic year.

9.21 For all boarding arrangements, any additional journey to those laid out above will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer.

9.22 In the interests of the efficient use of resources the Council will, in all cases, encourage the parent/carer to make their own travel arrangements for which appropriate reimbursement will be made (Section 11, paragraph 26). Where a Motability vehicle has been provided for the child travel assistance will be by way of a mileage payment to the parent/carer.

9.24 One parent/carer may be transported with the child to act as a passenger assistant to out of Council area schools where it results in the most efficient use of the council's resources.

9.25 All additional transport requirements to those detailed above will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer**.**

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Education Heath Care Plan (EHCP)

9.26 This section applies to children who are the subject of a Statement of Special Educational Need made under s.324 of the Education Act 1996 or an EHCP under Section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

9.27 There is no automatic entitlement to travel assistance for a child who is the subject of a statement or EHCP. Assistance will be given, if the child meets the general criteria in Section 2 or when a specific need can be identified for it. This will usually be founded upon the individual special needs of the pupil, see below.

Assessment of Specific Need

9.28 A child undergoing formal assessment for Special Educational Needs or EHCP will have their transport needs considered as part of that process. A copy of the *Special Eductional Needs Transport Application Form* is available for information on the Council website www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport. A decision will be based on written evidence from a range of sources, for example, the Educational Psychologist, the parent/carer and the school Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). An eligible child will show one or more or the following factors that impact on their ability to travel to school in the same way as other children of their age:

- Long term[1] severely restricted independent mobility.
- Lack of awareness of common dangers and lack of age appropriate independence skills so the child could be at signficant risk when travelling to school. This could be caused by factors such as:

9.29 Just as an aim of special education provision is to increase the independence of the pupil, the way that a child travels to school should change over time, to reflect their increasing progress and maturity. For this reason, the transport needs of the child will be reviewed on a regular basis.

9.30 Transport will usually be arranged on a localised pick-up point basis, if assessed as appropriate through the transport needs assessment process. For all other children the pick-up and drop-off point will be as close as possible to the address at which they usually live.

9.31 If the child has a disability which affects their mobility, then the primary mobility aid (e.g. wheelchair or walking frame) will normally be transported, subject to risk assessment.

9.32 Pupils who attend special schools often take part in integration programmes with mainstream schools. Pupils are expected to attend their nearest qualifying school to enable the parent/carer to make their own arrangements to take or collect the child.

9.33 If a parent/carer moves home within Central Bedfordshire during the Academic Year, this will represent a change in circumstances and eligibility for travel assistance will be reviewed. The child should be transferred to the nearest appropriate school to the new address from no later than the beginning of the next academic year. However, if the parent/carer wishes their child to remain at the current school then transport will become their responsibility.

9.36 Where the transport need has not been assessed at the annual review or as part of the statutory assessment process, it will be necessary for an *SEN Transport Needs Assessment form* to be completed by the child's parent/carer. This will apply to children with Special Educational Needs who are not subject to assessment or do not have Statements of Special Educational Needs/ EHC Plans and also to children who do not have special educational needs but do have disabiltiy or mobility problems. Information is required on the mobility of the child, any special medical or behavioural conditions and any special equipment required to inform the individual assessment of transport need. The form should be passed to the Special Needs Co-ordinator at the school for endorsement.

[1] Long term describes something that is likely to last for at least a year or for the rest of the life of the person affected. This can include intermittent or sporadic conditions such as epilepsy or multiple sclerosis

The view of the Special Needs Co-ordinator at the school will be taken into consideration when assessing the need for transport.

Parental Preference

9.37 It should be noted that the Council will consider transport to the nearest suitable school. If by parental preference a more distant school is named in the child's statement or EHCP but in the Authority's view the child's needs could be suitably met at a nearer school, transport will be the responsibility of the parent/carer.

Review of Transport Need and Assistance

9.38 Eligibility for travel assistance and the type of provision required will be reviewed on a continuing basis and at least once per academic year. Wherever possible the review will be undertaken following the child's statutory annual SEN Statement review. Any changes will be implemented from the beginning of the next school term, or sooner by mutual agreement.

Pupils with Temporary Medical Problems

9.39 Travel assistance may be considered where a child lives within the defined walking distance to school relevant to his or her age and is attending the designated or nearest school available but is unable to walk to school because of a medical condition. This may be provided for a fixed period dependent upon the medical need identified by an appropriate medical practitioner, for example no more than 6 calendar weeks while the child is unable to walk the route due to a broken leg. The period may be extended on request by the parent/carer if the fixed term is likely to be inadequate because the medical condition persists.

9.40 It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to produce evidence of the medical condition in all cases, detailing:

a. full medical details of the condition, including timescales for recovery;
b. written medical confirmation regarding the child's fitness to return to school;
c. the likely period for which revised travel assistance arrangements may be needed;
d. the type of vehicle needed, where appropriate, for example, where the child is in a full body cast;
e. any manual handling risks.

9.41 This should be endorsed by the General Practitioner (GP) or in certain circumstances by a medical consultant. The Council reserves the right to require the parent/carer to provide further medical evidence as deemed necessary. Any charges incurred by the parent/carer in providing this evidence will not be paid by the Council.

9.42 Similarly, if the travel arrangements made for a child, by the Council, are considered not appropriate as a result of an accident, planned surgery or an illness, then a request for revisions to the travel assistance arrangements must be made in writing, giving a minimum of 5 days notice.

9.43 All requests should be made to the Transport Team (Section 13, paragraph 17).

9.44 All decisions will be based on the facts provided, taking into account the needs of the child, the availability of appropriate travel assistance and any significant increase in costs.

9.45 Appeals against decisions not to provide additional assistance in these circumstances should be made in writing to be considered by the Transport Eligibility Panel (Section 13).

Pupils with a Disability

9.46 Where a pupil has a disability, under the Equality Act 2010 (Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005) this policy illustrates that the Council will make reasonable adjustments as appropriate to the pupil's specific needs.

Parents with a Disability

9.47 The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people and to eliminate discrimination.

9.48 The Council may exercise its discretion to provide travel assistance to a child who is of a primary school age (reception year to the end of year 6), lives within the walking distance to their school and is attending the designated or nearest school available but where his or her parents are unable to accompany him or her on the walk to school because of a medical condition or disability.

9.49 The Council will consider the availability of help from immediate and extended family members and from neighbours. The availability of help through a School Travel Plan will be considered as will the use of any disability benefits to help secure attendance. It is expected that the parent/carer will have made every effort to secure other help. The Council may seek confirmation of this from the parent/carer, school or other agencies.

9.50 It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to produce evidence of the medical condition. This is normally endorsed by the GP or medical consultant. The Council may ask the parent/carer to provide explicit further medical evidence. If provided, the requirement for transport will be reviewed no less than on a termly basis.

9.51 All requests should be made to the Transport Team (Section 13, paragraph 17). Decisions will be based on the facts provided, taking into account the needs of the child, the availability of appropriate travel assistance and any significant increase in costs.

9.52 An appeal against a decision not to provide additional assistance in these circumstances should be made, in writing, to be considered by the Transport Eligibility Panel (Section 13).

Cared For Children, Refugees and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

9.53 The Council will exercise its discretion to provide a child with travel assistance to continue to attend their school, for a period of up to 12 calendar weeks where the child

- is temporarily living at a foster placement
- is within the Council area

9.54 Where a request for travel assistance does not meet the above criteria, arrangements for transport will fall to the Social Worker responsible, representing the Council as the corporate parent.

9.55 In general, where subsequent temporary placements occur after the initial 12 week period, no further transport assistance will be provided, however applications may be considered on the grounds of "individual or extenuating circumstances" (Section 9, paragraph 72).

Pupils Excluded from School

9.56 A pupil permanently excluded from a school will be provided with assistance to their new school provided it is both the nearest suitable school and is outside statutory walking distance from home (Section 2). Exceptional arrangements may be made if a permanently excluded pupil attends alternative provision and this may include assistance with part-time attendance at other educational establishments as required by their particular needs.

9.57 The transport needs of pupils who attend alternative provision because of a fixed term exclusion from a school or academy will be a matter for the school and the parent/carer.

Children Admitted to School under the Fair Access Protocol

9.58 When considering the admission of pupils under the Council's Fair Access Protocol, which operates outside normal admission procedures, the nearest schools to the pupil's home address will be identified to determine which school should be offered. In administering this protocol the Council will consider a group of schools and identify with the pupil, their parent/carer and other relevant agencies the school to be approached. Account will be taken of the travelling distance to each school. Pupils who are placed under the Fair Access Protocol will be considered for transport as if the named school was their nearest suitable (qualifying) school.

Education Other Than at School

9.59 Where the Council arranges for a child to receive education other than in school then the location where education is provided will be considered as if it were a school when determining eligibility for transport assistance. In determining reasonableness, the Council will take into account the cost to the Council of the proposed transport and the availability of alternative arrangements.

9.60 Where a parent/carer has decided to educate the child other than at school, no assistance for transport will be available from the Council.

9.61 Where transport assistance is provided, there is an expectation that all children will travel by public transport unless either no public transport is available, or the child's needs are such that this would not be appropriate (Section 9, paragraph 26 to 36), as decided by

a relevant Officer. The parent/carer may be required to provide medical or other supporting evidence where there is a request for provision other than by public transport.

9.62 Where it is not appropriate to use public transport or where none is available then provision will be made by the Transport Team. Where it is more cost effective for the Council, a personal transport cost allowance will be offered to a parent/carer able to make their own travel arrangements (Section 11, paragraphs 26 and 27). Only where there is no reasonable alternative available will taxis/or minibuses be used for the entire journey.

9.63 Where a child remains on roll at a mainstream setting and that setting out-sources all or part of the education provision, the setting will be responsible for all transport arrangements for the child's off-site education provision.

9.64 The Council will only consider the provision of travel assistance where a child:

a. is of statutory school age and lives within the Central Bedfordshire Council area; and lives further from the setting than the walking distance for the child's age or meets entitlement criteria; and

b. has been placed in the school/setting by the Council and either

- has been permanently excluded or is at risk of permanent exclusion, or
- is unable to attend the designated setting due to exceptional circumstances, with appropriate supporting evidence having been provided; or
- is dual registered and meets standard eligibility criteria.

Children in Temporary Residential Circumstances

9.65 Where a family is forced to re-locate temporarily to alternative accommodation owing to circumstances outside their control:

a) The Council is prepared under this policy to consider on its merits an application in respect of a child accommodated under a temporary/emergency arrangement otherwise than where responsibility is accepted by the Council in (b) below, having regard to the usual distance criteria (Section 2, paragraph 2), although this requirement may be waived in the case of a child accommodated in a refuge, whose safety would otherwise be at risk. Any such temporary arrangements made to provide travel assistance will be subject to review as necessary and at least on a termly basis.

b) Where school transport becomes necessary on social grounds as a result of the intervention by the Council's Children's Services, transport will be provided

9.66 Regular work commitments or domestic difficulties of the parent/carer will not normally be considered. The parent/carer is expected to take their responsibility in enabling their child's attendance at school.

Children below Compulsory School Age

9.67 Arrangements may be made for a child below statutory school age with SEN to attend a special school nursery or a similar setting offering special needs provision. When making such arrangements the normal eligibility criteria for children of primary school age, including walking distance, will apply.

Emergencies and Requests at Short Notice

9.68 In exceptional circumstancesthe Council will attempt to make arrangements at short notice when requested. However, this cannot be guaranteed, and a parent/carer of a child who relies upon assistance may need to make their own arrangements at their own expense in the case of an emergency. The Council will not accept responsibility for any arrangements so made by a parent/carer.

9.69 No travel assistance will be provided, other than at the beginning and end of the normal school day. In cases of exclusion, illness, if a child has to go home during the course of the school day, or during examination periods, the school or parent/carer is responsible for transport. Reasonable adjustments may be made for pupils attending specialist or alternative provisions.

9.71 Transport during exam periods will be provided to the school in time to accommodate attendance for the first exam and will collect the child(ren) after the last exam. One journey inbound and one journey outbound per vehicle will be provided. This will be based on the earliest start time and latest finish time for all children on board the vehicle for that day.

Individual or Extenuating Circumstances

9.72 Individual consideration will be given to a child or children from vulnerable groups who do not meet the criteria set out above. The parent/carer must submit their application in writing, together with the details of any special exceptional circumstances they wish to be considered to the Transport Team.

9.73 Please note that individual family work commitments, childcare arrangements or inconvenience to a parent/carer are not normally taken into account when considering eligibility for travel assistance.

The Council will not consider an unaccompanied child. The law states that it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that a child gets to school, including accompanying them, if appropriate. This includes the parent determining how their child will get to school and may include making appropriate arrangements such as with a friend or a childminder to ensure that the child is accompanied.

The Council does not consider work commitments as an exceptional circumstance. The law states that it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child gets to school, and this may include making appropriate arrangements. This could include use of a childminder, friend, before school and after school club.

Parental Preference - If a parent has chosen a school which is not the nearest school to the home address, this is parental preference. The Council expects parents to have considered how to get their child to school. This could include use of a childminder, friend, before school and after school club.

10. Circumstances Where Transport Assistance is Not Provided

Parental Preference

10.1 A child will be ineligible for travel assistance where he or she attends a school which is not designated for the home address or which is not the nearest available to the home address, where this is a result of parental preference.

10.2 When expressing a preference for a school other than the nearest school (qualifying school), parents and carers are strongly advised to consider their commitment to providing transport for the whole duration of a child's attendance at that school and to consider whether their ability to provide or pay for that transport is likely to continue over that period of time.

10.3 Particular care should be taken when using a concessionary seat on school transport (Section 11, paragraph 31). These seats are subject to removal with a minimum of two weeks' notice if required for new passengers who have eligibility for a seat. The withdrawal of a concessionary seat alone will not be considered as grounds for an appeal for assistance from the Council. Parents/carers should consider whether they are likely to be able to make their own arrangements should this occur before taking up a school place or moving house.

10.4 Where a child is withdrawn by a parent/carer from one school and placed in another school, travel assistance will not be provided unless the child is eligible, under the terms of this Policy, from the home address to the new school. Such a transfer of school will be regarded as an expression of parental preference.

Admission choices should not be made on the assumption that the same transport eligibility rules will apply throughout a child's education.

Children Attending a School on the Grounds of Religion or Belief

10.5 Travel assistance will not be provided by the Council to a parent/carer of a child attending school on the grounds of religion or belief ('denominational grounds'). The exception from this is where a child is from a low-income family, as detailed in Section 9, paragraph 1 v.

Outside the Normal Start and End of the School Day

10.6 No travel assistance will be provided at lunchtimes or at any time other than the normal start and end of the school day. Travel between these times will remain a parental

responsibility. Reasonable adjustments may be made for pupils attending specialist or alternative provisions. Please see section 9 paragraph 70 for more information.

Sibling, Brother, Sister

10.7 Assistance given for one child in a family will not create a precedent for any of his or her brothers or sisters or other children living at that address. Each child's case will be considered individually, and separate applications for assistance must be made for each child. If the Policy for Travel Assistance for Children and Young People Attending School has changed since the older sibling received assistance, the younger sibling will be subject to the new Travel Assistance for Children and Young People Attending School.

Change of Address

10.8 When there is a change of address, a child's transport entitlement will be reviewed under the policy in existence at that time. Travel assistance will not generally be given to maintain a pupil's place at a school if the family moves house to a more distant address from the pupil's school. However, if no place is available at the nearest qualifying school within the statutory walking distance from the new address then assistance would normally be given to the next nearest suitable (qualifying) school. Residents moving house are reminded that if they move to an address in another authority, their child or student will then become subject to the policies of the authority into which they have moved.

10.9 Where a child who is attending a school in Central Bedfordshire in years 10 and 11 has to move in exceptional circumstances to a new address in Central Bedfordshire this will represent a change in circumstances and their eligibility for transport assistance will be reviewed. They must have completed at least one term in year 10 at their current school.

10.10 Please contact the Transport Team on 0300 300 8339 or at school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk for further information on what would be defined as 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents/carers of a pupil with special educational needs, currently receiving transport who move house within Central Bedfordshire should provide as much notice as possible to the Transport Team and to allow their eligibility to be reassessed. If the pupil is entitled to transport from the new address, it may take up to 15 working days for transport to be provided.

10.11 The Council may offer to move the child to a nearer suitable school bearing in mind any special circumstances, for example, examinations or students in their final year. Should this offer be refused the current school may be deemed as a "parental choice" and not meet the criteria in Section 9, pargraph 28 to 36 of this policy.

Single Sex Schools

10.13 Travel assistance to single sex schools will not be supported unless the school concerned is the Council recognised nearest qualifying school, where the usual transport criteria will apply.

10.14 Similarly, if the Council recognised closest qualifying school is a single sex establishment, transport will not be provided to enable the child to attend a mixed school.

Part Time Attendance, Detention, After School Clubs, etc.

10.15 Travel assistance will not be provided at a time other than standard school times e.g. home during the day or late after school, including payback, detention, sporting or other after school clubs and societies. Pupils are expected to complete a full school day and fit into the normal timing of transport.

10.16 Where a child's day starts or finishes earlier or later the parent/carer would generally be required to make other transport arrangements outside of the Council provision. This can include pupils who have a phased induction period when first attending a school. For pupils attending a special school setting, reasonable adjustments may be made in order to facilitate thier attendance during the normal school day.

Other Circumstances

10.17 Travel assistance will not generally be provided:

- if the school attended is not the one which the Council deems to be the nearest suitable school;
- to/from any address other than the primary home address (Section 9 paragraph 4);
- to enable the child to attend extra curricular activities or between institutions within the school day. (For journeys of this nature the organising school or institution will be responsible for transport arrangements);
- to attend dental or hospital appointments, or other non-educational appointments;
- in the event of sickness, where the child has to be collected from school (or returned to residential school midweek);
- for parents/carers attending review meetings;
- to attend work experience;
- to attend an induction day at another establishment;
- to accompany a friend home;
- following misbehaviour occurring on transport, which threatens the health and safety of staff and/or other pupils (Section 11, paragraph 35 and 36).
- when the pupil has repeatedly failed to take up the provision of home to school transport for which he/she is entitled, without prior notice or explanation given to Transport Team

Participation in Education or Training Post 16

10.18 The Education and Skills Act 2008 has now increased the age at which young people are required to participate in education or training to 18 years of age. However, this is not a change in the statutory school age (reception to the end of year 11), which this policy is aligned with, so it does not extend the entitlement for the provision of free travel assistance beyond year 11.

10.19 Details of travel assistance available under the Council's Post 16 Transport Policy are available on the Council's website http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport.

11. Travel Assistance Provided

Mode of Transport

11.1 The Council will endeavour to follow established best practice in the provision of the most cost effective and appropriate home to school travel assistance for each entitled child, taking into account their own individual needs. It will make arrangements that enable an eligible child to reach school without such stress, strain, or difficulty that would prevent them from benefiting from the education provided.

11.2 Travel assistance arrangements will be designed to allow the child to travel in reasonable safety and in reasonable comfort. Priority will be given to travel assistance solutions that help to develop travel independence skills, so as the child grows older, they are better equipped to lead independent lives. Types of assistance that may be considered include:

- Travel pass for use on public transport
- Personal transport cost allowance payment to parents/carers (mileage)
- Personal Travel Budget
- Independent travel training (ITT)
- Cycle allowance, where available
- Travel pass to travel on Council contracted services
- A wheelchair accessible vehicle, if so required, or,
- in exceptional cases a taxi.

11.3 Travel assistance will be provided at an appropriate specified place and time. It is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure that the child is taken to the agreed pick-up point at the agreed time. No alternative transport will be made on the day and the parent/carer will be responsible for ensuring the child's attendance at school.

Pick-Up/Set Down Points and Timing

11.4 Children will be picked-up and set-down either from home, where their needs require this, or a convenient pick-up/set-down point. The Transport Team will notify these arrangements to the parent/carer.

11.5 Arrangements will not require a child to walk an unreasonably long distance to catch a public service bus, or a bus journey that ends at an unreasonably long distance from the school. A child may be required to walk up to one mile from home to the pick-up point and one mile from the set-down point to home. The actual distances will depend on a range of circumstances, including the age of the child, their individual needs and the nature of the route they are expected to walk to the designated pick-up/ set-down point.

11.6 It is the parent/carer's responsibility to take and collect their child to and from the vehicle or pickup/set down point. In the case of pupils with specific needs, alternative arrangments can be agreed with the Council with prior notice.

11.7 A parent/Carer may not vary the agreed pick up / drop off arrangements and neither passenger assistants nor drivers are authorised to agree route variations.

Route Planning and Route Reviews

11.8 The Transport Team regularly reviews transport provision and individual transport routes. A review may result in a change of arrangements to be provided. Notice will always be given to parents/carers ahead of any proposed changes to transport provision.

11.9 Consultation with the parent/carer will not normally take place as part of a route review. This is to enable route reviews to be carried out in a timely and efficient manner and to avoid raising parental expectations that a preference for a particular form of provision will override the cost-effectiveness or efficiency of the service provided. However, where a child's special educational needs indicate that he/she is particularly sensitive to change; the impact of any proposed change will be considered. This may involve discussion with the school or the parent/carer and school prior to any change to the travel assistance provided.

11.10 A parent/carer may receive notification at any time that the type of transport provision for their child's school transport is to be changed as a result of a review. Changes may involve:

a. a new pick-up and set-down point (Section 11, paragraph 4 to 7);
b. a change to journey times;
c. a change to the contractor employed;
d. the withdrawal of a passenger assistant.

11.11 Notice will be given of changes wherever possible, but some may need to be made at very short notice, for example as a result of sickness, road closures or the termination of a contract with a vehicle operator.

11.12 Children who are not entitled to transport assistance are not included in the planning of transport networks. No additional expenditure will be incurred in order to accommodate non-entitled passengers. This may mean that, for example, a smaller vehicle may be used on a route. The size of vehicle will be sufficient to carry entitled passengers but may not include space for existing concessionary passengers (Section 11 paragraph 31).

Maximum Journey Time

11.13 Best practice suggests that the maximum each way length of journey for a child of primary school age is considered to be 45 minutes; whilst a child of secondary school age could be expected to travel up to 75 minutes each way. However, a child's special educational needs and/or disability might be such that it implies a shorter maximum journey time.

11.14 Journey times may exceed these limits for exceptions such as:

- exceptional traffic or weather conditions;
- attendance at a special school;
- attendance at a remote boarding school;
- attendance at a remote school or institution in order to avoid exclusion;
- attendance at a remote school following a move in order to maintain educational continuity;
- attendance at an alternative school following an exclusion or managed move.
- where more than one establishment is served by one vehicle.

Provision of Passenger Assistants (PA)

11.15 ***Mainstream Transport***
PAs are not provided on mainstream transport. The need for exceptional provision, on either a temporary or permanent basis, will be approved by the Transport Team on the basis of a risk assessment being undertaken. When a vehicle transports more than 16 pupils of lower school age a PA will generally be provided.

11.16 ***Transport for Pupils with Special Educational Needs***
A PA is provided if, during the Transport Needs Assessment process, or at a later date, it is considered that the health and safety of the child, driver or anyone else travelling in the vehicle would be at risk if not provided.The need for such provision will be reviewed as part of the annual review.

11.17 PAs are generally only provided where the child has:

- a severe physical condition;
- a medical condition requiring immediate treatment;
- severe behavioural difficulties.

11.18 ***Passenger Assistants' Role and Responsibility***
Passenger assistants are given a range of training, including emergency first aid and moving and handling of equipement or mobility aids. If a child has specific needs which requires specialist training, the Council will consider the request and the training which is required. On occasion the driver will also fulfil the passenger assistant role.

11.19 Passenger assistants will have had a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for people working with children before taking up duty. They will display their School Transport ID badge at all times when on duty.

11.20 Passenger assistants monitor the well-being and conduct of pupils and ensure their safety while the journey is in progress. They familiarise themselves with the children and ensure good behaviour during the journey. However, passenger assistants are not assigned for the specific purpose of managing behaviour, an acceptable standard of behaviour is expected as detailed in the *Code of Conduct for Pupils on School Transport* (Ref Doc 1).

11.21 In the event of a medical emergency, the passenger assistants will administer emergency first aid to the level to which they have been trained; this will normally be to make the passenger safe and then request assistance from the emergency services, where necessary. The passenger assistant/driver will not administer medication.

11.22 Passenger assistants have a responsibility to report any accidents, incidents, near misses or illnesses that occur in transit, to the school and to the Transport Team. They will take notes on the pupil's well-being, care for them on site and report back to the Transport Team, who will notify parents and schools, as appropriate.

Independence Training

11.23 For some children with SEN increased independence may be demonstrated by a child gradually developing the skills and confidence to travel by public transport, rather than on dedicated transport, or by being able to walk to school. For others it could be that they need less support and supervision.

11.24 Plans to encourage independent travel should be put in place by the school and parents/carers, working in partnership to mutually agreed targets. Progress will be evidenced at each subsequent Annual Review. This step is regarded as a positive achievement towards the child's progress in becoming a more independent traveller.

11.25 A secondary aged child with a Statement of Special Educational Needs who is eligible for travel assistance because of their special needs may also receive support for independence and mobility training as part of their school curriculum, if this is identified as a need. The way that the child travels to and from school should be used to help develop and consolidate new skills.

Personal Transport Cost Allowance (PTCA)

11.26 Where it offers the most cost effective soluition or where a Motability Vehicle has been provided to transport the child, the Council will offer a PTCA payment, currently referred to as a "parental mileage" PTCA payments are designed to provide a broader range of transport options providing there is no alternative, cost effective travel assistance available. The current scheme is based on the distance between home and school for which a mileage allowance is paid and covers two return journeys to the school from the home address. Details of the scheme are available in Ref Doc 2

Personal Transport Budgets

11.27 Personal Transport Budgets, are available to parents or carers of children with SEN and looked after children, Details of the scheme can be found at Ref Doc 5

Sustainable Travel

11.28 The Council has legal duties, under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, to promote sustainable travel for children. These duties include:

- assessment of travel and transport needs

- audit of sustainable travel and transport infrastructure that may be used when travelling to or from school
- strategy to develop sustainable travel and transport infrastructure
- promotion of sustainable travel

Appeals against Suitability of Transport

11.29 If a parent/carer is disatisfied by a decision taken in respect of the type of transport provided, they may appeal for the decision to be reviewed by the Transport Eligibility Panel (Section 13).

Monitoring of Transport Provision

11.30 The Transport Team will undertake regular checks to ensure compliance with service standards,including:

- spot checks on vehicles and licences;
- checks to ensure all drivers and passenger assistants are authorised and carry identification;
- checks to ensure that drivers and passenger assistants undertake duties in accordance with service standards and requirements;
- checks to ensure that contracts are operated in accordance with the agreed timetable.

Concessionary Travel Scheme

11.31 The Council is committed to supporting children to access school. Where a child is not entitled to travel assistance under this Policy, parents/carers may be able to buy a pass for a spare seat on a school contract vehicle once those entitled have been allocated a place. Passes can be bought for one term at a time and are allocated on a first come first served basis. Details of the scheme are available in Ref Doc 3.

Parents/carers should be aware that the seat can be withdrawn at any time, with a minimum of two weeks notice.

Requirement to Carry a Pass

11.32 All children are required to carry a pass, if issued to them, which demonstrates that they may travel on the vehicle. A pass may be issued where a child has a statutory entitlement, is carried on a discretionary basis or has purchased a concessionary seat on the vehicle.

11.33 A child who is unable to present a pass, when requested by the vehicle driver, passenger assistant or officer of the Council, may be refused entry to the vehicle. Pupils

may not be refused travel in the journey to school unless prior agreement has been given by the Transport Team.

11.34 A child who has been issued with a pass and persistently travels without it will be deemed not to be abiding by the *Code of Conduct for Pupils on School Transport* (Ref Doc 1), a potential consequence of which is having their transport withdrawn.

Pupil Behaviour

11.35 The Council will withdraw its provision of travel assistance or employ other sanctions, as it considers appropriate, in the case of any child whose behaviour during the journey to or from school is not of an acceptable standard. In addition, schools may choose a number of sanctions ranging from detention to exclusion in order to deal with persistent misbehaviour on school transport.

11.36 Transport operators will advise the Transport Team where the behaviour of a child breaches the *Code of Conduct for Pupils on School Transport*, (Ref Doc 1) and in turn the parent/carer and school will be notified. Where a criminal act is suspected the police will be notified.

When School Transport Does Not Operate

11.37 There will be occasions when a vehicle does not operate; this may be because of bad weather including flooding or icy conditions where it is not possible for the vehicle to travel safely. In these circumstances a parent/carer may decide to make alternative arrangements to transport their child to school. This will be entirely at the parent's discretion and own cost. The parent/carer will also be responsible for the return journey should conditions not have improved sufficiently for school transport to be provided safely.

11.38 In all circumstances where a child has been taken to school by school transport, arrangements will be made to return the child home or to a place of safety.

12. Applying for Travel Assistance, Determining Eligibility & Setting Up Travel Arrangements

Children without a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health Care Plan

12.1 Transport assistance is only provided on the basis of a formal application submitted by or on behalf of the parent/carer and the criteria set out in this policy are met.

12.2 Details of how to apply are available on the Council's web-site (http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport) or by contacting the Transport Team on 0300 300 8339 or via school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk, (Section 13 paragraph 17)

12.3 For 'in year admissions' the Council will aim to process your application within 15 working days of receipt of a complete application. If arrangements take longer than 15 days, it may be possible to claim a refund from the 16th day and until such time as transport is provided. All refunds will be based on the cheapest fare available at the time of travel and tickets should be retained as proof of purchase.

12.4 Applications for transport which is due to commence at the start of a new academic year will display a 'return by' date. **Applications received after this date will still be processed; however transport will not be in place until the October half term after the start of the new academic year. Where parent/carers have to fund alternative methods of transport as a result of a late application, no refund will be given.**

Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or EHCP

12.5 Transport assistance is only provided on the basis of a formal application submitted by or on behalf of the parent/carer or when the need for travel assistance is specifically identified as part of the annual review or statement process.

12.6 The type of assistance provided will be based on the assessment of individual needs; the Council will always seek to provide the most appropriate, cost effective provision within 15 working days of receiving a completed application. Where a Motability Vehicle has been provided to transport the child parental mileage will offered.

12.7 Applications for transport which is due to commence at the start of a new academic year will display a 'return by' date. **Applications received after this date will still be processed; however transport will not be in place until the October half term after the start of the new academic year. Where parent/carers have to fund alternative methods of transport as a result of a late application, no refund will be given.**

12.8 Details of how to apply are available on the Council's web-site (http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport) or by contacting the Transport Team (Section 13, paragraph 17)

Measurement of the Walking Route

12.9 The distance between home and school is measured, using the Council's electronic geographical information system, from the pupil's home gate or drive nearest to the school to the nearest pedestrian gate to the school grounds, by way of the shortest available walking route.

Assessment of the "Available" Walking Route

12.10 The Council recognises that some routes to school may be "unavailable". A route is considered by the Council to be unavailable when a child could not be expected to walk to school, accompanied as necessary by an appropriate adult, in reasonable safety. Queries regarding unavailable routes should be directed to the Transport Team (Section 13, paragraph 17).

12.11 Where a child attends the designated or nearest available qualifying school and the walking route is unavailable and cannot be sufficiently improved, travel assistance will be provided unless there is an alternative available walking route under the walking distance defined in Section 2 paragraph 2. It should be noted that measurement and assessment of a route does not require the authority to assess the most direct or convenient route – any route that is available within the maximum distance means travel assistance will not be provided.

12.12 In assessing the comparative safety of a route, the Council will conduct an assessment of the risks a child might encounter along the prescribed route taking into consideration the latest national guidelines published by Road Safety GB and Department for Education guidance available at the time of assessment. The Council will undertake a rolling 5 year reassessment programme where each route which has previously been assessed as unavailable will be reassessed to determine if this is still the case.

12.13 Such assessments will feed into the Council's duty relating to sustainable school travel and may inform the Council's plans to upgrade the highway infrastructure, support sustainable school travel or feed into school travel plans.

12.14 The Council will work with schools, road safety professionals, highways engineers and transport planners to reduce the number of unavailable routes. Where a route is no longer unavailable as a result of new building developments and roads, and/or remedial safety works, any transport previously provided but no longer required will be withdrawn. Transport provision will not be withdrawn with less than **6** weeks' notice.

Change in Circumstance

12.15 If there is a significant change in circumstances, such as a change in school or home address, a change in the parent's/carer's circumstances, or a change in the child's needs an immediate review of transport entitlement / provision may be required. It is the responsiblity of the parent/carer to promptly notify the Transport Team (Section 13,

paragraph 17) of any change in circumstances that may affect the provision of travel assistance.

12.16 Where travel assistance is provided for temporary medical needs, a review date, based on medical evidence, will be set when the travel assistance is agreed. Where this is not possible, all arrangements will be reviewed in relation to the specific circumstances.

Correcting Errors / Withdrawal of Transport

12.17 If travel assistance has been provided as a consequence of an error of the Council, provision will not be withdrawn with less than **6** weeks' notice.

12.18 Where an improvement in the accuracy of methods for assessing eligibility identifies that assistance has been provided for a non-eligible child, provision will not be withdrawn with less than **6** weeks' notice. This may occur where the distance from home to school is re-measured and found to be under the relevant walking distance, or a suitable, available walking route has now been identified. In this case, the child will have benefited from free transport and would be expected to be able to walk to school and not be obliged to transfer to another school.

12.19 Where an improvement to a route is made and results in the route becoming available for a child to walk, accompanied as necessary by an adult, provision will not be withdrawn with less than **6** weeks' notice.

12.20 If travel assistance has been provided as a consequence of information provided by the parent, which was false or misleading and where correct and accurate information would have resulted in a refusal of a request for travel assistance, provision may be withdrawn immediately and will normally be withdrawn with no more than four calendar weeks' notice. Should the Council believe that information provided was deliberately false or misleading; the costs of providing the transport may be sought from the parent/carer.

13. Review of Decisions, Appeals Process & Complaints

Decisions, Review of Decisions and Appeals Process

13.1 Decisions regarding the eligibility for travel assistance, the mode of assistance, and other practical matters of travel assistance will be only taken by authorised Council staff. If a parent/carer is unhappy with a decision that has been made, that parent/carer should first take it up informally with the officer or Department that made the original decision. If it is necessary to put the query in writing, then the Council will offer assistance with this in the case of a parent/carer with a disability.

13.2 If the matter is not resolved informally in this way, then the parent/carer will be required to complete a *Transport Appeal Form* (TAF1) which can be downloaded from the Council website. Alternatively, a copy of the form can be requested from the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team (Section 13, paragraph 17). The TAF1 form must be submitted within 20 working days of receipt of the original transport decision being made by the Council.

13.3 The completed TAF1 form should then be returned to the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team. The Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team Manager together with another Children's Services officer will review the initial decision and further information submitted. This will be completed within 20 working days of receipt of the TAF1 form.

13.4 It is anticipated that the majority of appeals will be resolved at this stage. If the appeal is unsuccessful the parent/carer will receive a copy of the appeal form with the reasons given for the decision.

13.5 If the matter remains unresolved the parent/carer can make a further appeal to the Transport Eligibility Panel. Appeals must be submitted, using the TAF2 form available on the website, directly to the Appeals Clerk, within 20 working days of the receipt of the decision of the first appeal considered by the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team and a Children's Services Officer. When submitting the completed TAF2 form, parents/carers must also submit the decision letter you received as the result of the initial. The Transport Eligibility Panel consists of 3 people who are independent and who have volunteered for the role. They are not paid and are not associated with the Council or a school connected with the appeal except as an independent panel member. They are trained in all aspects of this Policy and will make decisions within its remit. A Clerk will be present to minute the hearing and will write to parents with the decision made by the Transport Eligibility Panel.

13.6 Parents/carers must submit all evidence to the Appeals Clerk 10 working days before your appeal is due to be held. Information on how and where to submit this evidence is on the TAF2 form. Evidence received after this will only be considered with the agreement of the Panel and late evidence may result in the appeal being moved to a later date.

13.7 Parents/carers are invited to verbally represent their case to the Panel. A maximum of 2 adults are able to attend a hearing. These can be both parents/carers or 1 parent and 1 supporter. An interpreter or signer may be provided if requested on the TAF2 form. No children may attend.

13.8 A member of the Transport Team will also be present to explain the reasons why transport, or the particular provision requested, had been refused and where appropriate a member of the SEN team will attend to deal with the suitability of the education establishment.

13.9 The Panel will consider the information provided on the TAF2 form and any additional evidence provided by the parent/carer, as well representation from the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team. Appeals panels will be arranged as soon as is possible within 40 working days. The necessary documents will be provided to parents and the panel at least 5 working days before the appeal date, unless a shorter period is agreed beforehand. The outcome of the appeal will be advised to the parent/carer in writing within 5 working days of the appeal hearing. Where parents/carers have a disability which may impact on their ability to attend a hearing, or if they require assistance with language interpretation or reading, appropriate assistance will be provided by the Council if it is identified on the TAF2 form.

13.10 The Appeals Process detailed above does not prevent the parent/carer raising a school transport related issue with a local Councillor or any other person.

13.11 Where a parent/carer feels that an appeal has not been conducted in a fair manner, he or she may pursue a complaint using the Council's complaints procedure. (See 13.15 below).

Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal on Transport Provision

13.12 Where the pupil in question holds a statement of special educational needs or EHCP, it may be that a disagreement about travel is part of a wider question of school provision and placement. In such an instance, it may be necessary for the matter to be considered by a Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. Although this body does not hear appeals specifically about transport, it may consider it as part of a wider appeal.

Complaints/Queries

13.13 If a parent/carer has a query or is disastified by any aspect with regard to the determination of eligibility/entitlement for travel assistance, this should initially be brought to the attention of the Transport Team.

13.14 Queries/complaints relating to journey planning, standard/condition of vehicles, drivers, passenger assistants and any other issues relating to the journey to/from school should initially be brought to the attention of the Transport Team.

13.15 If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction it may be escalated via the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/local-government-in-central-bedfordshire/customer-feedback/default.aspx

13.16 There is a right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman if complainants consider that there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules or if there were any other irregularities in the way the appeal was handled. If the complainant considers the decision of the independent panel was flawed on public law grounds, the complainant may also apply for judicial review.

Contact Details

13.17 If you wish to discuss:

- entitlement to transport;
- an application for transport;
- amend or cancel transport;
- notify the Council of a change in medical needs, behavioral needs or additional support;
- change in existing timetable (part time or post 16 only)
- or if you wish to discuss the method of transport offered

Then please contact a Transport Officer at:

Tel: 0300 300 8339

Email: school.transport@centralbedfordshire.go.uk

Address: Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable, LU6 1LF

13.18 If your child attends a mainstream school or college and you have a questions about one of the following:

- the condition of the vehicle
- vehicle arriving early or late
- behavior of the driver or passenger assistant
- location of pick up or drop off points
- an incident of bad behavior
- or any other concerns in relation to the service that is allocated

Then please contact Transport Coordinator at:

Tel: 0300 300 8339

Email: school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Client Transport Team, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ

13.19 If your child attends a special school or accesses alternative transport provisions due to their special educational needs and you have a question about one of the following operational issues including:

- condition of the vehicle
- the vehicle arriving early or late
- pick up points or times
- behavior of the driver or passenger assistant
- a new wheelchair or change in an existing wheelchair

- transporting equipment

Then please contact the Transport Coordinator at:

Tel: 0300 300 8339

Email: school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Transport Team, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ

13.20 Other useful contacts details:

School Admissions Team

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

0300 300 8037

admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

13.21 Customer relations

Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ

0300 300 6077 or 0300 300 4995

customer.relations@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Definition of Terms

Academic Year, School Year
The academic year is deemed to start on 1st September in any given year and to end on 31st August in the following calendar year. In the exceptional case of a school whose academic year begins in August, the Council will consider whether it should take the date when that school's academic year starts as being the start of the academic year for a child or student attending that school.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Support Team Most children with special educational needs will get all the help that they need through their SEND Support Plan, as schools have an allowance in their budgets to meet their needs. However, for a very small number of children, a statutory assessment may be required. A statutory assessment is when the Local Authority looks carefully at a child's learning difficulties. Once the Local Authority has received all the information and looked at it, a Referrals Panel will decide whether to assess the child to see if he/she needs a Statement or Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). In Central Bedfordshire this process is managed by the Assessment and Monitoring Team.

Address, Home Address
For the purposes of home to school transport the home address will be deemed to be where the child predominantly resides, normally with someone who holds parental responsibility. Proof of residence may be requested to confirm that a child and the child's family are resident at a specified address. The following are examples of items that may suffice as proof:

- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits
- registration on the electoral roll
- utility bills
- bank statements
- driving licence
- mortgage or tenancy account details

The list of documents above is not exhaustive and the Council may ask for permission to gain access to other local authority information, for example Council Tax or Housing Benefit records. If doubt exists, the Council may also require a parent/carer to complete a formal statement to certify the home address. This would be discussed at the appropriate time.

Alternative provision
For some children, an education outside of school can be the most appropriate option. When this is arranged by LAs, schools or a group of schools, it is called alternative provision. It can range from pupil referral units (PRUs) and further education colleges to voluntary or private-sector projects.

Boarding/Residential Schools
Boarding/Residential schools are those that provide overnight accommodation arranged or provided by the school, at the school or elsewhere.

Cared for Children (Looked After Children)
A 'cared for child' is a child who is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that local authority (as defined in section 22 of the Children Act 1989).

Children who were previously Cared for
Children previously in the care of the local authority as defined above, but subsequently became subject to an adoption, residence, or special guardianship order. An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A child arrangement order or 'residence order' is as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

Child, Children
A young person of compulsory school age (from 5 years to 16 years old).

Compulsory (Statutory) School Age
Children reach compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. In compliance with legal requirements, children may start school in the reception class in the September following their 4th birthday. Parents/carers can request that the date their child is admitted to the primary school is deferred until later in the school year or until the child reaches statutory school age in that school year. To help younger children adjust to school, schools may phase full-time admission, admitting these children on a part-time basis. Arrangements are decided at school level.

Statutory school age ceases on the last Friday in June in the school year when the young person reaches the age of 16. No account is taken of the National Curriculum Year in which a pupil is being educated when determining the year in which compulsory school ages ceases.

The Education and Skills Act 2008 has now risen the age at which young people are required to participate in education or training to 18 years of age. This does not necessarily mean they will have to stay on at school after Year 11 as they will have a choice about how they want to participate post-16, which could be through full-time education, such as school or college; work-based learning, such as an Apprenticeship; or part-time education or training if they are employed, self employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week.

Council (Authority, Local Authority)
This is Central Bedfordshire Council. Decisions of the Authority are carried out in the name of the Authority by its officers.

Disability
From 1 October 2010, the Equality Act replaced most of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and 2005. However, the Disability Equality Duty in the DDA continues to apply. The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect disabled people and prevent disability discrimination by ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate the needs of all individuals. Under the Act, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

Harassment
Harassment occurs when an individual engages in unwanted conduct which is related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation and which the purpose or the effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliation or offensive environment.

Unwanted conduct can include spoken or written words or abuse, imagery, graffiti, physical gestures, facial expressions, mimicry, jokes, pranks, acts affecting a person's surroundings or other physical behaviour.

The word 'unwanted' means the same as 'unwelcome' or 'uninvited'. 'Unwanted' does not mean that express objection must be made to the conduct before it is deemed to be unwanted. A serious one-off incident can also amount to harassment.

Dual Registration
The law provides for pupils to be registered at two separate schools in cases where a child has no fixed abode for the reason that a parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require travel from place to place.

Client Transport Team
The Client Transport Team are the Council department responsible for sourcing the most cost effective appropriate transport for entitled children. The Client Transport Team develop and maintain relationships with all transport providers and ensure that vehicles and drivers comply with all necessary statutory regulations.

Mainstream School
A school that is not a special school for pupils with special educational needs.

Out-of-Council Area
In reference to a school, this means a school which is neither maintained by Central Bedfordshire Council nor is an academy, free school, UTC or Studio School within the Council's boundary. In reference to a place it means a place located outside the administrative boundary of Central Bedfordshire Council.

Parent/Carer or Guardian
In this Policy, the parent/carer will be taken to be the person with whom the child or student predominantly resides. This can include a person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility or care of the child or student. If the person is not the birth parent or adoptive parent, then evidence may be sought to ascertain that the legal basis of the relationship. In this policy the terms parent or carer are taken to include guardian or guardians.

Publicly Funded Schools
Maintained schools are funded by central government via the local authority and do not charge fees to students. The categories of maintained school are: community, community special, foundation (including trust), foundation special (including trust), voluntary aided and voluntary controlled. There are also maintained nursery schools and pupil referral units.

Academies and free schools are publicly funded independent schools. Some academies, generally those set-up to replace underperforming schools, will have a sponsor. Sponsors come from a wide range of backgrounds including successful schools, businesses, universities, charities and faith bodies. Academies receive their funding directly from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) rather than from local authorities.

The Funding Agreement between the establishment and the Secretary of State provides the framework within which Academies, Free Schools, UTCs and Studio Schools operate.

Private Schools
Private schools may be either non-maintained or independent, according to their foundation and legal status and receive their funding either direct from parents, from charitable trusts or from places purchased by local authorities. Generally, although not exclusively, an independent school is usually one run privately for profit whereas a 'non-maintained' school is run 'not for profit' usually by a charitable body.

Special Educational Needs
A Statement of Special Educational Need is a statement made by the local authority under Section 324 of the Education Act 1996 that specifies the special educational provision required for that child. Assessments after 1st September 2014 will be carried out under the Children and Families Act 2014 for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Schools must admit a child with a Statement of Special Education Needs or EHCP that names their school.

Special School
Schools that provide education for children and young people with complex or specific needs which generally cannot be fully met in a mainstream setting.

Studio Schools
Studio Schools cater for 14 to 19-year-olds, delivering project-based, practical learning alongside mainstream academic study. They are small schools - typically with around 300 pupils - delivering mainstream qualifications through project based learning. Students work with local employers and a personal coach, and follow a curriculum designed to give them the skills and qualifications they need in work or to continue in education.

University Technical Colleges (UTCs)
UTCs are Technical Academies for 14-19-year-olds. They offer technical courses and work-related learning, combined with academic studies. Each UTC is sponsored by a university and industry partner and responds to local skills needs. They provide young people with the knowledge and skills they need to progress at 19 into higher or further education, an apprenticeship or employment.

Ref Doc 1: Code of Conduct for Pupils on School Transport

In order to ensure safe travel to school, pupils should always:

- Wait sensibly off the road, in a safe area for the vehicle at the designated pick up point;
- Be ready at the designated pick up point at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled collection time;
- If issued ensure that you have your travel pass ready to show the driver before getting on to the vehicle;
- Be polite, courteous and respectful to the driver, passenger assistants and all other passengers on the vehicle;
- Remain in their seat whilst on board the vehicle and in allocated seat if specified by the operator or establishment;
- Wear provided seatbelt or any other specialist equipment at all times throughout the journey;
- Put belongings safely and securely out of the way and keep the gangway clear;
- No food or drink to be consumed on the vehicle unless prior agreement has been obtained from the Council;
- Leave the bus clean and tidy taking all belongings with you when leaving the vehicle;
- Adhere to any instructions given by the driver or passenger assistant at all times;
- If there is an accident pupils should stay on the bus until advised otherwise by the driver/passenger assistant of the appropriate action;
- If pupils leave the vehicle without the drivers permission this will be reported to the school, the Council and where possible to the parent/carer;
- Adhere to the Highway Code at all times.

Pupils should never:

- Allow another pupil to use their travel pass;
- Distract the driver;
- Operate the doors or emergency exits unless there is an actual emergency;
- Deliberately damage or vandalise the vehicle;

- Throw items around inside or out of the windows of the vehicle;

- Smoke including electronic products or use cigarette lighters whilst on the vehicle;

- Intimidate, bully, harass or be verbally or physically abusive towards other passengers, the driver, passenger assistants, school or council staff or members of the public

The individual needs of the pupil will be taken into consideration before issuing a temporary or perminant ban from transport.

Parents are responsible for any damage caused to the vehicle and will have to re-imburse the operator accordingly.
If you break these rules you may lose your entitlement to transport and your parents will have to make alternative arrangements to get you to school.

Ref Doc 2: Personal Transport Cost Allowance (PTCA)

The Council may request that a parent/carer make their own arrangements to convey their child to and from school:

- Where a Motability Vehicle has been provided to transport the named pupil.

  where an entitlement to transport exists and there are difficulties in negotiating a suitable transport contract;

  where an entitlement to travel assistance exists and there is no current transport provision available;

  where an entitlement to transport exists and to make a mileage allowance payment is financially advantageous to the Council;

  in other circumstances to be determined by the Transport Team.

- Where this is agreed by the Council, the parent/carer will be paid a personal transport cost allowance. The current scheme is based on the distance between home and school for which a mileage allowance is paid and covers two return journeys from the home address to the educational establishment. This scheme will be reviewed on a regular basis.

- The parent/carer will be required to complete a PTCA form, supplied by the Client Transport Team, this needs to be authorised by the school and submitted to the Client Transport Team monthly/termly, as agreed.

- The Council is currently paying a rate of 36p per mile, which is reviewed on an annual basis; the daily mileage payable will be agreed by the Client Transport Team.

- Where agreed, the allowance may be paid for boarders on the following basis:
  a. Termly boarding –at the beginning and end of each term and at the beginning and end of the mid-term holiday.
  b. 12 day boarding – on alternate weekends and at the beginning and end of each term.
  c. Weekly boarding - to school on Monday and from school on Friday each week.
  d. 52 week placement – up to a maximum of three return journeys a year.
  e. Attending one statement review per year at an out-county school.
  f. Other exceptional circumstances agreed by the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team.
  g. Parking, subsistence and other expenses will not be paid.

- The Council will review, on a regular basis, the payment of all PTCA payments and these may be withdrawn, with no less than 12 weeks' notice, if;:
  - entitlement to home to school transport support is withdrawn;

    - in other circumstances determined by the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team.

- In the event that the PTCA is withdrawn as a result of concerns being raised about the unauthorised absence/punctuality of the child, the 12 week notice period will not apply.
- In the event that a more cost effective form of transport provision becomes available, the 12 week notice period will not apply.
- The feasibility of the parent/carer of making their own travel arrangements and applying for a PTCA will be discussed by the Council when evidencing eligibility for travel assistance and at subsequent reviews.
- A parent/carer who is agreeable should be advised that the allowance is not likely to be offered where a place in shared transport or more cost effective travel assistance can be offered
- The Transport Transport Team will discuss the possibility of a personal transport cost allowance payment as an alternative to taxis for existing entitled pupils.

Ref Doc 3: Concessionary Travel Scheme

The Council is committed to supporting access to school where pupils do not qualify forftransport assistance. A charge may be made for "spare seats" on the school bus provided the pupil is a Central Bedfordshire Council resident, the route is operated on a contracted basis, they can be accommodated at no extra cost to the Council and there is an existing provision in place. Concessionary spaces are:

a. Charged on a termly basis.
b. Free for children entitled to free school meals, or whose parents are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.
c. Issued on a first come first served basis where demand for places exceeds availability.
d. Fixed at the termly rate. No pro-rata reductions are available for part week travel or single daily journeys or where for operational reasons, delays may occur in the issue of passes.

Concessionary places are not available on routes registered as public service routes, where he child pays the fare direct to the driver.

Prices for concessionary seats are revised each financial year with new charges coming into effect at the start of each Summer term.

It should be noted that the provision of a free concessionary pass will be based on the same benefit criteria as for families entitled to free transport on low income grounds. This will mean that certain families in receipt of working tax credit, but not at the maximum rate, who may have previously received passes free of charges, will in future, be required to pay.

The parent/carer should be aware that the concessionary place can be withdrawn at any time, with a minimum of two weeks notice. The place will be withdrawn if the seat is required for an entitled pupil, the service is withdrawn or the passenger carrying capacity of the vehicle is reduced.

Where a concessionary seat is withdrawn, this will be on a last-in, first-out basis.

When a concessionary place is abandoned by a parent or post-16 student, no refund for previously unused journeys will be given. If the Pass issued is returned a pro-rata refund will be given from the date received. Refunds may be subject to an administration charge.

The Council reserves the right to decline any application or withdraw a concessionary pass where the pupil’s behaviour is deemed to have put themselves or others at risk. By accepting a concessionary pass, parents/carers and pupils are agreeing to the Policy’s Code of Conduct (Ref Doc 1)

Concessionary passes are sold at the discretion of the Council and applications may be refused if the sale is in direct conflict with prior agreements with schools.

Ref Doc 4: Notes for Schools

1. Central Bedfordshire Council will help with the travel arrangements of children who qualify under distance or special needs criteria as set out in the Home to School Transport Policy for Pupils of Compulsory School Age.

2. When arrangements have been made, parents will be informed in writing. The letter will explain the pick-up arrangements, the responsibility of the parents to ensure their children are ready on time, that a responsible adult will be there to receive them and that their children will behave in a responsible way.

3. The safety of the child is fundamental to the policy. Where seat belts are fitted and should be worn by all passengers.

4. Where Passenger Assistants travel with children they will:

   - Inform the school of any incidents, bad behaviour or accidents involving the children;
   - take medication between parents and schools, but only when it is in a sealed container which has been clearly labelled with the pupil's name;
   - report any notified absences or irregular incidents.

5. When a Passenger Assistant or driver has a problem with a child's behaviour the schools head teacher or member of staff with specific responsibility for transport will be contacted. The Client Transport Team may withdraw transport if unreasonable behaviour causes an increased risk to passengers, other road users and/or the driver.

6. The school is responsible for the child from the time of getting off the vehicle until the time the child is returned to the vehicle. School staff should be available to help with the assisting of children to and from the transport. The school is responsible for ensuring that pupils are ready at the designated collection point on time. Drivers are instructed to leave the schools punctually. Pupils who are to be kept back for any reason will be the school's or parents/carers responsibility to arrange for transport to the pupils' home.

   Any traffic management systems or problems relating to transport of pupils should be directed to the Client Transport Team (see section 13.18 and 13.19).

7. Schools should:

   - promote compliance with the *Code of Conduct for Pupils on School Transport*;
   - have in place a system that checks the arrival and departure of school buses and provide information to the Client Transport Team on the quality of transport services provided;
   - Establish a traffic management system to ensure that home to school transport suppliers can manoever and park safely and that passengers can board and alight safely.

- advise the Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team of changes of address of pupils or other changed circumstances which may affect the transport requirements;
- assist the Client Transport Team in dealing with cases of difficulty on transport, for example misbehaviour by pupils;
- receive reports from passenger assistants on any signs of ill treatment of pupils and process these as considered necessary, in accordance with Child Protection guidance;
- assist the Client Transport Team and Transport Commissioning and Entitlement Team in contacting parents in the event of breakdowns or accidents to transport, significant changes in transport times / arrangements in emergencies, absconding of pupils from transport etc;
- advise the Client Transport Team of dates of school terms, inset days and holidays and other closures, including weather related closures.
- advise the Client Transport Team with at least one terms notice of any planned closure days outside the Council published term dates. If notice is less than one term, any incurred transport costs will be the responsibility of the school
- have a member of staff designated for dealing with all matters relating to school transport issues.

8. Plans to encourage independent travel must be put in place by the school and parents/carers working in partnership to mutually agreed targets and evidence of progress will be required at each subsequent annual review. Schools and parents/carers should encourage pupils to walk, cycle or to take up public/community transport options at the earliest opportunity. This step will be regarded as a positive achievement towards the pupil's progress in becoming an independent traveller.

Ref Doc 5. Personal Transport Budgets

What is a Personal Transport Budget?
A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) is a payment designed to help you make arrangements which will enable you to facilitate your child accessing school.
You can use the budget in any way you wish, to ensure your child attends school every day, on time and in a fit state to learn. For example, it can help towards covering the costs of running a family car or arranging with another member of the family or friends to assist with childcare, enabling you to make the journey.
The payment can also be put to use by arranging childcare for a younger sibling whilst the older sibling is taken to school in the family car.
The payment is a fixed amount based on proximity and bears no relationship to the cost of a taxi or hired vehicle.
It is expensive for the Local Authority to collect children daily using hired vehicles and it has been found by parents who already receive a PTB, that their children are more relaxed going to and from school when they are transported by someone close to the child. It also provides parents with a direct link to the school and more frequent opportunities to discuss a child's progress with the teachers that they may not have previously had.
Who can be considered for a PTB?
A PTB is available to children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and who have been assessed as eligible to receive home to school transport. The PTB is granted at the discretion of the Local Authority and is not automatically given upon request.
Parent/carers seeking to access the PTB must be found to be eligible for transport assistance before being considered for a PTB. Information on how to apply for Home to School Transport is available at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport
Before granting a PTB, the Local Authority will investigate whether there is any transport currently in place that your child could be placed onto at less cost than providing you with a PTB.
If it is not cost effective for the Local Authority to provide you with a PTB, but your child is eligible to receive transport assistance, you will not be granted a PTB and your child will be allocated a seat on the most appropriate mode of transport.
How do I apply?
You can apply for a PTB at
www.centralbedfordshirecouncil.gov.uk/personaltransportbudget
Alternatively, you can indicate your preference for a PTB by ticking the relevant box on your T1school transport application, which can be found at
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport
Please be aware that PTB applications require additional information about journey costs from transport providers and so can take longer to assess than standard transport applications. If your child is not already traveling to school in a Central Bedfordshire Council provided vehicle, you will be responsible for organising alternative transport arrangements while your assessment is completed.
How much would I expect to receive?
The amount of money that is awarded is based on the distance between your home and the school your child attends. Many available maps and internet based measuring tools will give you an indication of the distance from your home to your child's school, but this is only an indication. The distance measured is based on a straight line distance (as the crow

flies) and the Council's own measuring software is used to determine this. For fairness and consistency, the same software is used for all applications.

There are four distance bands in which you would expect to receive a payment.

Band Home to school distance Annual budget 1 Less than 5 miles £2,000 2 Between 5 – 9 miles £3,000 3 10 -19 miles £5,000, over 20 miles £8,000

PTB payments are made on the basis of your child attending school for 190 days per year. If your child attends school less than 190 school days per school year, Central Bedfordshire Council will make your PTB payment on a pro rata basis. This means you will receive less than the total amount outlined above.

Should your child be absent from school, even if this is through no fault of their own, your following month's payment will be reduced to account for the reduction in required travel. Free school transport is also not available for work experience or additional journeys that the school requires your child to take. You will be notified of the reduction that will be made in the following month's payment before that month's payment is due to be paid.

Would I receive the PTB until my child finishes at the school they attend?

The PTB is not guaranteed to be provided until a child leaves their current school. Central Bedfordshire Council will review your child's PTB at least once a year. The review will evaluate whether it remains cost effective for the PTB to be provided and new transport options may mean this is no longer the case. The review will also check your child's attendance records to ensure your child is being taken to school.

If your child's attendance at school is not sufficient to continue paying you a PTB or where there is more cost effective transport in place, the PTB may be withdrawn. If this should happen, you will be given 28 days notice.

What should I do if my circumstances change?

If your child moves home or changes school, you must ensure that you let Central Bedfordshire Council know as soon as possible, but no later than 4 weeks before the change is due to take place. Your child's eligibility to receive a PTB would then be reassessed. Whilst you may have received the PTB previously, it does not mean that you will automatically continue to receive the budget from another address to the same school or from the same address to another school. Any transport arrangements that are required after the change but before your child has been reassessed will be the parent's responsibility to arrange.

Where payments are made and it is later established that the Local Authority had not been informed of a change in circumstance, payments will be recovered by the Local Authority's Debt Recovery Team.

Would I receive a PTB for my child to attend two schools?

No. Transport assistance is only provided to one educational establishment. If you apply for a PTB, this will only be assessed to the main school that the child is on roll at.

How and when would I be paid my PTB?

The payments are paid over an 11 month period with no payments paid in August due to school closure over the holiday period. Payments are paid directly into your bank account on the 15th of each month or the previous working day where the 15th falls on a weekend or public holiday.

Payments are not back dated and no refunds are provided if your application for a PTB is processed within 6 weeks of receipt of the application.

My PTB request has been refused, can I appeal?
No. As PTBs are only available to children that are eligible for free school transport, there is no appeal as eligibility is not in dispute, but you can have the decision reviewed. If you have been refused a PTB because the cost of the PTB is more than the cost to the Local Authority of transporting your child, you can in the first instance ask for a review of the decision by a different officer in School Transport, providing any additional information or evidence that supports your request..
If you are still not satisfied by the response you receive, you can seek a final review from the Ad Public Protection & Transport, who will make the final decision on how Central Bedfordshire Council will assist with transport. If you have been refused any assistance with transport because your child does not meet the necessary criteria, normal transport appeal arrangements will apply.
In exceptional circumstances where a PTB is cost prohibitive, it may be possible to award a mileage payment instead. This will be at the discretion of the council and will normally only be appropriate where it is agreed that the child must be transported by the parents/guardians.
Frequently Asked Questions
Q. Will the payments be taxed? A. The budget is a payment made in relation to the child not the parent and so should not affect your tax situation. It is used to enable your child to get to and from school each day in a safe and legal way and should not be used for any other purpose. If you have concerns that it may impact on your tax situation, you will need to seek your own advise from a tax expert in relation to your personal circumstances.
Q. If I have two/or more children with statements, all of whom are eligible for transport assistance, can I claim a PTB for each child? A. You can claim for each child, but whilst the first child would receive 100% of the PTB, the second child would only be entitled to 50% of the PTB. Any additional children would not qualify for a PTB.
Q. My child travels in a taxi with other children. What would happen to that vehicle if one of the parents is granted a PTB? A. The Local Authority would continue to provide you with the appropriate transport assistance but would review the arrangements to see if you or the other parents would prefer a PTB. The vehicle would only be withdrawn if all the children occupying the vehicle were granted a PTB and where the total cost of PTBs collectively was less than the cost of procuring the existing transport arrangements.
Q. Both myself and my child are happy with the current contractor and driver that transport my child to and from school. If I applied for the PTB, could my child continue to travel on the same vehicle?
A. No. If you applied for the PTB, you will be responsible for making your own arrangements for transporting your child to and from school. Even if you decide to refuse the PTB and stay with your current contractor, there is no guarantee that any contractor/driver or passenger assistant would remain the same whilst your child attends their school. If you decide to accept the PTB and then return to transport provided by the Local Authority, there is no guarantee that your child will be able to be placed back on to their previous transport.
Whilst you could use your PTB to make your own personal arrangements with the taxi contractor to take your child to and from school, your child would not be able to travel on the vehicle that the Local Authority has arranged.
You can use the PTB in any way you wish, for example:

- You or someone in your family can drive your child to and from school

- You can arrange with a friend or relative to walk your child to school.
- You can car share with other parents where their children are going to the same school as your child.
- You could provide a relative or friend with a bus pass in order to take your child to and from school.
- You could pay for childcare for a younger child in order for you to take your child to school.

Q. Do I need to collect any receipts for petrol etc? A. No. Once the payments are made to you, you can use them any way you wish to in order for your child to get to and from school every day in a safe and legal way.
Q. What happens if my child is ill? A. Your child's attendance record will be reviewed and the payments for any days that they are absent will be deducted from the following month's PTB payment.
If your child's attendance drops below an acceptable level without reason, you will be at risk of having your PTB withdrawn.
Q. My child is a boarder. Would this affect the size of my PTB? A. Your child will be assessed in the same way as all other children and your PTB will initially be based on one of the three payment bands, however, the final payment will be offered on a pro rata basis to account for the actual number of journeys you are required to undertake.
Q. My child attends College, can I apply for a PTB? A. If your child's needs mean that they are unable to access public transport, they can be considered for a PTB at the Local Authority's discretion.
Q. I have one child that receives transport because of their EHCP and another that is currently going through the assessment process. Would I receive a PTB for each child? A. No. You can apply for a PTB for the child who already has an EHCP, but you would have to wait until your second child had received their EHCP before you could apply for that child.
If you apply for a PTB for your second child, please be aware, that you would only receive 50% of the PTB if both children attended the same school.
Q. I am a foster carer for a child that receives transport, can I apply for a PTB? A. If your foster child is in the care of Central Bedfordshire Council and meets the criteria to receive free home to school transport, then you can apply for a PTB.
If you are in receipt of an attendance allowance for the child you would not be eligible to receive a PTB.
If your foster child is in the care of another Local Authority i.e. outside of Central Bedfordshire Council, you will not be eligible to receive a PTB.
The corporate parent for the child may assist and should be contacted directly.
Q. My child has previously travelled in a taxi funded by the Local Authority. If I am granted a PTB, can I place my child on the same taxi now and again and pay the taxi company separately? A. No. Once you have been granted a PTB, your child's seat on the vehicle will either be cancelled or given to another child.
You can ask the same taxi company to provide you with a vehicle and pay for them to take your child to and from school, however, this would be through a private arrangement between yourself and the taxi company.
Q. If I apply and am granted a PTB but find that at a later date it doesn't work with my child or my circumstances change, can I change back to the previous transport arrangement?

A. Yes. You must give us 28 days notice to stop the payments into your bank account and to rearrange transport for your child.
Please be aware, that this may not necessarily be the same taxi company or driver that your child may previously have had as no guarantee can be given that the arrangements would stay the same.

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Central Bedfordshire Council
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Appendix B

Children's Services

Post 16 Travel Assistance Policy

Academic Year 2019/20

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Post 16 Travel Assistance Policy

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Introduction

The responsibility of a local authority to prepare and publish an annual Transport Policy Statement is included in the Education Act 1996. The Policy must set out the arrangements for the provision of transport, or otherwise, that the authority considers necessary, to enable young people age 16 – 18 to attend education or training, for the purpose of this Policy, 16-18 means young people aged 16-18 who are starting a programme at school, college or work based learning provider before their 19th birthday .

For young people aged between 19 and 25, and with an EHC Plan, where the Council has secured the provision of education or training, they should refer to The Travel Assistance Policy for 19 to 25 year olds. This applies to:

- adults (ie those who are aged 19 or over) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at local authority maintained or assisted further or higher education institutions or institutions within the further education sector; and
- adults aged under 25 with an EHC plan for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at institutions where they are receiving education or training outside the further and higher education sectors. For those young adults, the Council's duty only applies where the Council has secured the provision of education or training at that institution and the provision of boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training.

The overall aim of this policy is to ensure that, if support for access to education is **necessary**, this will be assessed and provided.

1. Legislation and Guidance

Through the Education Act 1996 and the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009) a local authority has a statutory responsibility to consider how it will assist learners to access the appropriate post 16 provision.

Through the Education and Skills Act 2008, from 2014 the age of participation has been raised so that young people will be required to stay in education or training until their 18th birthday.

A Post 16 Transport Policy Statement must be in place by 31st May each year. The Department for Education issues Post 16 Transport Guidance to support the preparation of a policy statement.

The policy links to the Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy and is similar in its principles to the Home to School Travel Assistance Policy.

2. Eligibility for Transport

This Policy sets out the eligibility criteria for travel assistance for students aged 16 to 18 to ensure that those most in need of support receive it and those who are able to pay the cost of their transport do so.

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The Executive of the Council sets its fees and charging policy rates annually and where students are eligible for subsidised transport, charges are made as set and published within the Fees and Charging Policy.

Transport may be provided for mainstream students who are entitled under the eligibility criteria of this Policy and the Home-to-School Travel Assistance Policy 2019 -20, who are enrolled on a full-time course of education or training. In this case a full-time course is defined as: 15 hours per week for at least 30 weeks in the academic year.

Transport may be provided for students with special educational needs, who are entitled under the eligibility criteria of this Policy and the Home-to-School Travel Assistance Policy 2019-20 who are enrolled on a course of education or training which has been acknowledged by Central Bedfordshire Council as meeting the specific individual needs of the student as set out in their Statement of Special Educational Needs Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)

The eligibility criteria enabling young people to be provided with transport assistance relate to the specific areas of:

- low income;
- medical grounds;
- children for whom Central Bedfordshire Council is a Corporate Parent;
- special educational needs.

Families with a low income

Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to working to assist low income families:

For a student to be eligible for transport assistance on low income grounds their family must be in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits set out in Appendix A and will live more than 3 miles, but no more than 20 miles and attend the nearest establishment which offers a qualification at the same level and in the same subject area(s) as the course applied for and accepted on to. These distances stated are calculated by the shortest available walking route if up to 3 miles or the shortest motorised route if over 3 miles.

Transport on grounds of medical needs

Where a student attends the nearest school or college offering the qualification and subject they are studying for, transport assistance can be considered on medical grounds when the distance between home and establishment is no more than 20 miles. This will be calculated by the shortest available walking route if up to 3 miles or the shortest motorised route if over 3 miles. Each application is considered on an individual basis.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to produce evidence of the medical condition in all cases, detailing:

a. full medical details of the condition, including timescales for recovery;

b. written medical confirmation regarding the child's fitness to return to school;

c. the likely period for which revised travel assistance arrangements may be needed;

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d. the type of vehicle needed, where appropriate, for example, where the child is in a full body cast;

e. any manual handling risks.

This should be endorsed by the family doctor or in certain circumstances by a medical consultant. The Council reserves the right to require the parent/carer to provide further medical evidence as deemed necessary. Any charges incurred by the parent/carer in providing this evidence will not be paid by the Council.

Transport assistance will be arranged in the most cost-effective way and be provided for a maximum of one term at a time.

Where agreed transport assistance will be provided for families with a low income or at the subsidised rate as set out in the Council's Fees and Charges Policy. The charge will be determined at a pro rata rate for the number of weeks for which transport is agreed.

Transport for children for whom Central Bedfordshire Council is a Corporate Parent

Whilst representing only a very small number of the total 16 – 18 age population, Looked After Children (including Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) can be some of the most vulnerable students in need of support. The most suitable establishment to meet these particular students' needs will not always be the nearest school or college to their home address.

As Corporate Parents to these children, Central Bedfordshire Council will ensure that transport assistance will be provided for students to attend the most suitable establishment outside of the statutory walking distance, 3 miles, to meet their individual needs.

Transport for students with Special Educational Needs

Transport Assistance needs for students with special educational needs will be assessed as part of the statutory assessment process, Education Health Care Plan EHCP.

Where students have been assessed as requiring transport and are eligible, a subsidised rate will be charged, as set out in the Fees and Charges Policy of the Council and reviewed annually. There will be no cost for travel assistance for families on low income.

A small number of students, typically with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties, who remain in continuing special school provision who do not reach a point of transition at 16 will therefore continue to receive their existing transport arrangements for as long as they remain in that provision.

Subsidised transport will be provided for a student to the establishment identified through the assessment, where the distance between home and the establishment is more than 3 miles.

Where the distance is less than 3 miles the assessment will include consideration of whether a student could reasonably be expected to walk or cycle to school or college. Where this is not possible subsidised transport will be provided.

The most appropriate mode of travel will be agreed as part of the assessment process.

The assessment will consider transport assistance to the nearest suitable school or college. If by parental or student preference a more distant establishment is named, transport will be the responsibility of the parent.

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Where a student with Special Education Needs remains in further education, transport could be provided up to the age of 25, if specifically required through the or Education Health Care Plan EHCP, transport provision for this group of young people is set out in the Travel Assistance Policy for 19 to 25 year olds

The Council will endeavour to offer transport assistance to students taking into account the shortest possible time and will investigate all possible alternatives if the travel time, one way, exceeds one hour and fifteen minutes. Where possible, adjustments will be made to transport assistance to reduce travel time to less than one hour and fifteen minutes provided this can be achieved efficiently.

The timescale for arranging transport will be a maximum of 15 working days from receipt of the application. Unless there is a return date stipulated on the application form. If the application form is not returned by the return date transport assistance will not be in place until after the October half term following the start of the new academic year in September.

Residential placements

Where a student attends a residential school or college, transport assistance will be provided in accordance with the accommodation arrangements:

a) Termly boarding

b) 12 day boarding

c) Weekly boarding

d) 52 week placement

termly boarding –transport assistance will be provided at the beginning and end of each term and at the beginning and end of the mid term holiday.

12 day boarding –transport assistance will be provided on alternate weekends and at the beginning and end of each term.

weekly boarding – in most cases transport assistance will be provided on Monday and Friday each week.

52 week placement –transport assistance will be provided for three return journeys per year.

Any additional journeys will be the responsibility of the parent/carer.

In the interests of the efficient use of resources the council will, in all cases, encourage parents/carers to transport students for which mileage reimbursement may be made.

Any additional transport requirements to those set out above will remain the responsibility of the parent/carer.

3. Additional considerations

Students who live in a joint home arrangement, who fulfil the other criteria for transport assistance, will be provided with transport assistance from the primary home address registered with the school or college.

Students may be required to walk up to one mile from home to the pickup point and where allocated a place on a public service route, they may be required to walk up to one mile from the setting-down point to the school.

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In determining entitlement to transport assessment, the route used in assessing the distance will be the shortest available walking route up to 3 miles. After 3 miles the shortest motorised route up to 20 miles will be used to assess entitlement. Measurement will commence at the gate of the student's home to the nearest gate on the school or college site.

Where students receive transport assistance as a result of errors in measurement, the transport will be withdrawn with no less than 6 weeks notice. The student and their family will be notified of any changes as soon as possible after the error has been identified.

4. Assistance Provided

16 -19 Bursary Fund

Young people who need some financial support to help them stay in education and training after age 16 can apply to their school, college or training provider for the 16-19 Bursary fund.

The 16-19 bursary fund has two elements:

Guaranteed bursary: those most in need will be eligible for a bursary of £1200 a year. To qualify students must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- care or a care leaver
- claiming Income Support or Universal Credit
- disabled and getting Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance
- eligible for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and either ESA or Universal Credit

Discretionary bursary: Providers may use their discretion to distribute any remaining funds to young people in ways that best fit the needs and circumstances of their students. Bursary funds should be targeted to young people facing financial barriers to participation, such as the costs of transport, book and equipment.

Providers have discretion to set policy, administer and allocate funds which best suit the needs of its learners. All organisations should have a 16-19 Bursary Fund policy which is available upon request. Applications should be made directly to the school, college or training provider.

Care to Learn Scheme

The Care to Learn scheme will continue to be available for parents in England who are under 20 when they start a course in 2016/17. The Care to Learn scheme will pay up to £175 per child per week to help with the cost of:

- childcare while the young person is learning, on work placements linked to the course or programme of study or undertaking private study;
- any registration fees (up to £80) or deposit (up to £250) charged by the childcare provider;
- a childcare 'taster' (up to five days) aimed at helping the learner's child settle in before their learning starts;
- fees the learner needs to pay during summer holidays to keep the childcare place open;

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- additional travel costs the learner has to pay so they can take their child from home to the childcare provider.

The childcare provider will receive payments direct from Care to Learn. Funding to help with travel costs will be paid to the young person's learning or training provider regularly and the provider will reimburse the learner or arrange travel for them.

For information on care to learn visit: https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn

Independent Travel Training

The Care Act states that "*local authorities must consider the benefits of approaches which delay or prevent the development of needs in individuals"*. As such the Council will look at providing support which builds the individual's confidence and independence. The Council will seek to offer people for whom it would suitable the opportunity to undertake Independent Travel Training in order to build their confidence and ability to lead an ordinary life. Where Independent Travel Training is not an appropriate offer and the person cannot travel safely on their own then this support may be offered by providing a travel buddy in order to help support them whilst they travel.

Carer Support

The Care Act requires the Council to consider how an individual can be supported by their family or other carers when determining if a person's needs are being met.

People who have eligible needs and do not have the capability to travel independently can be supported by their family; or by another person who is able to support them. For example the person can be supported by a carer who can walk, drive or travel with them by public transport to their activities as appropriate. Support provided by the family or another carer will be explored before other means of support are considered.

Travel Concessions

A Disabled Person's bus pass is available from Central Bedfordshire, the eligibility criteria and documentary evidence required to support an application can be found here http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/transport/bus-pass/disabled.aspx

Appropriate Travel Assistance

Once a person is eligibility for travel assistance they will be helped to choose the most appropriate assistance suitable to meet their identified needs, including travel training where the person will benefit from it. This will take into consideration their mobility, their intellectual capacity and the resources available to them.

In most circumstances, once a young person reaches sixth form age, the local authority expects that they will be able to make their own arrangements to travel to and from school or college independently. In some circumstances, the local authority will provide support in order to help the young person to travel independently or if necessary, provide a transport service to ensure that the young person is able to attend their educational establishment.

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Concessionary Places on School Contract Vehicles

Where students are not entitled to transport assistance it may be possible to purchase a concessionary pass for routes already operating for entitled pupils on a school contract vehicle.

Concessionary Passes are allocated on a first come, first served basis if there are any spare seats once all the entitled pupils have been allocated their spaces and the route is not publically registered

Concessionary passes are not available on routes that are public registered services, where it is possible to pay a bus operator direct. Information on public transport routes is available through http://www.travelineeastanglia.co.uk

Rail/Bus passes, Personal Transport Budgets and mileage reimbursements

Passes for public service routes are issued to students, based on the most cost-effective provision of transport.

Where there is no public transport or where it is not practical to re-route an existing contracted vehicle, parents/carers or students may be able to claim personal mileage allowances or a Personal Transport Budget for transport to and from school or college. However, this is at the Council's discretion and is based upon the most cost-effective provision of transport.

Replacement Bus Passes

Students are required to carry a travel pass on all occasions that they travel. Where a travel pass is lost a replacement must be obtained by contacting the School Transport Team. school.transport@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

A handling charge will be made for a new pass to be issued as set out in the Council's Fees and Charges Policy. In addition, the cost of a new pass provided by a bus/rail company will be passed on to a student. Information on the cost of replacement bus passes can be provided by contacting School Transport Team.

Parental responsibilities

In all cases where transport assistance is provided, parents/carers must make their own arrangements for the student to arrive at and be collected from the vehicle where provided.

Parents/carers will be asked to allow the Council to use any specialist seating which the student requires. If this is not possible the Council will arrange for suitable seating to be provided.

If parents/carers choose to transport the student themselves when a place is available on existing transport arranged by the Council, then no mileage reimbursement or Personal Transport Budget will be payable.

5. Appeals

Decisions regarding the eligibility for travel assistance, the mode of assistance, and other practical matters of travel assistance will only be taken by authorised Council staff. If a parent/carer is unhappy with a decision that has been made, that parent/carer should first take it up informally with the officer or Department that made the original decision. If it is necessary to put the query in writing, then the Council will offer assistance with this in the case of a parent/carer with a disability.

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If the matter is not resolved informally in this way, then the parent/carer will be required to complete a *Transport Appeal Form* (TAF1) which can be downloaded from the Council website. Alternatively a copy of the form can be requested from the School Transport Team (See appendix B). The TAF1 form must be submitted within 20 working days of receipt of the original transport decision being made by the Council.

The completed form should then be returned to the School Transport Team. The Team Leader together with another Children's Services officer will review the initial decision and further information submitted. This will be completed within 20 working days of receipt of the TAF1 form.

It is anticipated that the majority of appeals will be resolved at this stage. If the appeal is unsuccessful the parent will receive a copy of the appeal form with the reasons given for the decision.

If the matter remains unresolved the parent/carer can make a further appeal to the Transport Eligibility Panel. Appeals must be submitted, using the TAF2 form available on the website, directly to the Appeals Clerk, within 20 working days of the receipt of the decision of the first appeal considered by School Transport and a Children's Services Officer. When submitting the completed TAF2 form, parents/carers must also submit the decision letter received as the result of the initial appeal. The Transport Eligibility Panel consists of 3 people who are independent and who have volunteered for the role. They are not paid and are not associated with the Council or a school connected with the appeal except as an independent panel member. They are trained in all aspects of this Policy and will make decisions within its remit. A Clerk will be present to minute the hearing and will write to parents with the decision made by the Transport Eligibility Panel.

Parents/carers must submit all evidence to the Appeals Clerk 10 working days before your appeal is due to be held. Information on how and where to submit this evidence is on the TAF2. Evidence received after this will only be considered with the agreement of the Panel and late evidence may result in the appeal being moved to a later date.

Parents/carers are invited to verbally represent their case to the Panel. A maximum of 2 adults are able to attend a hearing. These can be both parents/carers or 1 parent and 1 supporter. An interpreter or signer may be provided if requested on the TAF2 form. No children may attend.

A member of the School Transport Team will also be present to explain the reasons why transport, or the particular provision requested, had been refused.

The Panel will consider the information provided on the TAF2 form and any additional evidence provided by the parent/carer, as well representation from TC&ET. Appeals panels will be arranged as soon as is possible within 40 working days. The necessary documents will be provided to parents and the panel at least 5 working days before the appeal date, unless a shorter period is agreed beforehand. The outcome of the appeal will be advised to the parent/carer in writing within 5 working days of the appeal hearing. Where parents/carers have a disability, which may impact on their ability to attend a hearing, or if they require assistance with language interpretation or reading, appropriate assistance will be provided by the Council if it is identified on the TAF2 form.

Where parents have a disability, which may impact on their ability to attend a hearing or if they require assistance with language interpretation or reading, appropriate assistance will be provided by the Council.

Where the pupil in question holds a statement of special educational needs or EHCP, it may be that a disagreement about travel is part of a wider question of school provision

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and placement. In such an instance, it may be necessary for the matter to be considered by a Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal. Although this body does not hear appeals specifically about transport, it may consider it as part of a wider appeal.

The Appeals Process detailed above does not prevent the parent/carer raising a school transport related issue with a local Councillor or any other person.

Where a parent/carer feels that an appeal has not been conducted in a fair manner, he or she may pursue a complaint using the Council's complaints procedure.

It should be noted that appeals will not be considered where the parent/carer does not agree with the school named in the EHC plan and they are appealing for transport refused due to parental preference. Where the education establishment is not agreed then the parent/carer should make an appeal to the SEND Tribunal

6. Complaints/Queries

If a parent/carer has a query or is disastified by any aspect with regard to the determination of eligibility/entitlement for travel assistance, this should initially be brought to the attention of the School Transport Team.

Queries/complaints relating to journey planning, standard/condition of vehicles, drivers, passenger assistants and any other issues relating to the journey to/from school should initially be brought to the attention of the School Transport Team (see appendix B).

If the complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction it may be escalated via the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/local-government-in-central-bedfordshire/customer-feedback/default.aspx

7. Principles

Central Bedfordshire Council aims to provide safe, efficient and cost effective transport for students entitled to transport assistance, in accordance with its duties and powers as described in legislation.

In meeting its statutory responsibility Central Bedfordshire Council will provide transport assistance in accordance with agreed eligibility criteria which it will review annually.

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity and access to services and facilities and as such has undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment of this Policy.

Information will be made available for parents, carers and students so that they are aware of the eligibility criteria and process for applying for transport assistance.

Parents, carers and students are required to agree to a Code of Conduct when students are travelling on transport provided by the Council.

Eligibility for transport assistance will be reviewed termly (before the start of each new term) to ensure that those students who are receiving transport remain eligible.

Take-up of transport assistance will be monitored to ensure that access is fair and equitable and that hard to reach groups and those who are most vulnerable are aware of their entitlement.

Information relating to applications for transport assistance will be held on a database for monitoring purposes and numerical information may be shared as requested with Central Government. Fair processing notices will be given to all applicants to ensure that they are aware of the purpose of the storage of their personal details.

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Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to supporting sustainable modes of travel to school and college. Walking and cycling helps to reduce the congestion caused by the journey to school, together with the associated accidents and pollution and carbon emissions. If walking or cycling is not an option, school contract buses, public transport and car-sharing are more sustainable alternatives to individual car journeys.

The eligibility criteria set out in the Policy will be used for students starting a new course in the academic year 2019/20. Students entering the second or third year of a course will be assessed using the same eligibility criteria against which their original application was assessed.

The timescale for arranging transport assistance, if approved, will be a maximum of 15 working days from receipt of the application if the application is returned the return by date stipulated on the application form.

A travel training programme to support those students who are physically able to walk, to travel more independently and to support transition to adult life will be introduced.

The Council will seek to introduce escorts on a temporary or permanent basis if a need for one is identified at point of application.

8. Implementation and Monitoring of the policy

The Director of Children's Services will be responsible for the implementation of this policy through the development of internal processes that will ensure the ability to monitor take up of service and regular reviews for those in receipt of the service.

This policy and the eligibility criteria will be kept under review and will be formally reviewed one year after implementation and thereafter every year.

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Appendix A: Transport Assistance for families with a low income

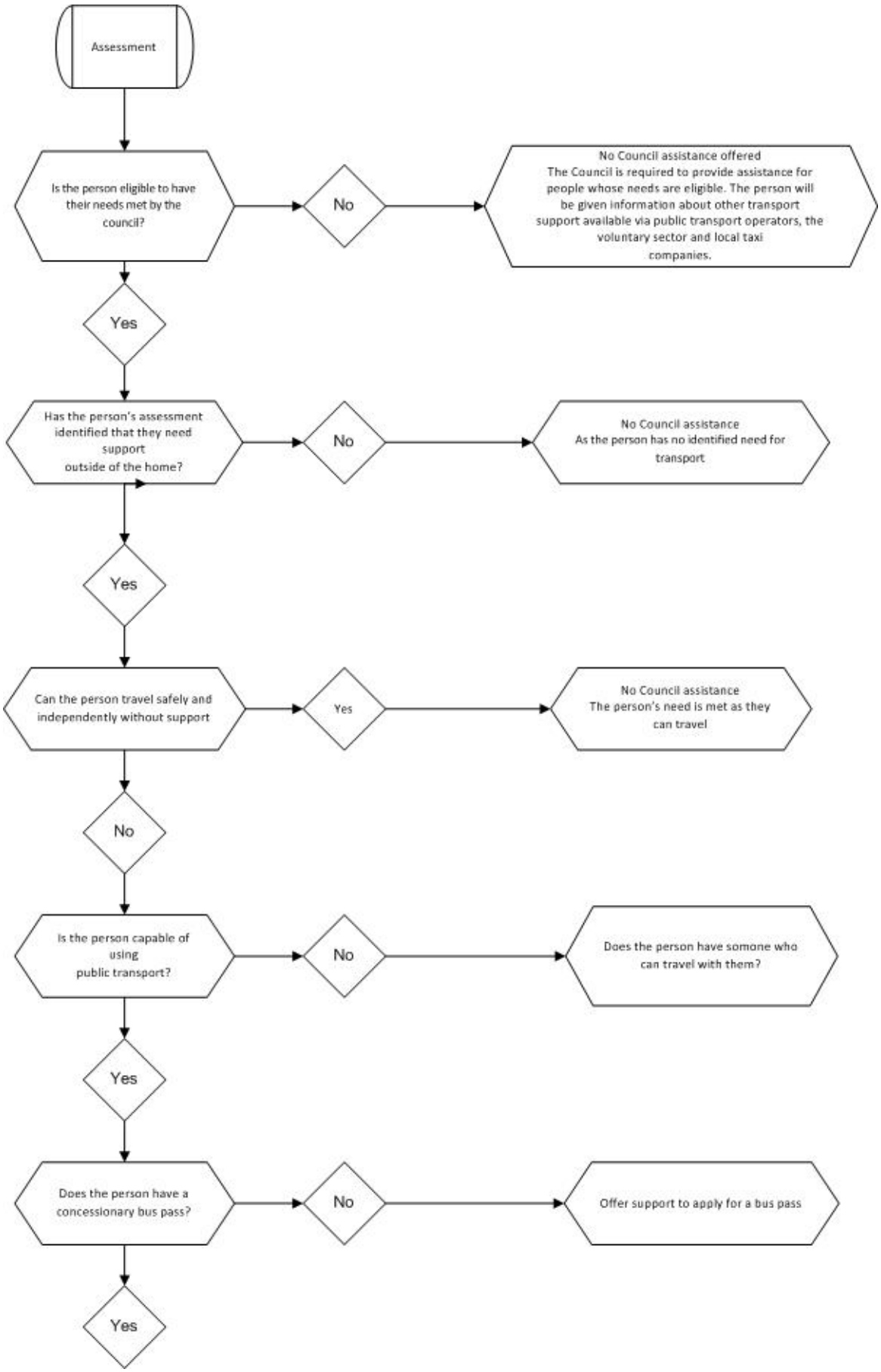
1. Children from low income groups are defined in the Education and Inspections Act (2006) as those whose families are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit (WTC)

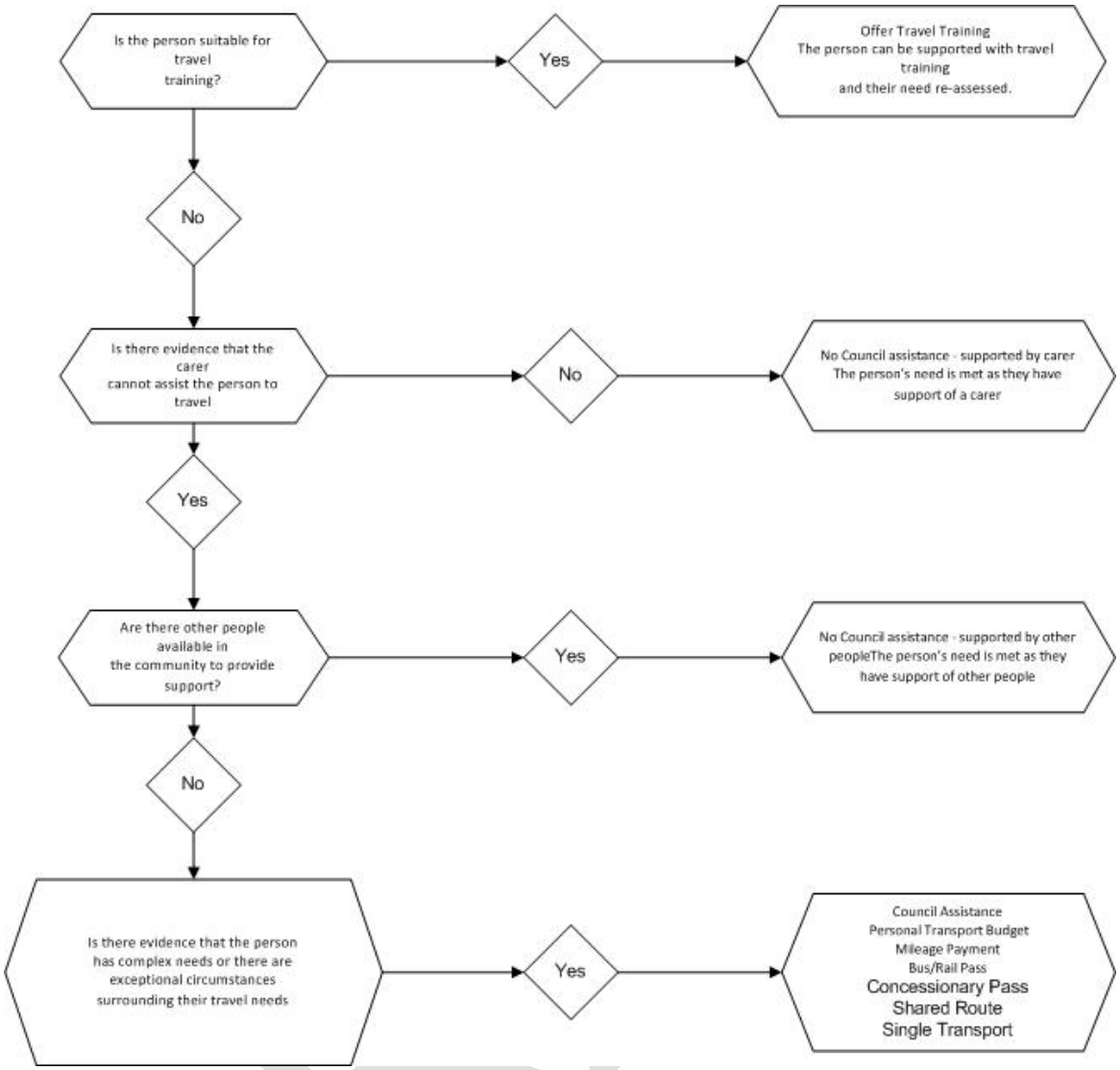
Maximum Working Tax Credit (WTC)

2. When a customer is first awarded tax credits, or following a change in their household circumstances, HM Revenue and Customs issue a "tax credits award notice" detailing the breakdown and amount of the award. Part two of the award notice gives details of "How we work out your tax credits" including details of the full WTC elements. This is the maximum amount a customer can receive in WTC in any year. It then lists "any reduction due to your income" and shows the net amount payable. It is therefore readily apparent from the award notice whether a person is receiving maximum WTC or a reduced sum due to income. Where there is a reduction due to your income in this section then you would not qualify for travel assistance.

3. Please see below the list of qualifying benefits and the documentation required to assess entitlement to transport:

Benefit	Documentation required
Income Support (IS)	• Letter confirming receipt of benefit
Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA)	• Letter confirming receipt of benefit
Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (from the National Asylum Support Service)	Letter of confirmation from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS)
Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit	Pension Credit M1000 Award Notice
Child Tax Credit, provided a parent /carer is not entitled to Working Tax Credit and has an annual income (as assessed by HM Revenue and Customs) that does not exceed £16,190	• TC602 Tax Award Credit Notice – issued by HM Revenue and Customs • Letter from the local Revenues and Customs Office confirming tax credit details
Employment Support Allowance	• Letter confirming receipt of benefit


Assessment
Is the person eligible to have their needs met by the council?
No
No Council assistance offered
The Council is required to provide assistance for people whose needs are eligible. The person will be given information about other transport support available via public transport operators, the voluntary sector and local taxi companies.
Yes
Has the person's assessment identified that they need support outside of the home?
No
No Council assistance
As the person has no identified need for transport
Yes
Can the person travel safely and independently without support
Yes
No Council assistance
The person's need is met as they can travel
No
Is the person capable of using public transport?
No
Does the person have somone who can travel with them?
Yes
Does the person have a concessionary bus pass?
No
Offer support to apply for a bus pass
Yes


Is the person suitable for travel training?
Yes
Offer Travel Training
The person can be supported with travel training
and their need re-assessed.
No
Is there evidence that the carer cannot assist the person to travel
No
No Council assistance - supported by carer
The person's need is met as they have support of a carer
Yes
Are there other people available in the community to provide support?
Yes
No Council assistance - supported by other peopleThe person's need is met as they have support of other people
No
Is there evidence that the person has complex needs or there are exceptional circumstances surrounding their travel needs
Yes
Council Assistance
Personal Transport Budget
Mileage Payment
Bus/Rail Pass
Concessionary Pass
Shared Route
Single Transport

Appendix C: Contact details

Please contact School Transport at:

Tel: 0300 300 8339

Email: school.transport@centralbedfordshire.go.uk

Address: School Transport Team, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5TQ

If you wish to make any other enquiries or to make a complaint

The please contact Customer relations:

Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ

Tel: 0300 300 6077 or 0300 300 4995

Email: customer.relations@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

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Appendix C

Home-to-School/College Travel Assistance Consultation Report

1. Purpose of consultation

The Council currently transports over 5,000 children/students from home to school each year. In 2016/17 this cost the council over £8.4 million, a rise of over £1.1m from the previous year. Having reviewed the legal requirements, the council has identified that it is currently offering services over and above the recognised statutory minimum.

The Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policies for Central Bedfordshire are therefore being reviewed. The consultation sought to understand the public's views on proposed changes to its Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policies. Responses to the consultation are helping to inform the review. Any revisions to the policies would then be applied (subject to approval) to new applications for the academic year 2018/19 and future new applications.

2. The proposals

The consultation sought feedback on a variety of proposals, looking at changes to; qualifying schools and where travel will be provided to, age range criteria, transport to boarding schools for Special Education Needs(SEN) provision and the type of travel assistance offered to those aged between 9-16 years old.

Elements of the proposals relate to provision for under-5s through to those attending post-16 education as well as having implications for SEN and mainstream students.

3. The Consultation Process

The consultation document was made available both as an online survey and a paper questionnaire and was launched on 29th June 2017 and concluded on 18th September 2017 following an extension after feedback from parents requesting additional time.

The consultation was supported by a comprehensive communications campaign which directly targeted parents/carers and those in the wider community.

Activities included:

- A news release was issued to all local newspaper groups at the start of the consultation. Biggleswade Comet and Dunstable Gazette both published

articles (9th July). Bedfordshire on Sunday and Biggleswade Comet again published articles during the consultation period.

- Regular updates were posted on CBC social media channels;
  - Twitter:
    - Number of tweets: 22
    - Total engagements (comments, likes, retweets): 133
    - Total impressions (people that saw the tweets): 21,444
  - Facebook
    - 2 posts
    - 391 engagements
    - 21,282 impressions
- Email bulletins were issued encouraging people signed up for Central Bedfordshire news to take part in the consultation.
- Updates were published in various council newsletters (Staff Central, Members' Information Bulletin) to promote the consultation and to encourage those in a position of influence such as councillors to promote it further.
- Targeted promotion with emails sent to database of 3000 parents/carers on the school transport database
- Emails and alerts were sent to all schools and colleges asking to help make parents aware.
- Notices were put up on the school admissions web pages, linking to the consultation page as these users could be directly affected by proposals.

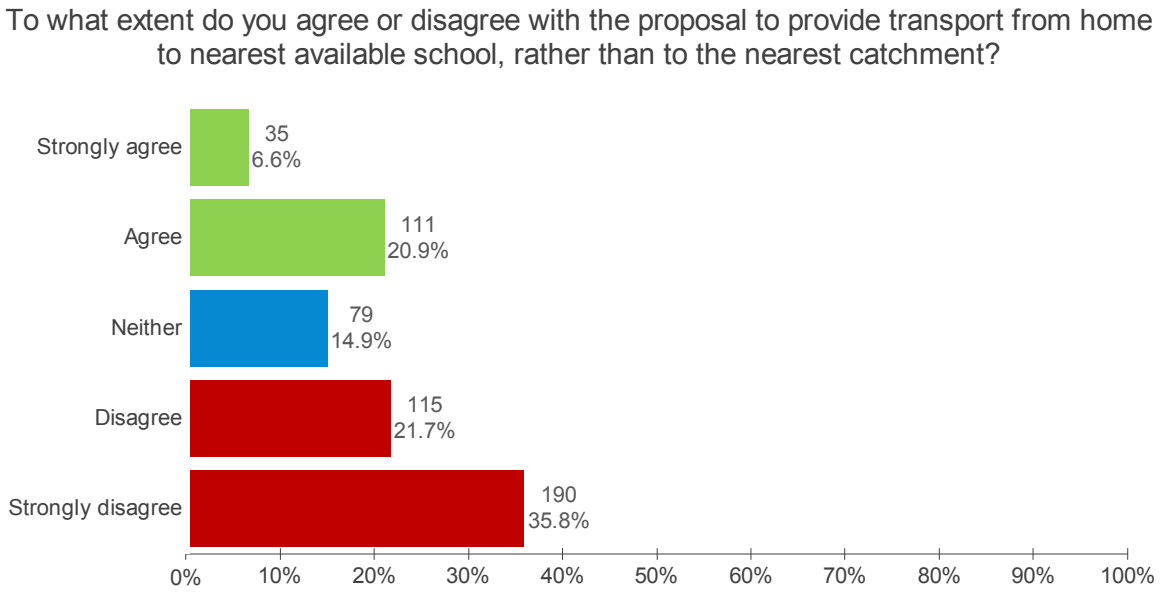
Paper copies of the questionnaires were made available through all Central Bedfordshire libraries and on the *Just Ask* 'Rave bus' that travelled Central Bedfordshire talking to residents.

The Home-to-School consultation webpages had a total of 16,357 page views between 29th June 2017 and 18th September 2017, demonstrating a high level of interest and reach of the campaign. The top method used to find information was via Facebook with just under 3,625 hits. Others included; 3,602 hits from google searches, 1,754 from Gov Delivery bulletins, 429 from Bing search engine and 160 hits from Twitter. 5,247 hits came directly meaning from untraceable sources but mostly likely from links in emails that were sent to parent/carers.

4. Feedback on the proposals

In total 538 residents participated in the consultation by completing the survey. 83% (449) said they were parents/carers of which 60% (271) said they were intending to apply for a 2018 school place. These groups were key stakeholders and it was important to engage with all of them throughout the consultation. The second biggest group were those who said they were residents of Central Bedfordshire 12% (67).

a. Changes to qualifying schools



58% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal to provide transport to the nearest available school, rather than to the nearest catchment school. With less than 28% supporting the proposal.

Comments on the proposal:

229 respondents provided additional comments regarding the first question. An analysis of the comments reaffirms the views of the first question, with the most frequent themes being:

- Council should provide transport to catchment schools (50 respondents)
- Policy restricts parental choice (40 respondents)
- School places and transport should be connected (40 responses)
- Policy would have adverse effect on children (31 respondents)
- Policy disregards catchment system (25 respondents)

"Q1 has big implications on Admissions as this will affect where parents choose to send their child to school. It is not the fault of the parent that the catchment school is not necessarily

their nearest school. It seems unfair to penalise parents and children by denying them transport to what the council has determined is the catchment school."

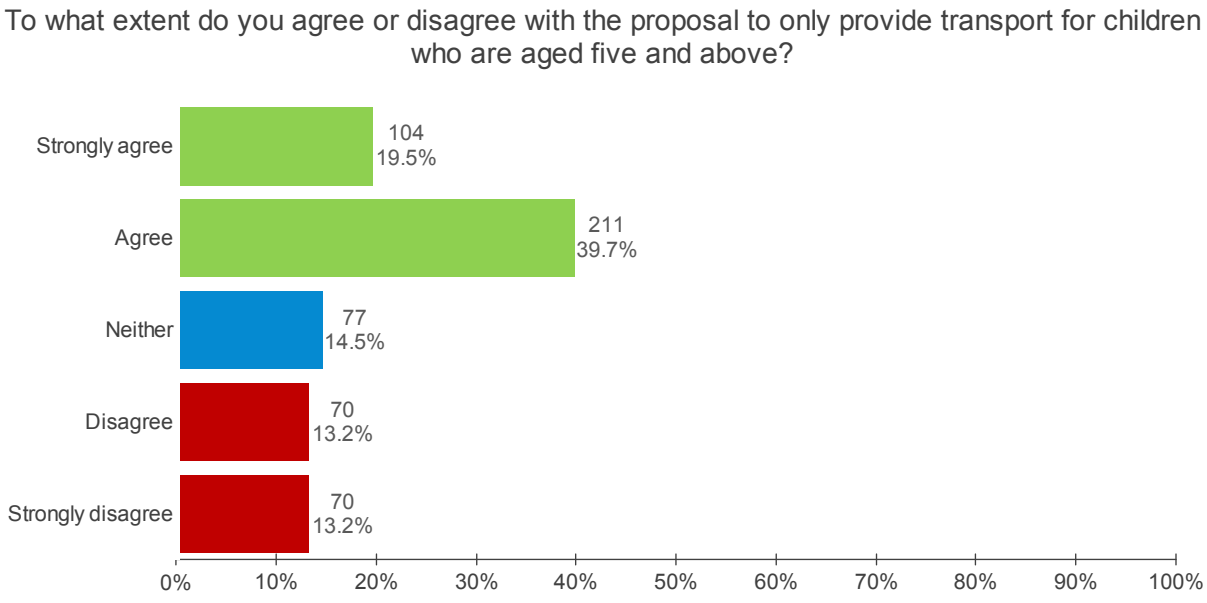
"this takes away parent choice for a school best to your childs needs"

"While this policy may make more financial sense, if the admissions policy of the schools are not in line with the transport policy, then there may be hardship on the child and family concerned."

Summary

There was a lack of support for this policy from respondents. Many of the main themes to come from the comments revolved around the disparity between the CBC school transport policies and BC school admissions criteria. It was pointed out that many schools still used catchment areas as criteria, with families choosing where to live based upon these catchments areas. To remove catchments from the school transport policies would mean some children would not be able to attend their preferred school of choice. This created a large amount of concern and confusion around why these two policies were not aligned together.

b. Changes to age range criteria



The majority (59%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to only provide transport for children who are aged five and above, with only 26.4% disagreeing.

Comments on the proposal:

- Proposals risk hindering development of children and young people (23 respondents)
- Under 5's should be escorted (5 respondents)

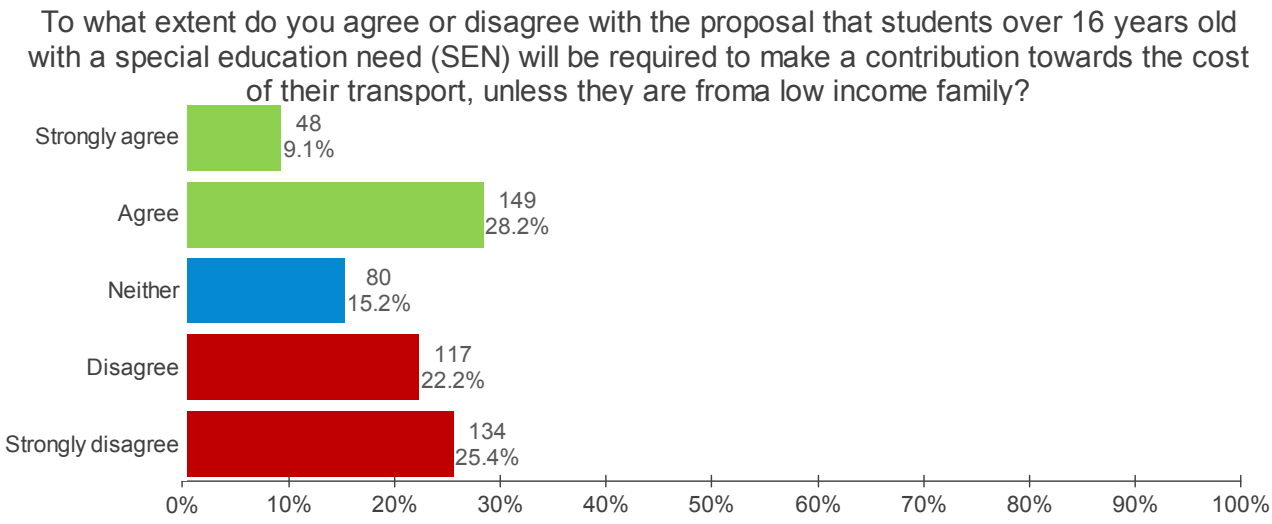
"Although children do not have to attend school full time until the term after which they turn five, the vast majority of children start school in the September (and attend full time) following their fourth birthday. This is strongly encouraged by schools and academies to ensure the best start for both the children and staff at the school. Parents can defer their child's place until the term after their fifth birthday, however for summer born children we will only hold the place for the child until the start of the summer term. If parents of summer born children have not started by this time, the place is withdrawn and parents are then required to reapply for a Year 1 place, at which there is no guarantee of a place at their preferred schools. Although the Council is not obliged to offer transport to children below statutory school age it seems at odds that they would not offer transport to four year old children in Reception Year when they are legally entitled to full time education at school."

"If transport is withdrawn for 4 year olds this would have a hugely detrimental impact on the early years education of Traveller children which could result in children missing the entire Reception year as parents would choose to keep their children at home until they could access the transport."

Summary

Whilst the majority supported this proposal there was some concern from those opposed with regards to four-year olds who have been granted a school place. There was again some concern and confusion around why school transport should not be provided to a pupil when a school place has been allocated. There was also some concern that this would impact most upon more vulnerable groups who could not facilitate the transport to school themselves and would have to defer starting school until the age of five, potentially putting them at a disadvantage to their peers who would be able to attend from the age of four.

c. Post-16 (SEN) contributions



47% disagreed with the proposal to require post 16-year olds with SEN to contribute towards the cost of their transport, unless from a low-income family. Another 37% agreed with the proposal with a further 15% responding neither, indicating a wider split in opinions.

Comments on the proposal:

- Transport for SEN should be provided (42 respondents)
- Paying for transport will cost families (36 respondents)
- Post 16 must stay in school (27 responses)
- SEN students have to travel for appropriate schooling (26 respondents)

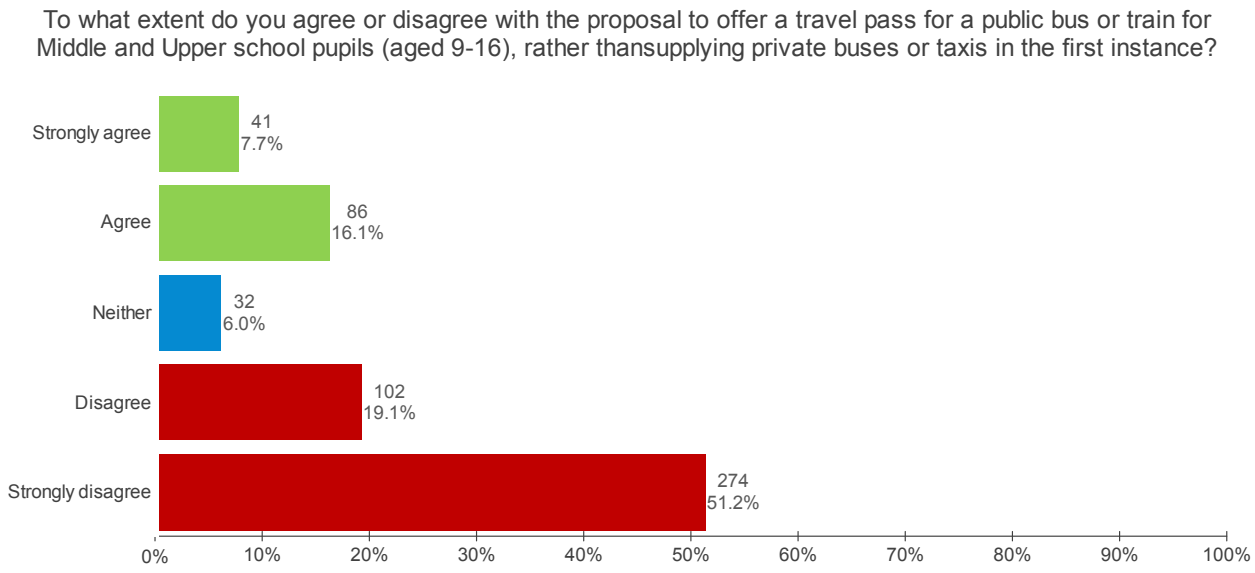
"This is unreasonable and in my opinion shows discrimination. It is not the fault of the family that a child has SEND and therefore has to travel further afield to attend school, e.g., Leighton Buzzard to Houghton Regis. Some over 16 have a very low academic age so it is important they remain at school where they feel safe and comfortable. Families with SEN children have enough pressure and their lives have to fit around the child as it is. There is no special school in Leighton Buzzard which again is not the fault of the families so this cost of transport should be fully covered."

"As schooling is now compulsory up to age 18, it would be discriminatory to request that those over 16 with a SEN should have to pay for their transport. If there are only certain schools that can fully support a child with a SEN, then it would be disgraceful to deny them access to that school on the grounds of transport cost. Forcing a child with a SEN to be placed somewhere where they cannot reach their full potential not only impacts negatively on that child themself, but can also cause disruption to the rest of their class and prevent those students from achieving what they should."

Summary

There was less of a consensus on this proposal but a larger proportion disagreed with it. Responses have indicated that it is unreasonable for SEN students to be asked to contribute towards transport as the locations of appropriate schools are often not local to where they live, meaning they may travel further than mainstream students would have to. Another frequent theme suggested that having to contribute to travel would cost families money, and would adversely impact those families just be above the 'low-income' threshold. Once again, there were comments regarding the inconsistent approach to policies, with many highlighting that it was now mandatory for students to remain in some form of further education after the age of 16. There were concerns that removing paid transport could affect attendance figures negatively, hence hampering the education of some students.

d. Changes to what travel assistance is offered



A significant majority (70%) disagreed with the proposal to offer a travel pass for a public bus or train to students (aged 9-16) rather than supply private buses or taxis in the first instance. Only 24% of respondents agreed with the proposal showing an overwhelming objection to the policy.

Comments on the proposal:

- Concerns over current public transport provision (119 respondents)
- Concerns with younger children travelling alone on public transport (116 respondents)
- Public transport not suitable for many SEN children (6 respondents)

"I have concerns regarding child protection using public transport, children would potentially be exposed to situations they should be protected from. The current public bus service would be inadequate to manage the number of children at the same time causing children to arrive late at school which would effect their education. This is a very bad idea."

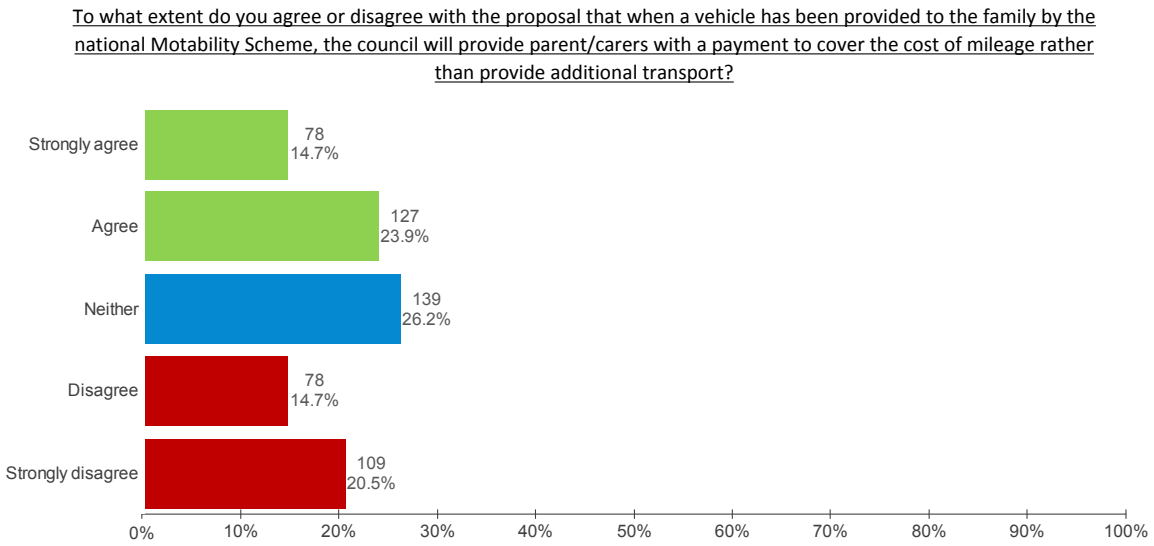
"Public buses may be unreliable - what happens if they are late? or full? I have concerns about pupil safety. I would be very concerned about by young daughter travelling on a public bus unaccompanied - I cannot accompany her as I work full time. A school bus gives me peace of mind."

"No SEN child would be able to get on a bus on there own , and if that child was to have a meltdown, they would be putting themselves and the public in danger"

Summary

Comments have highlighted two extremely common themes regarding this proposal. Firstly, there is concern regarding the current provision of public transport in Central Bedfordshire, many claiming it is too scarce and unreliable to be used as school transport. Respondents have suggested that transport links to villages are a particular issue and no routes would be suitable for their child to get directly to school. Secondly there were concerns over the safety of children on public transport, particularly those as young as nine with many parents worried about placing that amount of responsibility on young children. Safeguarding was also a frequent theme with respondents extremely concerned about young children being in close proximity to the general public unsupervised. There was some recognition that this proposal could work, but only if the age range was changed.

e. Motability Vehicle Proposal



39% of respondents agreed with the proposal to provide parents/carers with a payment to cover the cost of mileage of transporting their child to school with their Motability vehicle. 35% disagreed with the proposal whilst 26% responded neither, indicating no opinion which suggests the proposal may not affect them enough to comment either way.

Comments on the proposal:

- Motability proposal would penalise working parents (27 respondents)
- Agree with Motability vehicle proposal (4 respondents)

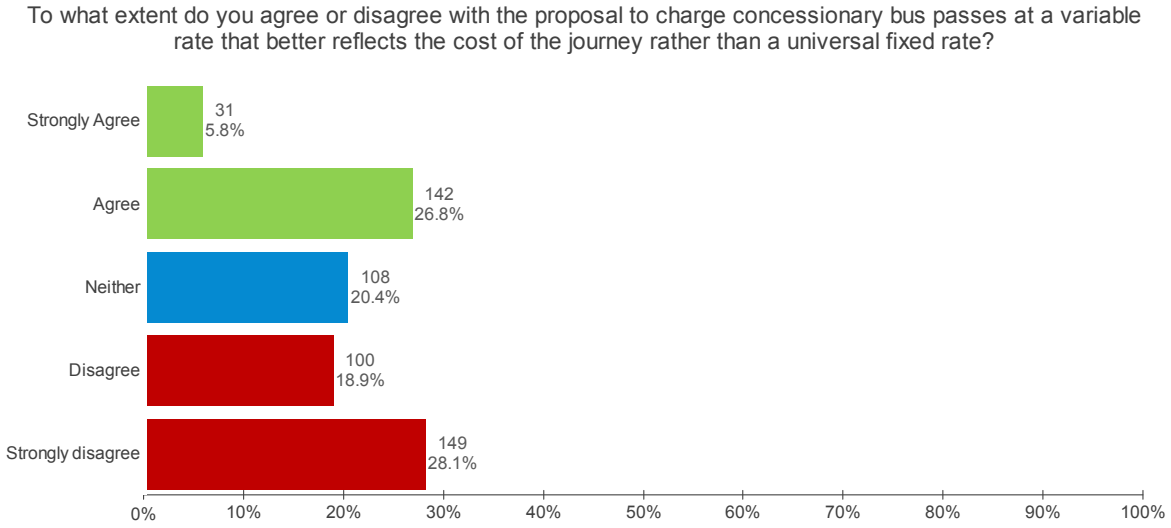
"Disabled children are likely to be travelling very much longer distances to school, and those schools are less likely to provide any sort of wraparound care. Without school transport it would become difficult if not impossible for many parents to work. For single parents this could be catastrophic."

"it is ridiculous for children who have mobility cars to be transported to their schools by their parents/ carers when their parents/carers have to go to work, or have other commitments ie other children. This would not work in our situation as I would have to give up work and claim benefits from the council if I were to drive my child to and from school every day in their motability car. I strongly object to this proposal. In addition, is the council trying to promote more cars and traffic onto our already congested roads? I thought we were meant to be looking at our carbon footprint and thinking of ways to reduce car journeys?"

Summary

Responses have shown more of a split regarding this proposal with no clear majority either way. With the single biggest response coming from 'neither' suggesting no opinion from a large proportion of respondents. The additional comments should be noted for the details they provide regarding the potential impact on some families. Comments have clearly indicated concern with many respondents explaining how this proposal would negatively impact upon working parents of SEN students. They explain that the amount of travel that would be required to undertake would mean many would have to give up their job to do this. As with a previous proposal, the distance that SEN students are required to travel to school, was highlighted, and the responses have once again noted that is unfair to penalise these students and families because of it.

f. Concessionary buss passes



Just under half of respondents (47%) disagreed with the proposal to charge concessionary bus passes at a variable rate rather than a universal fixed rate, with only 33% agreeing with the proposal.

Comments on the proposal:

- Concessionary pass should not be charged on distance (23 respondents)
- Parents should be means tested (6 respondents)
- Agree with concessionary bus passes (4 respondents)

"I think if you start to have a variable charge for a pass it will have a huge impact on the demographic attending particular schools where the journey may incur a greater/lesser cost for whatever reason…"

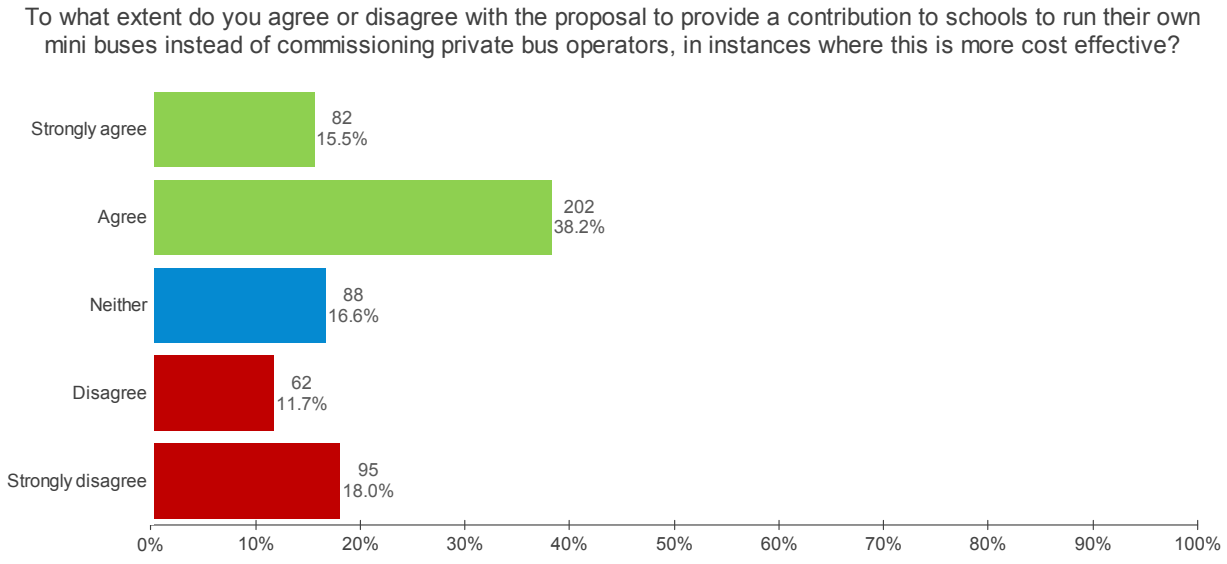
"It seems unfair that some pupils will be charged more for their journey than others because they live further away. It may mean that they cannot afford to travel to a chosen place of education if too expensive."

"If the cost of transport was increased this would possibly make it unviable for us. We would then have to drive to the school which would increase transport at school which the council says it wants to avoid."

Summary

Once again there was no outright majority in agreement or disagreement with the proposal. The largest majority was 47% in disagreement. Comments suggest this is because respondents disagree with the proposal to charge on distance rather than a fixed rate. Cost also became a factor with some suggesting the price could lead to some students not being able to access certain schools or curriculum because of cost.

g. School mini buses



The majority (54%) supported the proposal to provide a contribution to schools to run their own mini buses instead of commissioning private bus operators, with only 30% in disagreement.

Comments on the proposal:

- Transport is the responsibility of the council (42 respondents)
- Schools cannot run own mini bus (31 respondents)

- Agree with concessionary bus passes (4 respondents)

"Contribution to schools is a cop out of the councils responsibility…The council has responsibility to ensure students can get to their place of education just the same as parents have responsibility for them to attend but this change WILL mean students not being able to get to their education facility"

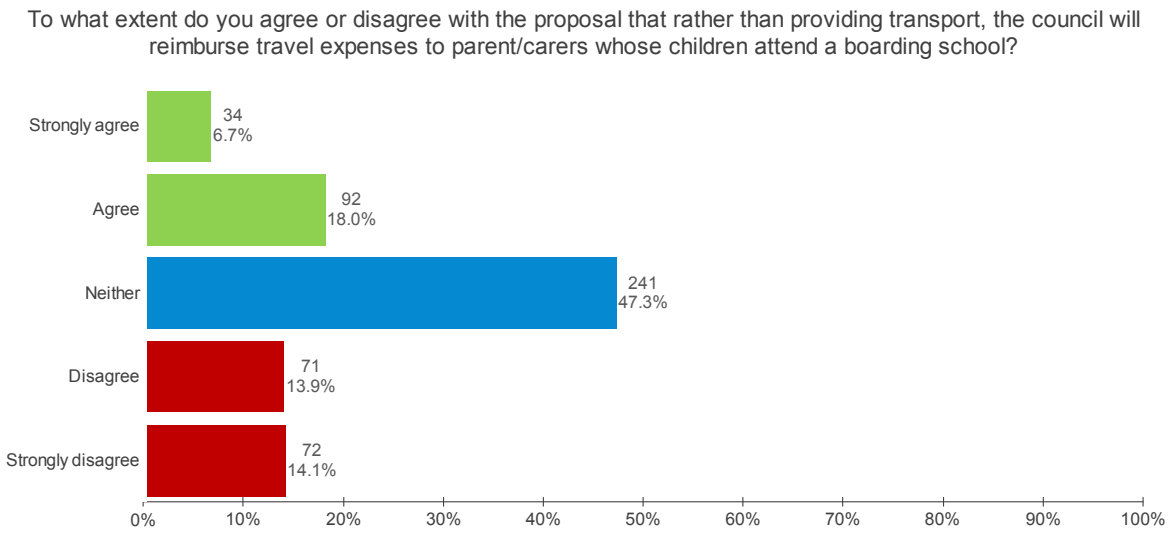
Not a very practical idea as school minibuses are for all pupils to use and having to use them at the beginning an end of school day for possibly one or two pupils would completely upset the use of having a minibus to take pupils to Visits and sports fixtures during the morning and after-school. The school would have to supply and pay for a driver to run the mini buses as it is usually only a few members of teaching staff that are trained to drive the minibuses. Schools cannot afford any more expenses…"

"…if this is generally cost effective then yes but not at the cost of schools having to find more money from their already diminishing budgets to fund it."

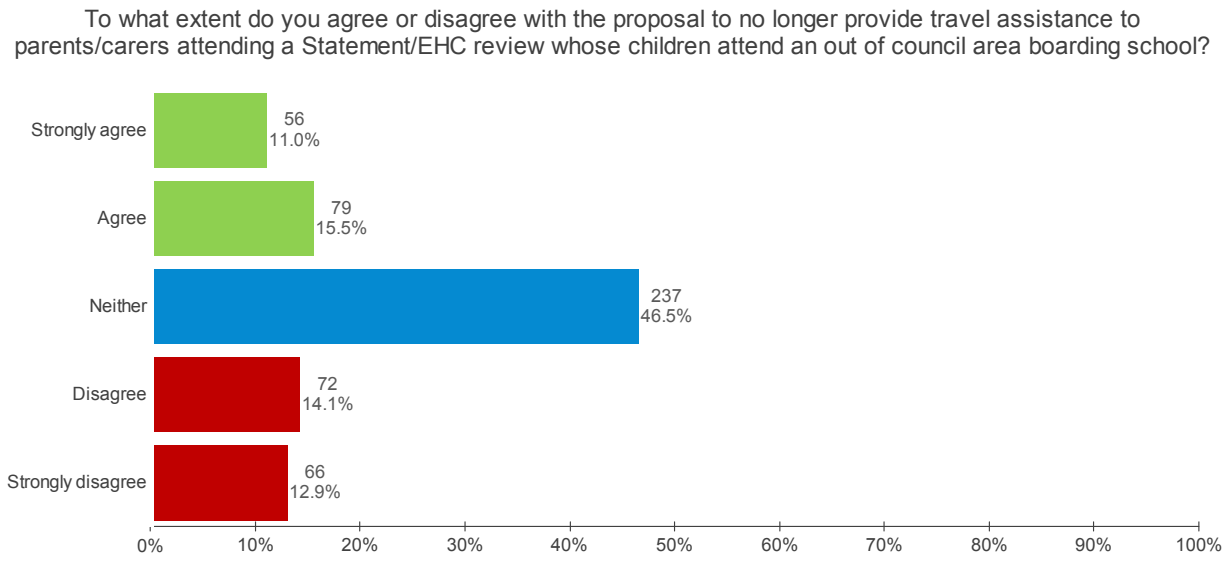
Summary

Whilst the majority of respondents were supportive of this proposal, there were some concerns about how well this would work in practice. Some felt it was not the role of the school to transport children and this should lie with the council. In particular they did not want to see further strain put upon school budgets by having to use money to facilitate the use of the mini bus. There were also concerns regarding the knock-on effect this proposal would have for extracurricular activities for the school i.e. field trips, sports events. Careful consideration would need to be given to these issues before any implementation.

h. Boarding Schools – *where a boarding school has been identified as the nearest available school to meet the child's needs.*



47.3% responded 'Neither' indicating no opinion, likely because of the very specific nature of the proposal. 28% disagreed with the proposal to reimburse travel expenses to parent/carers rather than provide transport in the first instance with 15% agreeing.



Again, a similar proportion of respondents (46.5%) responded 'Neither'. 27% disagreed with the proposal to no longer provide travel assistance to parents/carers attending a Statement/EHC review at an out of area boarding school. With a slightly smaller percentage (26.5%) disagreeing with the proposal.

Comments on the boarding school proposals:

- Families with SEN children should be supported (14 respondents)
- Misunderstanding of proposals (14 respondents)
- It is not the families fault they have to travel out of area (13 respondents)
- If school is deemed necessary, transport should be funded (9 respondents)

"If the school that is best for that child is out of area...why should the family have to pay? Any family with a child that has needs should be fully supported and to make life no more difficult than it already is. No one chooses to have a child with extra needs and to live the life,24/7 is tough...it should not be made any more difficult."

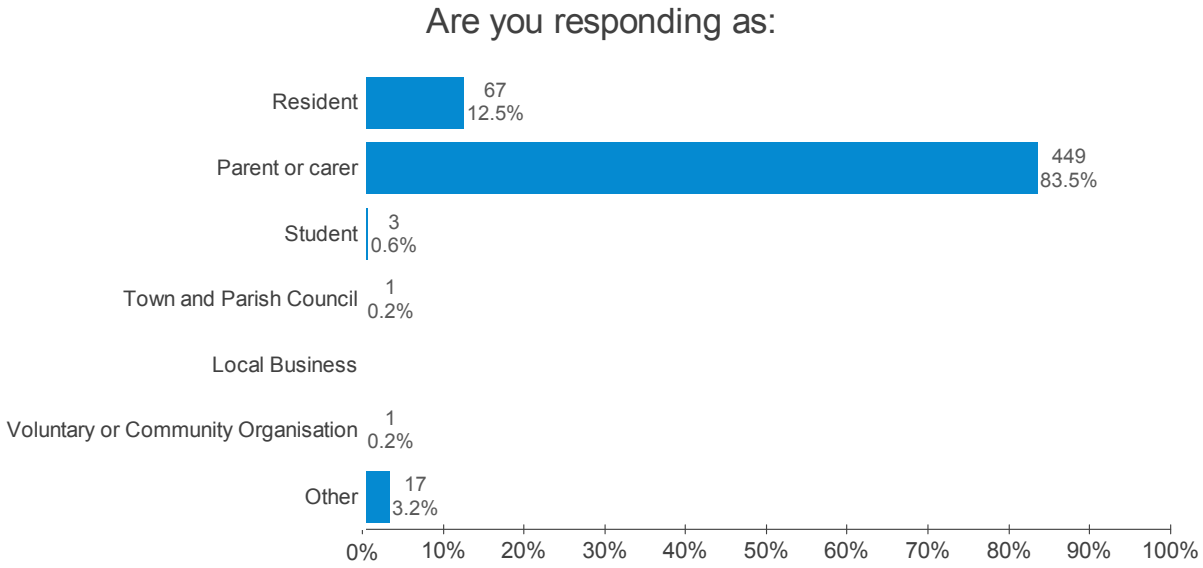
"Being able/not able to pay for travel should NOT affect whether a parent can attend a Statement/ EHC meeting - or do you really believe these are of no importance?"

Summary

A section of comments suggested a misunderstanding of the boarding school proposals with some assuming the proposals related to private boarding schools rather than residential schools for pupils with special educational needs. It is important to highlight this misunderstanding as this could have affected how people responded to the proposals, particularly the first proposal which offered to reimburse

travel expenses to parents instead of providing transport. Some parents questioned why the council was supposedly funding transport to private boarding schools. Overall more respondents disagreed with both proposals than those who agreed. An analysis of the comments shows that respondents are not keen to see SEN families impacted upon, with concerns that SEN families should be supported given the difficult circumstances they face and that they should not be punished for having to travel out of area for their child's education. The later point is a reoccurring theme throughout the consultation regarding services for SEN children/parents.

i. Profile of respondents



- 84% of respondents indicated that they were parents or carers. 13% of respondents were residents of Central Bedfordshire, and 3% responding as other. This is a good indication that the consultation reached key stakeholder groups.

Please specify which Town and Parish Council:
Biggleswade Town Council

Please specify the name of your organisation:
Bedford Area Bus Users' Society

If other, please state:	
Head Teacher	Teacher
Work in a secondary school with SEN children	Governor
Teacher	Local authority employee
User of local buses and a member of the bus user group BABUS	Senior teacher at Stanbridge School
Professional	Lower school
School Admissions Team (CBC)	

- 54% of respondents said they would be applying for a 2018 school place within Central Bedfordshire.

- 80% of respondents were female and 20% male.

- Although the majority of respondents (95%) did not have a disability, 5% of respondents considered themselves to be disabled.

- The respondent profile was similar to the average for Central Bedfordshire as a whole, with 94% of respondents identifying as White British,1% Black/Black British, 1% Asian/Asian British, 2% identifying as mixed ethnicity and 2% as 'Other ethnic group'.

- The majority of respondents were aged between 30-44 years (50%) and 45-59 (40%). 60+ represented 6% of total respondents, with Under 30s representing 4%.

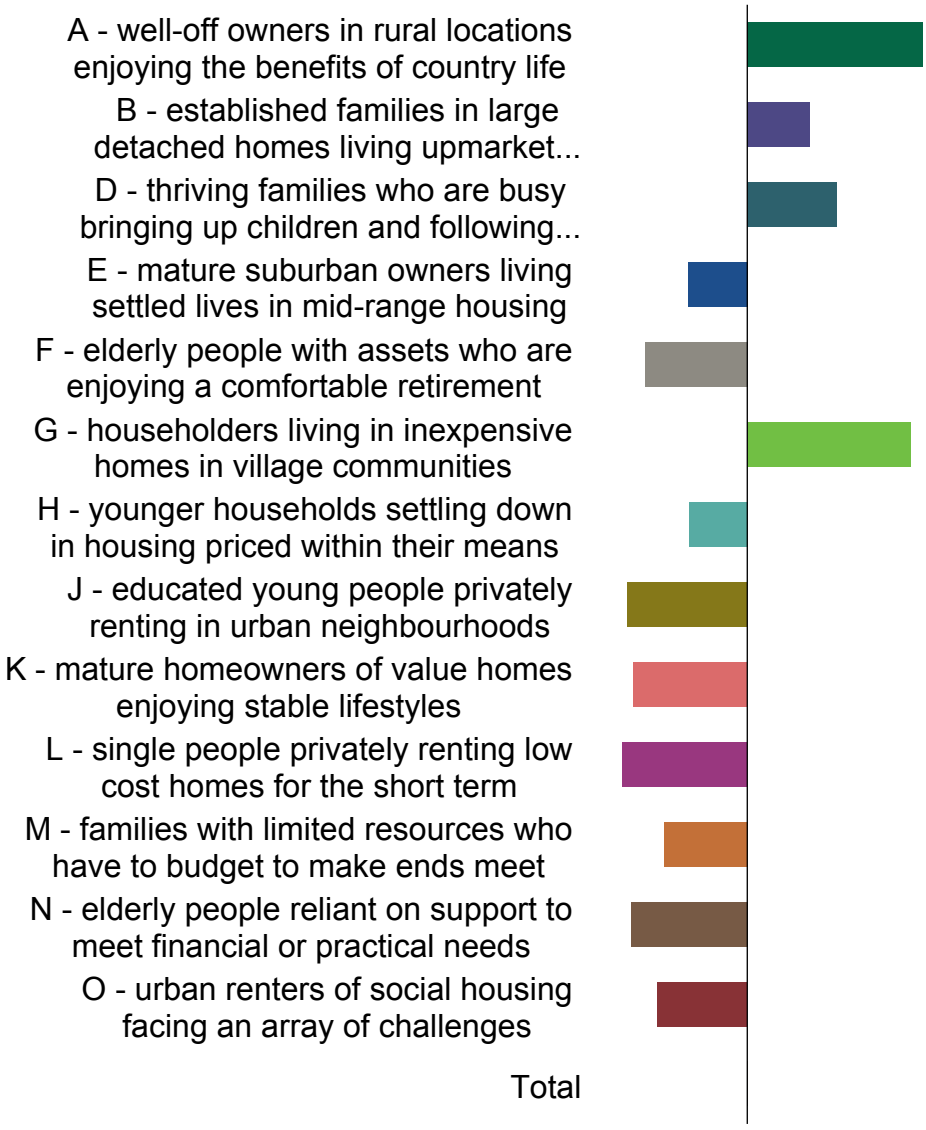
- Postcodes show there has been a varied response from across the Central Bedfordshire, and particularly from rural areas where there is a greater reliance on school transport, with less responses coming from the towns.

Postcode location (by Parish)	**No. of Respondents**	**Postcode location (out of area)**	**No. of Respondents**
Ampthill	15	**Aylesbury Vale**	**2**
Arlesey	16	**Bedford**	**5**
Aspley and Woburn	16	**Cambridge**	**1**
Barton-le-Clay	19	**Milton Keynes**	**7**
Biggleswade North	2		
Biggleswade South	6		
Caddington	12		
Cranfield and Marston Moretaine	82		
Dunstable-Central	1		
Dunstable-Icknield	2		
Dunstable-Manshead	2		
Dunstable-Northfields	5		
Dunstable-Watling	4		
Eaton Bray	2		
Flitwick	9		
Heath and Reach	30		
Houghton Conquest and Haynes	14		
Leighton Buzzard North	6		
Leighton Buzzard South	6		
Linslade	7		
Northill	20		
Parkside	4		
Potton	11		
Sandy	13		
Shefford	13		
Silsoe and Shillington	22		
Stotfold and Langford	20		
Tithe Farm	2		
Toddington	43		
Westoning, Flitton and Greenfield	33	**Central Bedfordshire Total**	**437**

Further analysis of the postcodes has allowed us to profile respondents. The analysis below uses Experian Mosaic data. This is a segmentation tool that looks at a wide range of data for every household in the country and then groups similar households together, including information on their preferences. This helps us to understand more about the characteristics of the respondents to the survey. It is only possible to use where we have the full, accurate postcode within Central Bedfordshire.

79% of consultation respondents gave a postcode that was valid to use in this analysis.

Compared to CBC residents



This data allows us to identify groups that may have been over or under represented in the consultation. Bars to the left indicate which groups have been under-represented and bars to the right represent groups which have been over-represented. The data shows that lower income groups have not been as active in taking part in the consultation in comparison with more affluent groups.

j. Additional analysis

Crosstab analysis was conducted on several demographic areas to identify any differing opinions between groups. Groups included; parent/carers, those applying for a 2018 school place, those aged 60 and above, and those who identified as having a disability.

Following analysis it was found that none of these groups gave vastly different answers to that of the overall results. It is important to conduct this cross-referencing task to mitigate against one particular group of people not being heard over the wider community.

5. Conclusion

The results of the consultation have broadly speaking uncovered considerable concern regarding the proposed policy changes. Whilst there were some elements of the proposals that have failed to attract support, others faced less opposition with the proposals allowing schools to run their own mini buses and to only provide transport for over-5s being supported. However, all of the proposals have highlighted issues that would require further thought, as summarised below.

<u>Inconsistencies in approach</u>
Firstly there was concern about the approach taken with the proposed changes. Respondents highlighted perceived inconsistencies and contradictions that the new policies created such as only providing transport to the nearest school. This proposal is not seen as being in line with council's wider approach to school admissions, with many school's still using catchment systems. Parents were concerned about applying for and accepting a place at a catchment school and then not being able to access school transport because it was not their nearest school. There was confusion about why the council is still using catchments if transport was no longer going to being provided to them.

Similarly, the proposal to only provide transport to children over the statutory school age of five was met with concern as parents claimed schools actively encourage pupils starting school following their fourth birthday with the school admissions team making provisions to allow this. Again, this highlighted to parents an inconsistent approach to children and schooling with accusations of a lack of joined up thinking within the council.

<u>Impact on children and young people with disabilities or special educational needs</u>
Secondly, respondents indicated that some of the proposals were unfair and targeted groups that were not able to adapt to these proposed changes. The Motability vehicle proposal drew criticism from service users i.e. parents with Motability vehicles. They explained that the proposal would severely impact their ability to maintain work as often appropriate schooling for their SEN children was much further afield than local mainstream schools, making the 'school-run' and reaching work on time unlikely to be viable. They felt this proposal unfairly penalised

them and their families for having to attend specialist schooling outside of the local area.

These sentiments were echoed in the proposal to require a contribution towards the cost of transport from post-16 SEN students, with respondents saying the need to attend a specialist school/college outside of the local area is not the fault of the students and they should not be penalised for having to access schooling outside of a local mainstream school/college.

Safety and Sustainability

A final theme from the consultation findings was the notion of safety and sustainability. The proposal to provide travel passes for public transport to pupils aged 9-16 years old was met with strong opposition with regards to the lower limit being nine years old. Safeguarding was a massive issue for parents who were concerned about the idea of their young children mixing with the public and having to navigate their way to school unaccompanied.

Some also highlighted concerns about whether the current public transport provision could sustain an influx of school children or whether it was currently suitable for transporting children at school times. There was a concern this had not been factored into the proposals with many parents citing current poor provision in rural areas as a barrier to getting to school.

There were similar thoughts with the proposal to provide a contribution to schools to allow them to run their own min buses, but again concerns were raised about whether this was sustainable for schools given current budget pressures. Some saw this proposal as passing the burden on to schools and they did not want to see education budgets spent on transport, which was seen solely as a council responsibility.

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The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Duty requires public bodies to have ***due regard*** to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

Protected Characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (elimination of discrimination only)
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Due Regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Duty as part of the process of decision-making. For example:

- How they act as employers
- How they develop, evaluate and review policy
- How they design, deliver and evaluate services
- How they commission and procure from others

Advancing equality of opportunity involves considering the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people because of their protected characteristics
- Meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
- Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low

Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed in discrimination law. This could mean making use of an exception or positive action provisions in order to provide a service in a way that is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic.

Officers should:
Keep an adequate record showing that the equality duties and relevant questions have been actively considered.
Be rigorous in both inquiring and reporting to members the outcome of the assessment and the legal duties.

Final approval of a proposal, can only happen after the completion of an equality impact assessment. It is unlawful to adopt a proposal contingent on an equality impact assessment

Title of the Assessment:		**Review of Home to School Travel Assistance**	**Date of Assessment:**	11/08/2017
Responsible Officer	**Name:**	Su Childerhouse		
	Title:	Head of Public Protection & Transport	**Extension Number:**	74394
	Email:	susan.childerhouse@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk		

Stage 1 - Setting out the nature of the proposal and potential outcomes.

Stage 1 – Aims and Objectives

1.1 What are the objectives of the proposal under consideration?

The Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policies for Central Bedfordshire are being reviewed in order to ensure that they meet the statutory requirements, whilst making the most efficient use of resources.

The Council currently provides more transport than is required by legislation. Currently, we transport over 5,000 children/students from home to school each year. In 2016/17 this cost the council over £8.4 million, a rise of over £1.1m from the previous year. Having reviewed the legislation, the council is currently offering services over and above the recognised statutory minimum

1.2 Why is this being done?

Central Bedfordshire Council has experienced reduced levels of government funding in recent years. Grant from national government for this year is half the amount of money received last year, and by 2019/20 this funding will disappear altogether. Meanwhile, there are increasing demands on services as a result of changes to the population.

Because of this, the council agreed a budget plan which is designed to maximise cost-effectiveness so that it can deliver the best possible services within available resources. The review of our home to school/college travel assistance policy contributes to our wider budget strategy.

The law states that it is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that a child gets to school, including accompanying them if necessary. This includes how their child will get to school and may include making arrangements with a friend or a childminder to ensure that the child is accompanied, or submitting applications as necessary for home to school travel assistance to the Council. It is also the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure the reasonable safety of themselves and their child between home and the designated pick up points.

1.3 What will be the impact on staff or customers?

The Council is proposing to change the following elements of the Home to School Transport Policies adopted by Executive in 2014:

<u>Changes to qualifying schools</u>

1. Travel will be provided from home to nearest available school with a place for that child, rather than to the nearest or catchment school. Where there are 'pyramids' of schools then that will be to the next school in the pyramid, rather than to the nearest school. For children with a SEN, it will usually be the school named in their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).

Changes to age range criteria

2. Transport will only be provided for children who are of statutory school age. The Council will no longer provide transport for children under 5 years old.
3. Students over 16 years old with an EHCP or a statement of special educational need (SEN) will be required to make a contribution towards the cost of their travel, unless they are from a low income family.

Changes to the travel assistance offered

4. The first offer of assistance for middle and upper school pupils (ages 9 -16) will be a travel pass for a public bus or train, rather than supplying contracted buses or taxis.
   This can help ensure the continuing viability of public bus routes, which can then be used by all members of the public. Buses and trains also help reduce congestion and the number of vehicles on the road, as well as parking issues.

5. Where a vehicle is provided to a family through the national Motability Scheme, we will provide parents/carers with a payment to cover the mileage, in order that they can use their specialised vehicle to transport their child to school or college.

6. Concessionary passes will be charged at a cost that better reflects the actual cost to the council of providing the transport. Concessionary passes are sold where there are spare seats on a council contracted route. The cost for concessions in 2016/17 was £157 per term. Under the revised scheme charges could vary from £100 - £300 based on journey cost.

7. Where a boarding school has been identified as the nearest available school to meet the child's needs, travel assistance will change for new applicants.

   In future, parents/carers will be required to make their own travel arrangements, for which appropriate reimbursement will be made. The council will cover the costs when this is less than the costs of providing travel.
   Travel assistance will no longer be provided to parents/carers attending one Statement/Education Health and Care Plan review per year at an out of council area school as this is a non-statutory provision.

   Where a Motability vehicle has been provided for the child, travel assistance will be by way of a mileage payment to the parent/carer to attend boarding school.

   If there are spaces on a bus to the boarding school provided through our travel assistance scheme, these spare spaces will continue to be offered to pupils who are not eligible for travel assistance, but they will be charged at a fee that reflects the cost to the council.
8. Where it is more cost effective, the council could commission the school to run their own bus instead of commissioning a private bus operator.
   Some schools already run their own minibuses. It therefore makes sense for the school to also use them for pupils to travel to and from school. The schools would receive a payment for this, which in turn would help schools to fund minibuses which are also used for other aspects of school life, such as field trips and sports training/matches.

1.4 How does this proposal contribute or relate to other Council initiatives?

The review of our home to school/college travel assistance policy contributes to our wider budget strategy

1.5 In which ways does the proposal support Central Bedfordshire's legal duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The Council will continue to meet the following requirements:

All children who are in reception year to the end of year 11 qualify for free school transport if they go to their **nearest suitable or catchment school** and live at least:

- 2 miles from the school if they are under 8
- 3 miles from the school if they are 8 or older.

If the family is in receipt of the maximum Working Tax Credit or your children are entitled to free school meals, they will get free school transport if they are:

I. aged 8 to 11 and the nearest suitable school is at least 2 miles away
II. aged 11 to 16 and attend 1 of the 3 nearest schools between 2 to 6 miles from the home address
III. aged 11 to 16 and attend the nearest school of their chosen religion or belief and it is between 2 to 15 miles from the home address

The Council must also make travel arrangements for pupils who are unable to walk to school due to their special educational need (SEN), disability or mobility problems; or because their route to school isn't safe. The needs of parents / carers are also considered.

1.6 Is it possible that this proposal could damage relations amongst groups of people with different protected characteristics or contribute to inequality by treating some members of the community less favourably such as people of different ages, men or women, people from black and minority ethnic communities, disabled people, carers, people with different religions or beliefs, new and expectant mothers, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities?

The council is undertaking consultation to ascertain views about the potential impact of the proposals.

Stage 2 - Consideration of national and local research, data and consultation findings in order to understand the potential impacts of the proposal.

Stage 2 - Consideration of Relevant Data and Consultation

In completing this section it will be helpful to consider:

- **Publicity** – Do people know that the service exists?
- **Access** – Who is using the service? / Who should be using the service? Why aren't they?
- **Appropriateness** – Does the service meet people's needs and improve outcomes?
- **Service support needs** – Is further training and development required for employees?
- **Partnership working** – Are partners aware of and implementing equality requirements?
- **Contracts & monitoring** – Is equality built into the contract and are outcomes monitored?

2.1. Examples of relevant evidence sources are listed below. Please tick which evidence sources are being used in this assessment and provide a summary for each protected characteristic in sections 2.2 and 2.3.

Internal desktop research			
	Place survey / Customer satisfaction data		Demographic Profiles – Census & ONS
√	Local Needs Analysis	√	Service Monitoring / Performance Information
√	Other local research		
Third party guidance and examples			
√	National / Regional Research		Analysis of service outcomes for different groups
√	Best Practice / Guidance	√	Benchmarking with other organisations
	Inspection Reports		
Public consultation related activities			
√	Consultation with Service Users	√	Consultation with Community / Voluntary Sector
√	Consultation with Staff		Customer Feedback / Complaints
	Data about the physical environment e.g. housing market, employment, education and training provision, transport, spatial planning and public spaces		
Consulting Members, stakeholders and specialists			
√	Elected Members	√	Expert views of stakeholders representing diverse groups
√	Specialist staff / service expertise		

Please bear in mind that whilst sections of the community will have common interests and concerns, views and issues vary within groups. E.g. women have differing needs and concerns depending on age, ethnic origin, disability etc

Lack of local knowledge or data is not a justification for assuming there is not a negative impact on some groups of people. Further research may be required.

2.2. Summary of Existing Data and Consultation Findings: - Service Delivery Considering the impact on Customers/Residents

- Age: *e.g. Under 16 yrs / 16-19 yrs / 20-29 yrs / 30-44 yrs / 45-59 yrs / 60-64 yrs / 65-74 yrs / 75+*

For September 2017 the numbers of entitled pupils for each area are:

Mainstream – 4911
SEN – 641
SEN P16 – 50
SEN 18+ 32
Mainstream P16 – 68 (This figure from last year was around 140-150, so an increase is expected in applications for this group)

SEN make up 11% of the students the council transports, post 16 SEN 0.87% and 18+ SEN 0.55%, mainstream 85% Post 16 SEN (max) 2.6%

School Transport Matters - March 2016

For post 16 students, the rising charges and lack of transport support are likely to limit choice, and affect staying on and completion rates particularly for those from less affluent homes and in rural areas.

The Association of Colleges reports one in five is considering dropping out, often due to transport problems. "*There are human and financial costs every time a young person fails to complete a course or does not achieve a recognised grade*". (LGA). The Local Government Association estimated that underachievement/drop out by this age group already costs the exchequer £814 million a year (2012 figures).

The effect of high bus fares for young people has been of concern to many organisations including the Youth Council, the Association of Colleges, *pteg* etc. *The iniquity of a national, funded, concessionary fare scheme offering free travel for elderly yet young people on apprenticeships earning as little as £3.30 per hour paying the full fare, is evident*.

Provision and funding is fragmented and young people have borne the brunt of transport cuts across the UK in the past five years, especially in rural England, where access and choice are now increasingly dependent upon private transport. Despite this, the Government wants participation in education and training, including apprenticeships, to rise for 16-18 year olds, and to reduce NEETs

SNAP PCF review of the consultation regarding proposals to change the 'The Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policies for Central Bedfordshire'

Contribution for 16+

This is lawful but CBC should avoid indirect discrimination. Will the contribution be set at a similar level to that of a bus pass for non-SEND students? The local authority should also consider that students with SEND may have to travel further to a suitable course.

Post 16 young people with SEN will be required to make a financial contribution. What is that contribution and are the Council looking at the bigger picture here? Will you be measuring your NEET figures as young people are forced to pull out of their courses, therefore risking that from 2018 fewer people take up further education?

- Disability: *e.g. Physical impairment / Sensory impairment / Mental health condition / Learning disability or difficulty / Long-standing illness or health condition / Severe disfigurement*

Guidance Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 2015

Transport
4.48 Transport can be an important factor in the support for children and young people with SEN or disabilities. The Local Offer must include information about arrangements for transport provision, including for those up to age 25 with an EHC plan, and this should include local authorities' policy statements.

4.49 Local authorities must ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made where necessary to facilitate an eligible child's attendance at school. Section 508B of the Education Act 1996

requires local authorities to make such school travel arrangements as they consider necessary for children within their area. Such arrangements must be provided free of charge. Section 508C of the Act gives local authorities discretionary powers to make school travel arrangements for other children not covered by section 508B. Such transport does not have to be provided free of charge.

4.50 Local authorities must publish a transport policy statement each year setting out the travel arrangements they will make to support young people aged 16-19 and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) aged up to 25, to access further education. This should include any arrangements for free or subsidised transport.

4.51 Local authorities must include in their Local Offer information about:

- any specific arrangements for specialised transport (for example, specially fitted buses)
- any support available from the local authority or others with transport costs and should include information about:
- any support that is offered to children and young people to help them use transport, including public transport, and
- any training given to aid independent travel

Research:

Still missing out? Ending poverty and social exclusion: messages to government from families with disabled children – Barnados 2002

At present, a disproportionate number of families with disabled children are living in poverty, for the numerous reasons, including:

- Work – parents with disabled children are often unable to work because they cannot secure childcare suitable for their child's needs.
- Extra costs – on average it costs three times as much to raise a child with severe impairment than a non-disabled child.
- Transport – many families have unmet needs, as most public transport is inaccessible and cabs are expensive.

Contact A Family:

- 52% of families with a disabled child are at risk of experiencing poverty.
- The income of families with disabled children averages £15,270, 23.5% below the UK average income of £19,968, and 21.8% have incomes that are less than half the UK mean

Prevalence of childhood disability and the characteristics and circumstances od disabled children in the UK Blackburn Spencer and Read 2010

Almost half of disabled children (compared with a fifth of non disabled children) live with a parent who is also disabled. In addition, a quarter of disabled children live with one or more siblings who are also disabled

Contact a Family Guidance

Are all children with special educational needs (SEN) or a disability entitled to free transport?

The law says that local authorities must provide transport to pupils who would be unable to walk to school because of their SEN, disability or mobility problems. It does not matter how short the distance is, or whether a pupil has a statement or EHC plan. Some children with SEN may be able to walk to school. Local authorities must assess a child's transport needs individually.

What kind of transport is provided?
Local authorities can provide different kinds of transport, including a dedicated taxi or minibus service with or without an escort, car mileage allowance, bus passes, or travel cards.

How does the local authority decide which kind of transport is most suitable for my child?
The local authority should consider your child's individual needs. You should provide clear information about your child's SEN, disability and any health needs when you apply for transport. The local authority should decide if your child requires special arrangements such as an escort, or equipment such as specialised seating. To be suitable, transport must be safe and 'non stressful'. This means that your child arrives at school ready to learn.

Can the local authority refuse transport for a child who gets higher mobility Disability Living Allowance (DLA)?
Local authorities cannot have policies that introduce additional criteria for transport, for example refusing transport to children receiving higher mobility DLA, children whose parents have cars, or children without EHC plans. This is unlawful.

My local authority won't provide transport as I get a motability car and the local authority says I can drive my child to school.
The local authority must provide transport to the nearest suitable school for children who are eligible for transport. Receiving higher level disability living allowance is not one of the eligibility criteria. The local authority may discuss individual travel arrangements with you, but they can't make this a criterion for transport.

Further Education

- Disabled young people are at particularly high risk of being NEET between the ages of 16-19
- 21% of disabled people aged 16 – 24 have no qualifications, compared with 5% of non-disabled people of the same age
- Disabled students account for only about one in 20 undergraduates

Contact a Family Guidance

Will my child get transport to college?

The local authority must have a transport policy which sets out how they will support young people aged 16 -18 to get to school or college. The policy must also say what help is available for students with SEN and disabilities. Local authorities do not have to provide free help to this age group and may ask families to contribute to the cost of transport.

Local authorities must also set out how they will help disabled adult learners over 18 to get to a place of education and training. Help could mean a taxi or bus, discounted fares, travel cards or travel training. Local authorities should always consider the young person's individual needs before making a decision. Transport needs should be discussed as part of an EHC needs assessment. The college may be able to help with transport. Social services may agree to fund transport in some situations.

Contact a Family Inquiry into School Transport for Disabled Children 2017

School transport is an integral part of a child's education. If a child can't get to school or has a stressful experience getting to school, they are not able to learn and take part in the school day like other children. School transport sits outside special educational needs (SEN) law in England, but is part of general education law.

- 48% say they agree or strongly agree that travel arrangements for their child to get to school mean that they can't work, or have to work reduced hours
- 27% agree or strongly agree that their child's journey is making it harder for their child to learn at school
- 23% say that their child's journey to school is stressful most of the time

Impact on children when Transport is refused or removed Parents reported that it unsettles the child or young person, inhibits learning, increases feelings of isolation, loneliness and impacts on friendships, perpetuates division and feelings of exclusion.

Impact on families when Transport is refused Families talk about financial strain when transport is refused, mostly due to reducing working hours. Respondents repeatedly talked about the stress on them and their whole family, and sadly the loss of independence for their disabled children and young people.

Post 16
The local council must have a transport policy which sets out how they will support young people aged 16 to 18 to get to school or college, including disabled students. Help could mean a taxi or bus, discounted fares, travel cards, or travel training. Local councils should always consider the young person's individual needs before making a decision. The introduction of a charging policy may be within the law as far as transport law goes. However, a local council may be failing in their duty under the Equality Act to: 'advance equality of opportunity for disabled learners' if the charge in their transport policy has a: 'significant negative impact on the ability of disabled students to access education'.

Apart from what we already know about the financial impact of raising a disabled child, transport costs may be higher for disabled students.

1 All 16 to 18-year-olds have a duty to participate in some form of education or training. However, many disabled young people will need to be in education or training longer than this in order to achieve the particular skills or qualifications they need to reach their full potential.

2 Disabled students' nearest suitable course or college may not be the local college. It may be some distance from their home.

3 Young people who cannot access public transport easily due to their disability will not be able to take advantage of the usual subsidised travel schemes that are open to other students – taxis are more expensive.

- 50% strongly agree or agree travel arrangements are too expensive (34% for all ages).
- 48% agree or strongly agree that travel arrangements for their young person to get to school mean that they can't work, or can only work reduced hours (consistent with all ages)
- 31% agree or strongly agree that their child's journey is making it harder for them to learn at school (slightly higher compared with all ages)
- 24% say the journey is stressful most of the time (consistent with all ages)

Suitability of Transport
The majority highlighted issues in terms of safety, training and communication. These can be summarised as:

- no escort or untrained escort
- unsuitable for child's needs (for example, child cannot travel with other children)
- vehicle unsuitable (for example, cannot take wheelchair)
- journey stressful – too long, doesn't coincide with school hours, unsuitable pick up or drop off points
- mileage allowance insufficient or offered inappropriately
- transport inflexible – doesn't allow attendance at after school activities or transport to a place other than child's home (for example, childminder)
- communication issues:
  - between the transport provider, escorts, drivers and families with regards to cancelations, changes to driver or pick-up times
  - language barriers, e.g. not trained in British Sign Language, English as a second language
- outsourcing:
  - changes to charges
  - quality and training of drivers and escorts
  - unsettling to children who require continuity
- safety – concerns included drivers and escorts who do not follow the law, for example speeding, smoking.

HCT group is a **transport social enterprise** operating a range of commercial and community transport services. They have worked with commissioners who have come up with some smart commissioning options to help reduce costs without impacting on quality, for example:

- **blended commissioning** – using the same fleet to deliver services to different client groups, (SEN, school swimming, school dinners), thus utilising vehicles during down time
- **altering school start times** so you can use half the number of vehicles to drop the same number of children, thus reducing the fleet and associated costs
- **allowing parents to pick from a set of drop off/pick up points**, often alongside other mainstream schools. This has helped parents who have other children to get to school combine the journeys, and resulted in shorter journey times for all.

Conclusions
Families with disabled children often face significant additional challenges in their daily lives, and the difficulty of obtaining suitable transport to school or college is adding to this. Unsuitable transport is affecting children or young people's wellbeing and progress in education, as well as family life. The cost of school transport for some is causing additional financial hardship. Many parents are unable to work due to the need to make school transport arrangements for their child.

Families with disabled children face additional challenges around school transport not experienced by other families including:

- disabled children may go to different schools to siblings – requiring separate journeys and pick up times
- disabled young people may need longer to complete their education – so families are bearing the cost of transport for longer
- lack of local specialist provision for disabled children and young people. This often means they are travelling further to their nearest suitable place of education – families struggle to provide transport as it is more expensive and time consuming

School Transport Matters - March 2016

Although the number of pupils affected by planned cuts to special needs transport is likely to be lower – as only about 115,000 pupils in England currently qualify for free transport because of their special needs. About half of pupils with EHCs currently receive transport - and those pupils with EHCs typically have the more severe /higher level of special needs. It is expected that cuts to services for these pupils will have considerable adverse impact on many families

CEREBRA - Local Authority Home to School On-line Transport Policies: Accessibility and Accuracy University of Leeds – School of Law

Transport is a crucial service for disabled children and their families. Referrals to the Cerebra in-house advice team concerning difficulties with school transport have been one of the most common problems it has encountered, amounting in 2015 to 17% of all cases, rising to 19% in 2016. Discussions with other charities providing advice for disabled children and their families indicated that they too had identified this issue as a particular problem area.

Cases referred to the LEaP Project have concerned a range of difficulties that families experience in obtaining suitable school transport, including:

- the unsuitability of an individual's transport arrangements (e.g. due to journey length, stress, noise levels, changes in the ratio of escorts to pupils, changes in the mode of transport etc.);
- the refusal to provide transport for children with disabilities or special educational needs who live within the statutory walking distance of their school;
- inadequate driver and escort training;
- late arrival at school as a result of reconfigured routes;
- a failure to provide transport to a school named in an individual's statement of special educational needs or Education, Health and Care plan;
- the withdrawal of transport at short notice by transport providers on the grounds of a child's challenging behaviour;
- delays in making alternative transport arrangements.

The most common problem referred to the LEaP Project has been the refusal to provide transport for children with disabilities or special educational needs (SEN) who live within the relevant statutory walking distance from their nearest suitable school.

Some of the ways in which local authorities have misinterpreted their statutory duties include:

- imposing a 'blanket ban' on the provision of transport for any child who lives within walking distance of their nearest suitable school (regardless of their ability to walk to school - alone or accompanied);
- excluding any reference in their transport policies to children who are eligible for transport under the Education Act 1996 (i.e. because they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school, due to their special educational needs, disability or mobility issues);
- providing transport on a discretionary basis, rather than as a statutory entitlement;
- providing incorrect information to parents of disabled children as to their rights;
- requiring parents who have access to a vehicle to drive their children to school;
- poor communication issues between LA's and parents;
- expecting families to use disability benefits to cover transport costs.

Examples encountered by the LEaP Project of where it may be unreasonable for a child to be expected to walk unaccompanied or otherwise might include where the child concerned:

- experiences physical pain or has difficulty walking long distances;
- has bladder or bowel problems;
- is vulnerable or unable to understand dangers;
- is unable to negotiate the route to school because of busy/difficult routes;
- has unpredictable behaviour

When considering the 'reasonableness' of this expectation, authorities are entitled to consider whether the child could walk to school if accompanied by a parent. The guidance states that a parent is generally expected to accompany their child to school 'unless there is good reason why it is not reasonable for a parent to do so'.

Circumstances encountered by the LEaP Project of where it **may be unreasonable for a parent to accompany their child to school can include:**

- a parent may be unable to ensure the safety of a child who has unpredictable or challenging behaviour;
- parent may have a disability which prevents him/her from walking a child to school;
- the parent's journey to and from school could take an unreasonable amount of time;
- the child's siblings may need to be taken to different schools;
- the child's siblings may have to be left at home unattended before and after school if a parent has to accompany the child to school.

The Guidance states in addition that an assessment of 'reasonableness would also consider 'the age of the child and whether one would ordinarily expect a child of that age to be accompanied'. For example if the child is 15, the question to be asked is '**would it be reasonable to expect a parent to accompany their 15 year old child without a disability to school?** If the answer is no, then it would be discriminatory to expect a parent to accompany their 15 year old simply because they had a disability

Other relevant legal considerations include:

- 'Disability' as a wide concept, including in addition to physical impairments, mental impairments and illnesses;
- Local authority policies cannot impose additional (or more demanding) requirements beyond those detailed in the legislation;
- It is not a prerequisite for a child to have a Statement of SEN or Education, Health & Care Plan.
- **Parents should not be required to use DLA** (Disability Living Allowance) to pay for the school transport required by the disabled child;
- Evidence from professionals may support a transport application but is not a legal requirement

Under the question 'does the policy make it clear that children who *cannot reasonably be expected to walk* to school because of their SEN, disability or mobility issues are entitled to transport' it was found that 39% of policies did not make this right clear - with comments referring to restrictive and or extra criteria including:

- 'parents are expected to drive children who have a temporary medical condition to school' ';

- such children 'will be considered' (rather than being ''entitled');'
- 'mobility issues must be 'significant, long-term and severe';
- 'that pupils with a statement of SEN/EHC plan must make their own arrangements to school';
- 'pupils with SEN attending mainstream school are not entitled to transport';
- 'an EHCP is required to be entitled to transport';
- '*certain* long term disabilities [will be considered]';
- 'firstly, parents should look for help from family members and neighbours'

These findings confirm the concerns identified by the LEaP Project and other bodies that many local authorities are not assessing eligibility based on the law and guidance. Instead, their staff appears to be guided by incorrect information as to individual rights; by policies that exclude references to the SEN, mobility and disability category; by an expectation that parents will drive their children to school; and by the notion that such support is merely 'discretionary'.

SNAP PCF review of the consultation regarding proposals to change the 'The Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policies for Central Bedfordshire' 2017

Motability
The proposed changes document state:

'Where a vehicle is provided to a family through the national Motability Scheme, we will provide parents/carers with a payment to cover the mileage, in order that they can use their specialised vehicle to transport their child to school or college.'

SNAP believes a mileage allowance can only be given with parents' consent. See fig 2, Education Act 1996 s508B (4)

(4) "Travel arrangements", in relation to an eligible child, are travel arrangements of any description and include—
(a)arrangements for the provision of transport, and
(b)any of the following arrangements only if they are made **with the consent** of a parent of the child—

(i)arrangements for the provision of one or more persons to escort the child (whether alone or together with other children) when travelling to or from the relevant educational establishment in relation to the child;
(ii)arrangements for the payment of the whole or any part of a person's reasonable travelling expenses;
(iii)arrangements for the payment of allowances in respect of the use of particular modes of travel

There is no exception in legislation applying to Motability cars. Therefore, the wording should be changed to '*We will offer a mileage payment with parents' agreement'.* SNAP would like clarification of what is the amount to be paid and how would families claim this?

The mobility cars are subject to a three-year lease and have a 60,000-mileage limit in those three years, anything over this figure is then charged at five pence a mile. If a parent decides to cancel their mobility car and take the extra payment they will be subject to a £250.00 administration fee. Parents who have a disabled child are already more likely to live in poverty; this policy helps to increase this situation.

SNAP would like to clarify, if a parent carer has a mobility car, is the council suggesting that they

will no longer be entitled to their free school transport? If this is the case then parents who work may no longer be able to continue in employment.

There will also be more congestion on the road as, instead of one mini-bus collecting six children, there will now be an extra five cars on the road.

Mobility cars do not have a hoist, therefore a parent carer will not only have to travel to their special school, which for the majority will not be local to them, they may have extra lifting to do twice a day, five days a week.

In addition, the parent may now have a two-hour round trip to get to and from school, twice a day equaling four hours. This may be when the parent carer sleeps if they have been up through the night caring.

The roads around the schools will be more congested. There is a potentially dangerous impact of this, furthermore, what happens when the parent is sick and unable to drive the child to school?

Some of our children have profound needs and while a mainstream parent may be able to ask a neighbour or friend to help, our families rarely have access to this support.

Under fives
How many children under five do you transport currently?
The Council for Disabled Children has written a report on how disabled children fall further behind even at the start of their early years education aged two years of age – they rarely ever catch up. This transport consultation helps to accelerate this. This is potentially discriminatory.

Children without SEND are likely to be in nursery or reception class close to home. Children with severe / complex needs may attend special schools at some distance from their home. LAs must offer full time reception places from the September after a child's fourth birthday, so disabled children will be disadvantaged if they cannot access education until they turn five due to a lack of transport.

There should not be a blanket policy not to provide transport for under fives

With regards charging for transport, we note there will be a reduction of up to £57.00 for some families and an increase of £143.00 for others. How will this be calculated and what is the criteria?

Please clarify what the cost is for travel as at the moment it states, ‘a fee that reflects the cost to the council’. This is ambiguous. Parents need accurate information to fully understand the impact to them before completing a consultation.

Offering a travel pass in the first instance is reasonable but for children with SEND it must take account of the needs of the child, not be a blanket policy. Some young people with SEND will not be able to travel by public transport until well into their teenage years and others may never achieve that level of independence.

Pyramid of schools?
Please clarify ‘travel will be provided from home to the nearest available school with a place for that child, rather than the nearest or catchment school’. Also, what is a ‘pyramid of schools’ and how may this affect children and young people with an EHCP? Who decides what is suitable, who decides what criteria will be used? How will it impact on school preference and admissions for children going through the normal admission system? SNAP notes that the actual draft policy only refers to the nearest qualifying school.

Travel Training
Nine years of age is young to expect children to travel on public transport. What is being done to assess the safeguarding issues around this? Will schools be supporting vulnerable children with 'travel training'? If so who will fund this?

Boarding school
SNAP feels the term 'boarding school', may be misleading. If SEN Residential Provision is included as part of this phrase, it needs to be clearly communicated. In order to participate effectively, families need to properly understand the consultation. How many families use this service, what are the costs?

Eligibility
The actual draft policy sets out clearly the legal eligibility criteria for free travel arrangements applying to all children

- Distance
- Low income families
- Unsafe walking route

The list does not include children unable to walk because of a mobility difficulty, disability or special educational need. This is covered separately and linked to children with an EHCP. The disability criteria should be listed at the top level along with the others.

Distance criteria and qualifying schools
The explanation and the consequence of the change is not clear. The legal requirement is to the nearest suitable school. This is defined by statutory guidance as the nearest qualifying school with places available which provides education appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and to any special educational needs he may have. The geographically nearest school may not be the nearest suitable school. The policy should reflect this. Will families have to change their child's school as you will now only transport to the 'nearest school with a place for that child'?

The proposed changes document states: 'For children with a SEN, it will usually be the school named in their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).' This is too vague the following wording may be better. '*For children with an EHCP the nearest qualifying school will be the school named in the EHCP where this is the only school named or the closest of 2 or more schools named.'*

EHCPs
'Suitability' applies to mainstream not just Special schools. In some cases, the nearest mainstream school may not be suitable for an individual child's needs. The policy should make this clear.

The paragraph on EHCPs should be linked to that on medical conditions. The term 'medical condition' should be replaced by 'special educational need, disability or mobility problem' to match the legislation. Otherwise there is a danger that the policy will be interpreted in an unnecessarily restrictive way.

It must be made clear that the needs of this group will be individually assessed and that the distance criteria to not apply.

Public transport for mainstream schools
The loss of contract school buses may place some children with SEND at a disadvantage. There will be a group of children who may be able to travel on a dedicated school bus but would not be able to manage public transport.

- Carers: *A person of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without this help due to illness, disability, mental ill-health or a substance misuse problem*

Contact A Family:

- One in five say that isolation has led to the break up of their family life (Forgotten Families, 2011).
- 72% of parents / carers experience mental ill health such as anxiety, depression or breakdown due to isolation (Forgotten Families, 2011).
- Between 46% and 62% of carers are not getting adequate services to help them work.

The CBC policy includes provisions for transport to be provided if a parent / carer has a medical condition or has needs which make it unsafe for them to accompany their child.

- Gender Reassignment: *People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex*
None identified

- Pregnancy and Maternity: *e.g. pregnant women / women who have given birth & women who are breastfeeding (26 week time limit then protected by sex discrimination provisions)*
None identified

- Race: *e.g. Asian or Asian British / Black or Black British / Chinese / Gypsies and Travellers / Mixed Heritage / White British / White Irish / White Other*

The public consultation highlighted that *"If transport is withdrawn for 4 year olds this would have a hugely detrimental impact on the early years education of Traveller children which could result in children missing the entire Reception year as parents would choose to keep their children at home until they could access the transport."*

- Religion or Belief: *e.g. Buddhist / Christian / Hindu / Jewish / Muslim / Sikh / No religion / Other*
None identified

- Sex: *e.g. Women / Girls / Men / Boys*
None identified

- Sexual Orientation: *e.g. Lesbians / Gay men / Bisexuals / Heterosexuals*
None identified

- Other: *e.g. Human Rights, Poverty / Social Class / Deprivation, Looked After Children, Offenders, Cohesion, Marriage and Civil Partnership*

Social Class:
- Babies with professional or managerial parents develop better and faster than those whose parents are in unskilled or semi-skilled manual occupations.
- By age 6, low-achieving children from more advantaged homes will out-perform initially high-achieving children from less advantaged homes

Ethnicity:

- Some groups are far less likely to use pre-school education: - Poor White families and Pakistani heritage families.
- Just 77% of 3 & 4 year old ethnic minority children use early years provision, compared to nearly 87% of white children.

Disability:

- Early education provision for disabled children is poor. One study of childcare providers found that just 50% of day nurseries & only 40% of playgroups were able to offer facilities for children with impairments.

Intervention: Home Learning Environment (HLE) & Pre-School Provision:

- Success at school can be significantly increased according to what families do for under-5s in the home, and experience of pre-school education.
- Children's later achievement in language, reading and number ability improves if they attend good pre-school provision.
- The most important factors associated with a poor HLE are having:
  - English as an additional language and
  - having three or more siblings
- Contributory factors include having a mother with a low level of education, early developmental problems, and living in an area of high deprivation.

Children with these characteristics are at significantly greater risk of under-achievement before they have even entered school

The latest statutory guidance - Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance, Department for Education, July 2014 and Post 16 Transport to Education and Training, Department for Education, February 2014;

Councils are entitled to consider whether it's reasonable to expect a parent to accompany their child along a walking route, but they cannot insist that parents who have a car should be expected to drive their child to school.

http://w3.cerebra.org.uk/research/more-school-transport-success-for-the-legal-entitlements-research-project/

School Transport Matters – March 2016

Cuts to school transport services compound the problems for local buses in rural areas - as fewer children travel to school by bus, services will cease to be commercially viable for operators. In addition, the registration of school services for use by the general public can provide vital peak hour bus services for rural areas at minimal additional cost.

How school transport is provided

Local authorities can provide school transport to eligible pupils using a variety of modes - most typically they contract with local operators of taxi, private hire, minibus, coach or buses to provide services. All local authorities in Great Britain are under a duty to coordinate social care, education and local bus transport to achieve value for money. If there is a local bus service that can be used, the expectation is that season tickets should be purchased for use on this rather than utilising a duplicate contracted route.

Likewise, if there is a contract provided for school children, it would often be appropriate for this to be registered to become a local bus service and available to the general public.

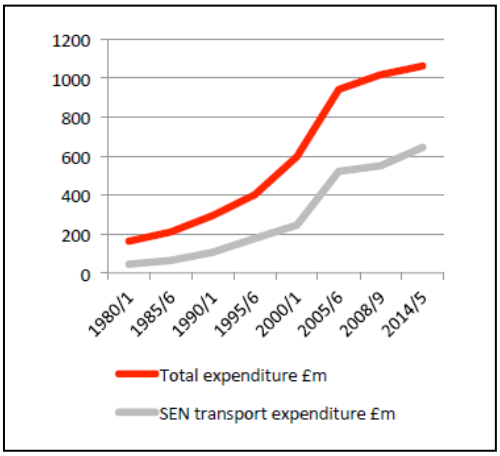
Unit costs

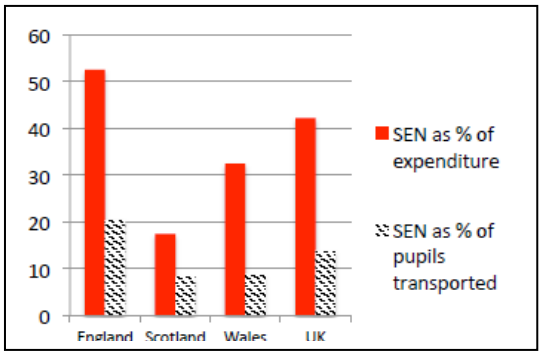
Overall expenditure figures suggest average unit costs of transport in England are about £1,800 per pupil and £1,400-1,500 for the UK.

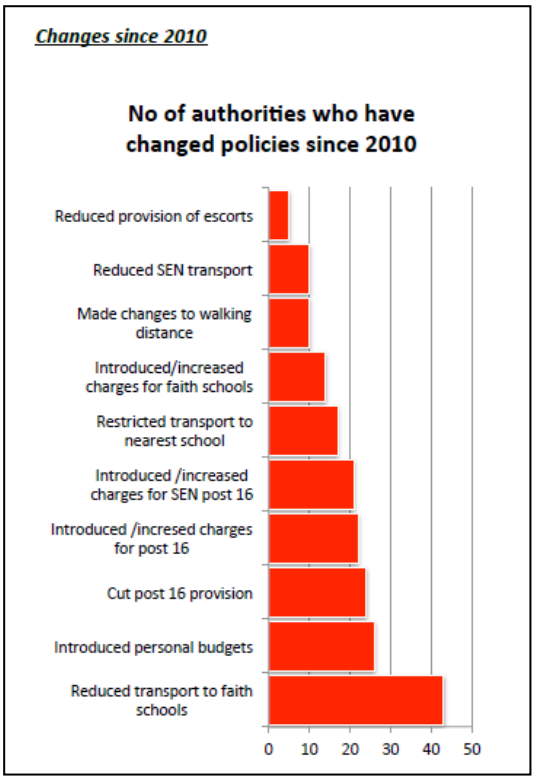
For mainstream pupils the average cost is about £900 per year, equivalent to £2.37 per trip.

For pupils with special needs, the average cost is over £4,000 per year - equivalent to nearly £11 per journey.

The survey responses suggest that special needs transport is now accounting for about 53% of all school transport expenditure in England, and about 42% across the UK, however, it accounts for about a fifth of pupils transported in England and 14% in the UK as a whole.







Other ways of managing budgets

Promoting travel training and independent travel Many local authorities reported investing in travel training to promote more independent travel by young people with special needs, and also to reduce the costs of door-to-door transport provision.

Introducing personalised budgets

Many English local authorities also reported introducing personalised budgets, with twenty-six saying these had already been introduced, and another nine authorities planning their introduction.

Promoting sustainable travel

Nearly 90% of local authorities said that their authority was promoting walking and/or cycling to and from school. Twenty-four authorities said that they had invested more in walking and cycling since 2010, but conversely 13 said they had cut their investment in walking and cycling. Half of respondents said there had been no change.

Local authorities report that funding cuts remain the main challenge facing school transport in coming years - with almost 60% of authorities citing budget cuts as their main concern, followed by the pressure on authorities to meet greater levels of pupils' needs, and parental expectations. Local authorities responding appear to be resigned to continuing to cut and/or charge for SEN

and post 16 transport. Nine authorities also reported turning their focus to escort provision, and are expecting to reduce the level and costs of this

There remain concerns about the environmental, health, and congestion impact of continuing rises in car use, and the social impact of the loss of rural bus services.

2.3. Summary of Existing Data and Consultation Findings – Employment
Considering the impact on Employees

- Age: *e.g. 16-19 / 20-29 / 30-39 / 40-49 / 50-59 / 60+* **Not Applicable**

- Disability: *e.g. Physical impairment / Sensory impairment / Mental health condition / Learning disability or difficulty / Long-standing illness or health condition / Severe disfigurement* **N/A**

- Carers: *e.g. parent / guardian / foster carer / person caring for an adult who is a spouse, partner, civil partner, relative or person who lives at the same address* **N/A**

- Gender Reassignment: *People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex* **N/A**

- Pregnancy and Maternity: *e.g. Pregnancy / Compulsory maternity leave / Ordinary maternity leave / Additional maternity leave* **N/A**

- Race: *e.g. Asian or Asian British / Black or Black British / Chinese / Gypsies and Travellers / Mixed Heritage / White British / White Irish / White Other* **N/A**

- Religion or Belief: *e.g. Buddhist / Christian / Hindu / Jewish / Muslim / Sikh / No religion / Other* **N/A**

- Sex: *Women / Men* **N/A**

- Sexual Orientation: *e.g. Lesbians / Gay men / Bisexuals / Heterosexuals* **N/A**

- Other: *e.g. Human Rights, Poverty / Social Class / Deprivation, Looked After Children, Offenders, Cohesion, Marriage and Civil Partnership* **N/A**

2.4. To what extent are vulnerable groups more affected by this proposal compared to the population or workforce as a whole?

The proposal includes provisions relating to mainstream pupils and also pupils with Special Educational Needs or a disability. Consideration therefore needs to be given to vulnerable groups within mainstream provision and also children with SEN / disability.

2.5. To what extent do current procedures and working practices address the above issues and help to promote equality of opportunity?

Consultation process:
The consultation document was made available both as an online survey and a paper questionnaire and was launched on 29th June 2017 and concluded on 18th September 2017 following an extension after feedback from parents requesting additional time.

The consultation was supported by a comprehensive communications campaign which directly

targeted parents/carers and those in the wider community.

In total 538 residents participated in the consultation by completing the survey. 83% (449) said they were parents/carers of which 60% (271) said they were intending to apply for a 2018 school place.

The results of the consultation have broadly speaking uncovered considerable concern regarding the proposed policy changes. Whilst there were some elements of the proposals that have failed to attract support, others faced less opposition with the proposals allowing schools to run their own mini buses and to only provide transport for over-5s being supported. However, all of the proposals have highlighted issues that would require further thought, as summarised below.

Inconsistencies in approach
Firstly there was concern about the approach taken with the proposed changes. Respondents highlighted perceived inconsistencies and contradictions that the new policies created such as only providing transport to the nearest school. This proposal is not seen as being in line with council's wider approach to school admissions, with many school's still using catchment systems. Parents were concerned about applying for and accepting a place at a catchment school and then not being able to access school transport because it was not their nearest school. There was confusion about why the council is still using catchments if transport was no longer going to being provided to them.

Similarly, the proposal to only provide transport to children over the statutory school age of five was met with concern as parents claimed schools actively encourage pupils starting school following their fourth birthday with the school admissions team making provisions to allow this. Again, this highlighted to parents an inconsistent approach to children and schooling with accusations of a lack of joined up thinking within the council.

Impact on children and young people with disabilities or special educational needs
Secondly, respondents indicated that some of the proposals were unfair and targeted groups that were not able to adapt to these proposed changes. The Motability vehicle proposal drew criticism from service users i.e. parents with Motability vehicles. They explained that the proposal would severely impact their ability to maintain work as often appropriate schooling for their SEN children was much further afield than local mainstream schools, making the 'school-run' and reaching work on time unlikely to be viable. They felt this proposal unfairly penalised them and their families for having to attend specialist schooling outside of the local area.

These sentiments were echoed in the proposal to require a contribution towards the cost of transport from post-16 SEN students, with respondents saying the need to attend a specialist school/college outside of the local area is not the fault of the students and they should not be penalised for having to access schooling outside of a local mainstream school/college.

SEN families should be supported given the difficult circumstances they face and they should not be punished for having to travel out of area for their child's education.

Safety and Sustainability
A final theme from the consultation findings was the notion of safety and sustainability. The proposal to provide travel passes for public transport to pupils aged 9-16 years old was met with strong opposition with regards to the lower limit being nine years old. Safeguarding was a massive issue for parents who were concerned about the idea of their young children mixing with the public and having to navigate their way to school unaccompanied.

Some also highlighted concerns about whether the current public transport provision could sustain an influx of school children or whether it was currently suitable for transporting children at school times. There was a concern this had not been factored into the proposals with many parents citing current poor provision in rural areas as a barrier to getting to school.

There were similar thoughts with the proposal to provide a contribution to schools to allow them to run their own min buses, but again concerns were raised about whether this was sustainable for schools given current budget pressures. Some saw this proposal as passing the burden on to schools and they did not want to see education budgets spent on transport, which was seen solely as a council responsibility.

Cost also became a factor with some suggesting the price could lead to some students not being able to access certain schools or curriculum because of cost.

Special Needs Action Panel Facilitated Meeting with Parents 22 September 2017

The meeting was also attended by Cllr Hegley and Cllr Dodwell.

The Head of Public Protection & Transport explained the proposals contained in the consultation and also confirmed that parents with motability vehicles (including age 16+) would not be required to transport their children to school. The following issues were raised during the course of the meeting:

- SEN children need a longer period of time to achieve their potential and it is unfair to be penalise them with transport costs post age 16.
- The wording of policies is crucial to ensure that they can be fully understood. The provision of flow charts would help.
- EHC Plans don't always mention transport needs. Some children don't have an EHC plan.
- Mainstream pupils are being transported to schools which are not their first choice of school. If a place subsequently becomes available shouldn't they transfer over to help save on travel costs
- Is the Council rigorous in checking fraudulent applications for assistance?
- Are sufficient steps taken to limit the costs of transporting children who have been expelled for bad behaviour from their original school?
- Council transport provision is not flexible enough to deal quickly with deteriorating conditions. The rules around manual handling and wheelchair passports are very rigid
- Why do further education colleges such as Barnfield challenge transport provisions every year?
- The Post 16 policy proposes to charge SEN children more for transport. It is discriminatory to charge disabled / SEN children more for their travel costs than mainstream children.
- The policy needs to recognise that transport can be shared with ex partners.
- Further consideration should be given to the location of special needs provision because this could help reduce transport costs in the longer term. There needs to be a clearer vision and a mapping of routes and provision
- Could some funding be redirected from transport to enable schools to support pupils in their local area and so avoid substantial travel costs?
- What role can personal budgets play?
- Can more be done to work with housing to ensure that homeless families / those in temporary accommodation are placed locally to help avoid increased transport costs.
- To what extent is the Local Plan considering the needs of SEN / Disability?

Written submission - Motability;

The proposals relating to disabled children and motability cars will limit the independence of disabled children, and foster more dependant, resource intensive, adults. It will restrict the ability of parents to work or study and pose risks to children's safety in school car parks and adjacent streets.

Only a child with severe mobility difficulties is awarded the higher mobility element of the DLA needed to contract hire with motability. The Council is therefore penalising the group with the highest mobility needs. The Council is not considering the variable income of parents or that some parents in receipt of the higher level of DLA may choose to finance a car in another way.

The proposal does not consider the wider family circumstances in terms of other family members, work and study commitments. Special schools are often a distance from the family home. There are not the same options in relation to school clubs, pickups by other parents and childminders.

The impact in terms of traffic congestion and safety has not been considered.

Some parents may no longer be able to afford their Motability car but will have to pay a cancellation fee if they do not continue with the Motability contract.

2.6. Are there any gaps in data or consultation findings

None identified

2.7. What action will be taken to obtain this information?

Not applicable

Stage 3 - Providing an overview of impacts and potential discrimination.

Stage 3 – Assessing Positive & Negative Impacts					
Analysis of Impacts	**Impact?**		**Discrimination?**		**Summary of impacts and reasons**
	(+ve)	(- ve)	YES	NO	
3.1 Age		√	√		The proposal to provide travel passes for public transport to pupils aged 9-16 years old was met with strong opposition with regards to the lower limit being nine years old. Safeguarding was a massive issue for parents. Will the contribution for Post 16 SEND be set at a similar level to that of a bus pass for non-SEND students? The local authority should also consider that students with SEND may have to travel further to a suitable course
3.2 Disability		√	√		The proposals relating to disabled children and motability cars will limit

					the independence of disabled children, and foster more dependant resource intensive adults. The use of a motability car cannot be required. Not all families in receipt of DLA finance a car through motability. This proposal focuses on those with the highest mobility needs. In relation to residential schools SEN families should be supported given the difficult circumstances they face and should not be punished for having to travel out of area for their child's education
3.3 Carers		√	√		The Motability vehicle proposal drew criticism from service users i.e. parents with Motability vehicles. The proposal could severely impact their ability to maintain work as often appropriate schooling for their SEN children is much further afield than local mainstream schools, making the 'school-run' and reaching work on time unlikely to be viable.
3.4 Gender Reassignment	-	-			
3.5 Pregnancy & Maternity	-	-			
3.6 Race		√			*"If transport is withdrawn for 4 year olds this would have a hugely detrimental impact on the early years education of Traveller children which could result in children missing the entire Reception year as parents would choose to keep their children at home until they could access the transport."*
3.7 Religion / Belief	-	-	-	-	
3.8 Sex	-	-	-	-	
3.9 Sexual Orientation	-	-	-	-	
3.10 Other *e.g. Human Rights, Poverty / Social Class / Deprivation, Looked After Children, Offenders, Cohesion Marriage and Civil*		√	-	-	Success at school can be significantly increased according to what families do for under-5s in the home, and experience of pre-school education. Children's later achievement in language, reading and number

Partnership					ability improves if they attend good pre-school provision. In terms of concessionary passes and charging full cost it was felt that the price could lead to some students not being able to access certain schools or curriculum because of cost.

Stage 4 - Identifying mitigating actions that can be taken to address adverse impacts.

Stage 4 – Conclusions, Recommendations and Action Planning

4.1 What are the main conclusions and recommendations from the assessment?

Further consideration should be given to the following proposals:

- **Under 5's** – access to early education can be very important for disabled, Gypsy and Traveller and disadvantaged children
- **Motability** – this can only be a request. It should be recognised that parents in receipt of DLA may finance transport in other ways
- **Post 16 SEND** – these young people often have to travel further to access appropriate education and shouldn't incur higher costs
- **Residential schools** - should not be punished for having to travel out of area for their child's education
- **Concessionary passes** – increased cost may be an issue for disadvantaged families
- **Bus passes** – consider whether the proposed age range should be increased above age 9

4.2 What changes will be made to address or mitigate any adverse impacts that have been identified?

Community Services and Children's Services have agreed to set up a joint Project Board. The remit is to work together to find immediate and longer-term solutions to the 'home school transport' budget challenges.

The Board will be attended by representatives from Children's Services, Community Services, Adult Services (Transition), Housing Solutions, Community Intelligence and Kirsty Green from SNAP (Parents Representative for the Special Needs Action Panel). At some future stage other Partnerships may be considered such as Health.

The Board will analyse the findings of the consultation and EIA.

In addition, the Project Board will review future options such as Personal Transport Budgets (PTB's) and Independent Travel Training (ITT) as a way of improving independence for young people. A number of authorities have already successfully implemented these in line with the national policy direction of increasing personalisation.

The Project Board needs: -

- a more thorough understanding of how PTB's and ITT can be rolled out here in CBC
- a framework for assessing the value of the PTB and ITT budgets and delivery to parents/carers. To consider a pilot
- a communication strategy for specific engagement with parents/carers and other stakeholders which clearly explains the benefits
- a costed model to demonstrate the potential benefits and any investment needed to enable them to be delivered more widely (such as invest to save)

4.3 Are there any budgetary implications?

Proposed efficiency savings may not be achievable in the current financial year

4.4 Actions to be taken to mitigate against any adverse impacts:

Action	Lead Officer	Date	Priority
To be identified by Project Board			

Stage 5 - Checking that all the relevant issues and mitigating actions have been identified

Stage 5 – Quality Assurance & Scrutiny: Checking that all the relevant issues have been identified
5.1 What methods have been used to gain feedback on the main issues raised in the assessment?
Step 1:
Has the Corporate Policy Advisor (Equality & Diversity) reviewed this assessment and provided feedback? *Yes/No*
Summary of CPA's comments:
The Council's Equality Lead has been fully involved in the development of the EIA.
Step 2:
5.2 Feedback from Central Bedfordshire Equality Forum 8 June 2017 Members of the Forum were provided with an early draft of the consultation documents. The Forum: **NOTED** **the document entitled 'Travel Assistance Policies – Comparison of Current and Proposed Approaches'.**

RESOLVED

1 **that, in the 'Proposed Changes' column opposite the reference to Working Tax Credit under 'Current Approach', a reference to Universal Credit be added;**

2 **that the Head of Public Protection and Transport establish and amend the document circulated at the meeting and a revised copy be attached as an appendix to the note of this meeting.**

Stage 6 - Ensuring that the actual impact of proposals are monitored over time.

Stage 6 – Monitoring Future Impact
6.1 How will implementation of the actions be monitored? To be agreed by the Project Board
6.2 What sort of data will be collected and how often will it be analysed? To be agreed by the Project Board
6.3 How often will the proposal be reviewed? To be agreed by the Project Board
6.4 Who will be responsible for this? To be agreed by the Project Board
6.5 How have the actions from this assessment been incorporated into the proposal? To be agreed by the Project Board

Stage 7 - Finalising the assessment.

Stage 7 – Accountability / Signing Off
7.1 Has the lead Assistant Director/Head of Service been notified of the outcome of the assessment **Name: _____ Date: _____**
7.2 Has the Corporate Policy Adviser Equality & Diversity provided confirmation that the Assessment is complete? **Date: _____**

Appendix E

Executive – 4 December 2018

Comments from the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 November 2018

RECOMMENDED:-

1. **That the Committee acknowledge the outcomes of the home to school transport policies consultation.**

2. **That the Committee welcome the policy review of the 19-25 year old provision for educational transport and that its implementation be as robust as is considered reasonable, taking into account the individual circumstances of young people using the service.**

3. **That the Executive consider the use of the Council's fleet and transport provision, including that of the voluntary sector in order to support an effective service.**

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive **4 December 2018**

Regional Adoption Agency

Report of: Cllr Steve Dixon, Executive Member for Families, Education and Children
steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Responsible Director: Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services
sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

This report relates to a decision that is Key/Non-Key

Purpose of this report

1. In line with the Government's policy of Regionalisation of Adoption Services, it is proposed that Central Bedfordshire Council's adoption service combines its service with that of Milton Keynes Council.

2. This report sets out the plans for forming the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) which will be hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council and seeks delegated authority for the Director of Children's Services (DCS) to negotiate and conclude a partnering agreement to enable this to be implemented with a planned live date of 1 April 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The meeting is asked to:

1. **approve Central Bedfordshire Council Adoption Service becoming part of a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) by merging services with Milton Keynes;**

2. **delegate authority to the DCS to approve the signing of a partnership agreement with Milton Keynes Council to implement the RAA; and**

3. **delegate the leadership and management of the RAA to the DCS.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

3. Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the proposal on 11 September 2018 and recommended that the Executive continue to monitor those Local Authorities wishing to join the RAA in the future and that additional detail in relation to the governance structure of the RAA be delivered to the Executive.

Issues

4. The Department for Education (DfE) require all local authorities (LAs) to 'regionalise' adoption services by 2020. As well as providing a level of funding and support to facilitate this transition, DfE has taken powers to direct LAs to regionalise if required. The aim of the policy is to create greater scale and consistency across adopter recruitment, matching and support practices to improve the extent and timeliness of adoption for children where it is in their best interest.

5. Forming a RAA involves integration of delivery across LAs (not necessarily within a traditional 'region'), under a single brand, management structure, and organisation. A RAA must also involve one or more Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) in their formation.

6. Central Bedfordshire Council has been part of the Central East RAA project since 2016 which originally involved seven LAs and was led by Coram. In August 2017 Central Bedfordshire Council took over project leadership and an Outline Business Case (OBC) and Full Business Case (FBC) were developed. Following the OBC, four of the LAs left the RAA project leaving Central Bedfordshire Council to develop a FBC with Milton Keynes and Bedford Borough. Subsequently, Bedford Borough decided not to proceed with implementation. Although small for a RAA, the DfE has been very supportive in encouraging the two remaining Councils to join their services with a possibility of other LAs joining later.

7. Work is now in progress to implement the RAA including operational, legal, financial, HR and IT workstreams. This report seeks delegated authority to enter into the necessary legal agreements to enable this to happen with a target date of 1 April 2018.

Option for consideration

8. Various options for delivery of the RAA, including setting up a separate company, were considered during the development process. However, a local authority hosted model was considered the best option – due to its ease of set up and operation (as no new legal entity is created) and ability to deliver within the budget envelope.

9. The RAA will be an integrated adoption service, with a single team working across the two LAs under the leadership of a single Service Manager. The service will provide:
    - Shared adopter recruitment and assessment – a single "pool" of adopters
    - Shared matching of children to adopters
    - Shared adoption support, and
    - Shared adoption panel

10. Central Bedfordshire will act as "host" LA which will involve:
    - Acting as the legal entity for the RAA – including being paymaster/commissioner/procurement authority for contracted services and all inter agency fees
    - Acting as Agency Decision Maker for approving Adopters
    - Providing support services to enable the RAA to operate

11. The individual LA's and the relevant director as the Agency Decision Maker will remain responsible for approving Children being placed for adoption.

12. To ease the transition, Milton Keynes staff will be seconded to Central Bedfordshire Council as the RAA host. New staff required in adoption will be appointed by the host. No redundancies are anticipated, and staff will not be required to relocate as the two existing office bases will be used and agile working will operate.

13. A legally binding Agreement is being developed to specify the service to be provided and to set out the terms of the partnership and duties of each party. Governance will be exercised via a RAA Board which will consist of the relevant director from both LAs.

14. The Board will also involve representatives from the two Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA) partners, St Francis Children's Society and AdoptionPlus, who have helped with the design of the RAA. The VAAs will be non-voting members. There also will be a RAA Operational Board consisting of the RAA Service Manager plus the two Heads of Corporate Parenting – this will meet regularly and be responsible for operational matters.

Reasons for decision

15. As well as the requirement to comply with national policy there are there are benefits from combining the two adoption services:
    - Improving adopter recruitment and matching by operating at greater scale and making use of best practice
    - help children to find a permanent home thereby reducing the time children have to wait to find a permanent home
    - Fewer disruptions and breakdowns due to more effective pre and post adoption support
    - Potential cost avoidance as a result of children spending less time in care
    - Improved outcomes for children as a result the timely placemen of children there will be improved outcomes for them.

Council Priorities

16. The proposal supports the Protecting the vulnerable, improving wellbeing Council priority.
    - Enhancing Central Bedfordshire
    - Great resident services
    - Improving education and skills
    - Protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing
    - Creating stronger communities
    - A more efficient and responsive Council.

Corporate Implications

17. None to explain.

Legal Implications

18. A comprehensive Partnering and Hosting Agreement is being drafted by the Council's legal advisers LGSS Law and will be scrutinised by Milton Keynes' legal team before being cleared for signature by both Councils. There are already 10 RAAs operating across the country and the project benefits by drawing on agreements developed for similar arrangements including provisions covering GDPR.

19. The draft Agreement states the legal basis for the proposed arrangements is as follows:
    - Central Bedfordshire Council and Milton Keynes Council intend to discharge their adoption functions jointly pursuant to section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972; sections 9EA and 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended); the Local Authorities (Arrangements for Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012; Section 111 Local Government Act 1972 and all other enabling powers for joint working arrangements.

    - Both Councils are best value authorities with duties and powers to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way they exercise their functions, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness pursuant to Part I of the Local Government Act 1999.

Financial and Risk Implications

20. The combined adoption service will have a gross expenditure budget of £1.43m, employ 20 full time equivalent staff and place 25-35 children per year for adoption. The draft RAA budget 2019/20 is summarised as follows:

	FTE	**£000s**
Employees	20.10	928
Non-staff expenditure		505
Gross expenditure		1,433
Less : Income		416
Net expenditure		1,017
Funded by contributions from LAs	£000s	
– Central Bedfordshire	549	
– Milton Keynes	471	
		1,020
Surplus		-3

21. The RAA plans to operate within existing revenue resources. For 2019/20 each Authority's funding contribution to the RAA will be in proportion to their current year adoption budgets as shown above.

22. All MK adoption staff will be seconded to Central Bedfordshire Council to form the RAA. The costs of implementation will be met from the DfE implementation grant. No capital implications are anticipated as existing staff bases and current IT infrastructure will be used.

23. All risks associated with the new operating arrangements will be considered and managed though the Partnering Agreement and the governance arrangements. The key operational risks for the RAA are the potential loss of Adoption Support Fund due to changes in national policy and fluctuations in numbers of children placed for adoption or adopters recruited year on year. It is considered that the increased scale and pooling of resources will enable the RAA to better manage these operational risks.

Equalities Implications

24. The content in this section is yet to be added by Clare Harding (Corporate Policy Adviser (Equality & Diversity).

Conclusion and next Steps

25. The Board is invited to approve the recommendation that:
    - Central Bedfordshire Council Adoption Service becomes part of a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) by merging services with Milton Keynes, and authority is delegated to the DCS to approve the signing of a partnership agreement with Milton Keynes Council to implement the RAA and manage and lead the RAA.

Report author(s): Sacha Rymell – Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Early Help

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Appendix 1 to RAA Delegation Report

Central East Regional Adoption Agency – Background Paper

October 2018

RAA Programme - National Context

- In 2015, DfE launched the Regionalising Adoption programme, encouraging all LAs to work with other LAs and voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) to regionalise their adoption services, and consider alternative delivery models.
- Many RAAs are working towards an LA-hosted model which involves a LA delivering the RAA on behalf of other LAs rather than the establishment of a new entity (such as an LA Trading Company) or tendering for a VAA to operate the service
- As of May 2018 there were 10 operational RAAs incorporating 49 LAs. The projects under development cover a total of 90 LAs, leaving only 13 LAs which are not part of an RAA.

RAA Programme - National Context (Cont.)

- The aim is for RAAs to offer greater scale and consistency across adopter recruitment, matching and support to improve the extent and timeliness of adoption for children where it is in their best interest.
- In practice this means integrated delivery of these functions across a number of, under a single brand and management structure, and by a single organisation.
- The DfE have seven criteria for forming an RAA:
  - Single line of accountability
  - Core functions are transferred to the RAA
  - Pan-regional approach
  - Recruitment, support and matching
  - Management responsibility
  - Pooled funding
  - Partnership with the voluntary sector.

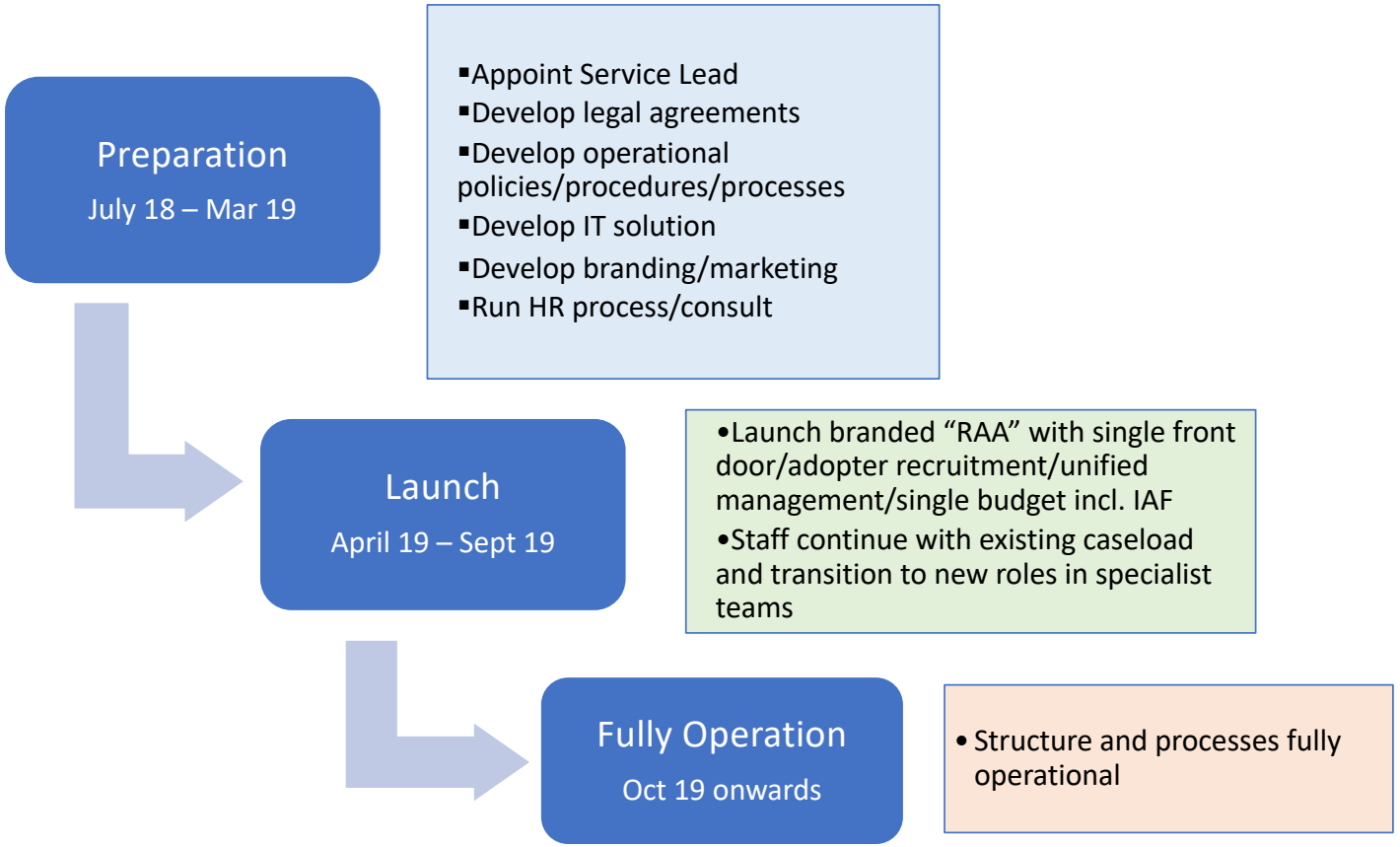
Benefits of working in a RAA

- Milton Keynes and Central Bedfordshire Council's both have very strong adoption teams which would benefit by working together to develop greater specialisms and commission services on a wider scale
- CBC already hosts a joint adoption panel with Bedford Borough which works very well. Milton Keynes will join this arrangement.
- MK's performance with adoption timescales is good but there is always room for improvement and the less time children spend waiting for their 'forever' families is better for them
- There is a statutory requirement to join an RAA by 2020 as set out in the Children and Families Act

Background to Central East RAA

- Under an initial development led by Coram, Central East RAA was made up of Central Bedfordshire, Bedford, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk.
- Until January 2017 development was led by Coram and focused on establishing best practice across the region
- In June 2017 Central Bedfordshire took on the lead role and worked with other LAs to develop an Outline Business Case (OBC) to support an LA hosted model completed in October 2017.
- After considering the OBC it was decided that Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire would explore other options.
- Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough and Milton Keynes worked together to prepare a full Business Case (FBC) for an RAA hosted by Central Bedfordshire.
- In June this year Bedford Borough requested more time to consider their approach whilst maintaining close links and joint working where appropriate.
- DfE supported CBC and Milton Keynes to proceed to implementation with a view to others joining once the RAA has become established.
- The plan is for the newly branded joint service to ‘go live’ in April 2019.

RAA – Implementation



Implementation (Cont.)

- DfE have provided grant to support the implementation and a Project Manager has been engaged
- Six workstreams have been identified and are in progress:
  - Legal and governance
  - Finance
  - Operations
  - Human resources
  - IT and performance
  - Marketing
- A key workstream is the development of the RAA Partnering and Hosting Agreement – This is being developed by LGSS Legal (CBC's Lawyers) and will be closely reviewed by MK's legal team
- Staff engagement in the process from both Milton Keynes and CBC staff has been very positive to date with front line staff and managers co-constructing the design.

Central East RAA – Agreed vison and design principals

Vision

'To achieve the best possible outcomes for children, and local areas - through high quality services that place children with the right adopters at the right time with the right support'

Design Principles

Better life long outcomes for children and adopters

The experiences and **life long** outcomes of children and adopters will improve

Adoption will be an option for a wider range of children (including older children and those with complex needs)

More families will be able and willing to adopt

The RAA will recruit adopters in line with children's needs

A better environment and opportunities for the adoption workforce

RAA will retain and develop the right skills, experience and talent in support of high quality services

RAA will support and encourage professional and career development

Better value for money

Investment will be efficiently and effectively managed

Opportunities to reduce cost will be identified and acted on

Outcomes will be clearly defined and measured

Set up and implementation costs will be low

Adoptions services will be transparent and collaborative

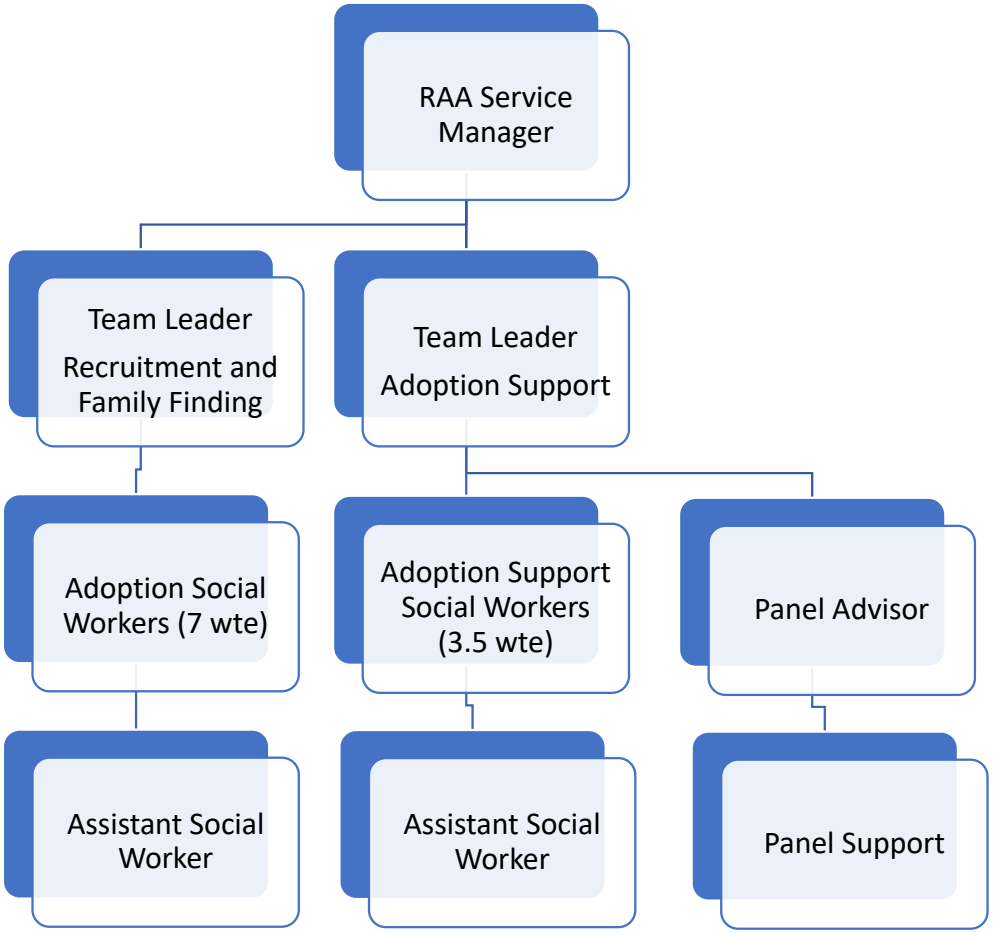
What RAA is and what it does will be clear and understandable

Local authorities will have influence over service delivery

There will be local presence of skilled adoption expertise

RAA will work collaboratively with local authorities and maintain regular and open communication

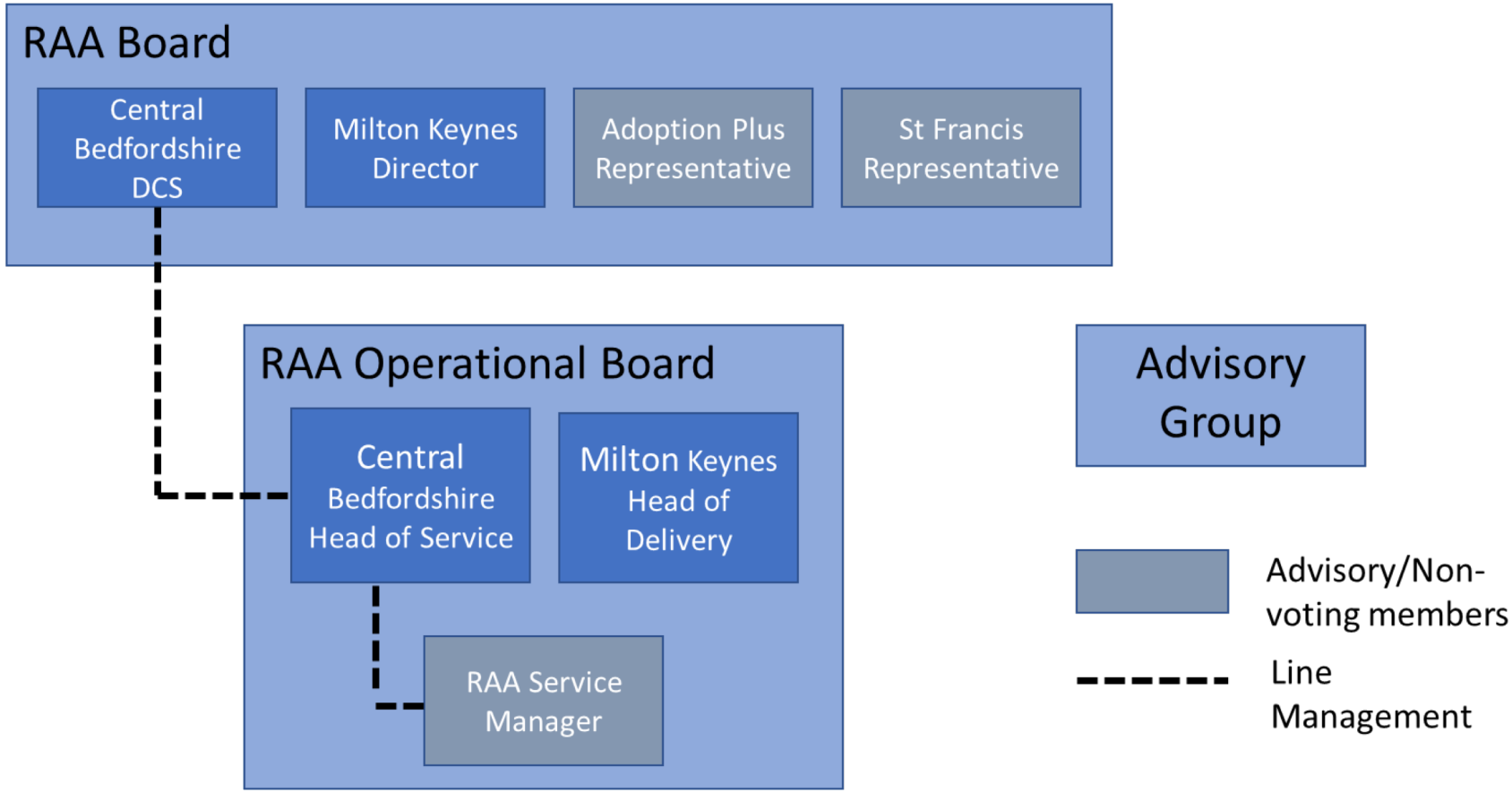
RAA Organisation Structure



CBC/MK RAA – Draft Budget

Expenditure	FTE	Full Year
Employees		**£000s**
Head of Service	1.00	76
Recruitment of Adopters	11.20	503
Adoption Support Service	5.90	270
Panel Management/other support	2.00	79
	20.10	928
Non-Pay Expenditure		
Staff Related		38
Panel Member Fees/Expenses		35
Contracted services		310
Subscriptions/Licenses		13
Other Expenditure		19
Other support to Clients		30
		445
Gross Expenditure		1,373
Income		
Adoption Support Fund		-287
Inter Agency Fees (Net)		-80
Panels - contribution from BB		-50
LA Baseline Contributions		-1,020
Surplus		-63
Other Potential Costs		
Host support costs		35
Potentially unreleased indirect staff budgets		25
Revised surplus		-3

RAA Proposed Governance Structure



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Appendix 2

Central East Regional Adoption Agency: Full Business Case

Supporting the development of a Regional Adoption Agency

Note: This document is intended for the internal use of the three participating local authorities within the Central East Regional Adoption Agency for the purposes set out within it. It should not be distributed beyond authorised officers within those authorities without the express and prior consent of Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services, Central Bedfordshire Council.

June 2018

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version	Date	Author	Details	Distribution List	Date of distribution	Approved by
V1.1	29.05.18	Colin Foster, Sam Jury-Dada, Dominic Luscombe	First draft	Sue Harrison	31.05.18	Sue Harrison
V2.1	01.06.18	As above	First draft – with further revision and development	Sue Harrison, Colin Foster, Michael Bracey	01.06.18	-
V2.3	11.06.2018	As above	Second draft – incorporating feedback following RAA Board workshop	Sue Harrison		
V2.4	12.06.2018	As above	As above with CF updates	Sue Harrison, Mac Heath, Michael Bracey, Colin Foster	27.06.18	

DRAFT

REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY FULL BUSINESS CASE

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1. ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document is a Full Business Case ('FBC') setting out the case for the establishment of a Central East Regional Adoption Agency ('CERAA', 'RAA') between Central Bedfordshire, Bedford Borough and Milton Keynes Councils.

Its purpose is to support the three participating local authorities with a decision on the form and function of the RAA, including the proposed operating model and governance arrangements, and a plan for implementation.

It does so by setting out the strategic, financial and management case and a proposed detailed operating model. These are the outputs from a detailed design activity carried out between February and May 2018, in collaboration with all three local authorities, participating Voluntary Adoption Agencies (St Francis and Adoption Plus), and local adopters.

This FBC builds upon an Outline Business Case (OBC) produced in October 2017, which set out a proposed vision, a set of design principles, scope, an outline design and an initial assessment of the case for establishing the CERAA.

In January 2018 iMPOWER Consulting Limited ('iMPOWER') were asked by Central Bedfordshire (as lead local authority) to support the development of this FBC in collaboration with Central Bedfordshire Council (and the Project Manager appointed by the council).

This business case has been co-developed with the help and support of staff within the adoption services in each local authority and at each VAA.

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2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive Summary

This FBC sets out the proposed vision, design principles, scope, operating model, legal form and governance arrangements (including funding formula), together with the associated costs, benefits and risks of establishing and operating such an agency.

Context

In 2015 The Department of Education (DfE) launched the Regionalising Adoption programme encouraging all local authorities (LAs) to work with other LAs and voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) to regionalise their adoption services. This includes providing funding and support to LAs and the power to direct LAs to regionalise local services if required. Additionally, there is a statutory requirement for all local authority adoption services to join Regional Adoption Agencies by 2020.

The DfE aim is for RAAs to offer greater scale and consistency across adopter recruitment, matching and support to improve the extent and timeliness of adoption for children where it is in their best interest. In practice this means integrated delivery of these functions across a number of LAs (not necessarily within a traditional 'region'), under a single brand and management structure, and by a single organisation. Within this framework, the DfE have seven criteria for forming an RAA:

- Single line of accountability
- Core functions are transferred to the RAA
- Pan-regional approach
- Recruitment, support and matching
- Management responsibility
- Pooled funding
- Partnership with the voluntary sector.

As of May 2018 there were 10 operational RAAs incorporating 49 LAs. The projects under development cover a total of 90 LAs leaving only 13 LAs which are not part of an RAA.

Introduction and approach

This FBC and the proposed operating model set out in this FBC has been developed in collaboration with stakeholders. Between January and May 2018 a detailed design exercise was completed with support from local authorities (Directors of Children's Services, Operational Leads, Finance Leads, HR leads, ICT leads, Legal leads), voluntary adoption agencies and adopters.

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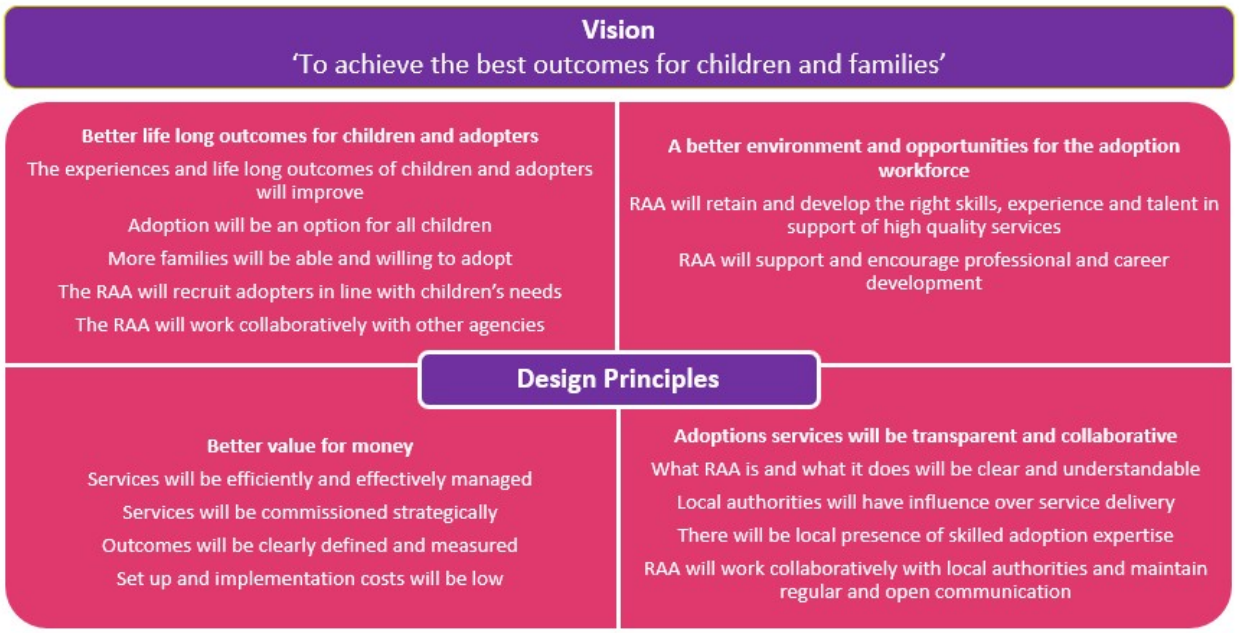
Strategic case

The operating model proposed in this FBC has been developed with the aim of improving the outcomes and experience of children and adopters, building on current strong performance across the three local authority partners. The overall vision for the RAA is 'to achieve the best possible outcomes for children, and local areas – through high quality services that place children with the right adopters at the right time with the right support'.

Figure 2.1: Vision and design principles of the CE RAA



The proposed operating model aims to:

- Help more children to find a permanent home, reduce the time children wait to find a permanent home, and improve the experience for children and adoptive families
- Achieve fewer disruptions and breakdowns due to more effective and sector leading adoption support.
- Deliver cost savings/ avoidance as a result of fewer children in care and/ or children spending less time in care
- Deliver cost savings through the identification of efficiencies from improved practice and performance (reduced delivery costs per placement).

Financial case

The finance work undertaken with finance leads from each LA has established 2018/19 baseline budgets for adoption using a consistent methodology. It is proposed that the sum of these would be the initial contributions to the operating costs of the RAA, and would form the affordability envelope for the new RAA operating model.

The RAA proposed staffing model has been costed and is £19k more than the baseline staff budget of £1.3m. To complete the costing of the RAA new operating model, non-pay costs have been added by aggregating the three existing budgets. Net Inter-agency fee budget has been set at zero, in line with existing budgets, which is a considered a prudent position. Overall the RAA budget indicates that the model is broadly affordable subject to some key financial risks.

The potential financial benefits from the RAA operating model arise from increasing capacity and capability to place more looked after children with adoptive families and the avoidance of costs relating to care. The operating model also has the potential to improve operational efficiency to enable additional placements or to yield savings in the future.

Management case

A plan has been produced setting out the activity required to implement the RAA and support implementation activity. This is summarised below:

- The implementation period will run from June 2018 to go-live on 1 April 2019
- The RAA Head of Service will be appointed and lead the implementation from 1 September 2018
- There will be a formal staff consultation and formal process for matching staff to the new structure before go-live
- The employment model proposed is to second staff from Bedford and MK to the RAA
- There will be a 6 month period after go-live where staff will work through their existing cases and transition to their new roles.

A key piece of work in the implementation period will be the negotiation and sign-off of an RAA legal Agreement.

The RAA will receive a grant for implementation costs. This is subject to confirmation but is expected to be £120k. Paying for the Head of Service to be in post from September to lead the implementation will be a key expense against this budget. There is a risk that this grant may be reduced.

RAA operating model and governance arrangements

The proposed operating model is designed to focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for children and adopters, and delivering one set of processes and practice used by all adoption staff. In summary, it will include the following elements:

- One Head of Service with overall responsibility for delivery and performance improvement
- Roles organised into three specialist teams, each with a dedicated team manager reporting into a Head of Service:
    - **Recruitment and assessment team:** Team Manager, Learning and Development Officer, Marketing Officer, Adoption Social Workers, Assistant Social Workers, Business Support
    - **Matching and family finding team:** Team Manager, Family Finder Social Workers, Assistant Social Workers and Business Support

    - **Adoption Support Team:** Team Manager, Adoption Support Social Workers, Business Support
    - Other roles reporting directly into Head of Service including Panel Adviser and Panel Support
- **Prospective adopter and other enquiries** managed centrally through one website, telephone number and central locations
- **Recruitment and Assessment Team** and **Adoption Support Team** to deliver across boundaries of all three LA areas, working from three bases in Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes
- **Matching and Family Finding Team** based locally and co-located with Children's Social Work teams (these teams will be the key interface with the three LAs and work to embed early permanence).

A local authority-hosted model is the proposed legal and contractual form for the delivery of the RAA. The roles of each partner LA in relation to the RAA is determined through a legally binding RAA Agreement. Strategic oversight and decision making will be provided by an RAA Board, which will include the three LA DCSs as well as representatives of the VAAs. In addition, there will be an Operational Board which will support and guide the Head of Service with the operational management of the RAA. This will link the RAA firmly into the wider children's services operating in each LA.

The financial model for the RAA, which will be set-out in the legal agreement, is essentially one of budget pooling and risk sharing. In summary the key features are:

- A single RAA budget with contributions from each LA in the first two years in proportion to their share of the 2018/19 agreed budget baselines
- No inter-agency fees between the LAs in the RAA
- Risks of over spending to be shared between the LAs on the basis of their agreed budget shares.

Recommendations

This FBC makes five key recommendations for the development of the Central East RAA:

1. Agree to establish a Central East RAA based on appraisal of the strategic, financial and management case set out in this document
2. Agree the proposed operating model, employment model and governance arrangements
3. Proceed to implementation and design phase in June 2018, as defined in the implementation plan, working towards proposed go-live on 1 April 2019
4. Agree the implementation plan set out in the management case including timescales and costs, and
5. Further clarify and formalise the role of the two participating VAAs in the governance and delivery of the RAA.

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3. CONTEXT

3.1 National context

In 2015, DfE launched the Regionalising Adoption programme, encouraging all LAs to work with other LAs and voluntary adoption agencies (VAAs) to regionalise their adoption services, and consider the use of alternative delivery models for adoption services, at greater scale.

This followed a concerted and high-profile policy push by the previous administration to improve the timeliness and level of adoption. Alongside reforms to adopter recruitment and support, and to the process for moving children through the system in readiness for adoption, significant grants were provided to both LAs and VAAs.

The Regionalising Adoption programme was launched with the aim of enabling the adoption of more children more quickly. In launching this programme DfE indicated the opportunity for regional adoption agencies to:

- Speed up matching and improve the life chances of neglected and damaged children;
- Improve adopter recruitment and adoption support, and;
- Reduce costs through realising economies of scale and scope.

In July 2016 DfE published 'Putting Children First: delivering our vision for excellent children's social care'. This set out an expectation for:

- All LAs to become part of a RAA by 2020;
- RAAs to have one pool of adopters and one pool of children;
- VAAs to be integral in their design and delivery, and;
- RAAs to deliver adopter recruitment, assessment and matching functions.

There are now a range of RAAs in different stages of development across England. The support offered through Regionalising Adoption Programme includes:

- Dedicated support and guidance from a DfE-appointed coach;
- Financial support for design, development and implementation, and;
- Sharing of learning, insight and approaches between RAAs in development, through a knowledge hub and national learning events.

The guidance from DfE was that local authorities must meet seven criteria when designing their RAAs in order to be legitimate. The seven criteria for an RAA are:

- Single line of accountability

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- Core functions are transferred to the RAA
- Pan-regional approach
- Recruitment, support and matching
- Management responsibility
- Pooled funding
- Partnership with the voluntary sector

As a result, many of the RAAs are working towards an LA-hosted model which involves a LA delivering the RAA on behalf of other LAs without the establishment of a new entity. As of May 2018 there were 10 operational RAAs incorporating 49 LAs. The projects under development cover a total of 90 LAs, leaving only 13 LAs which are not part of an RAA.

3.2 Local context

Initial proposal for Central East RAA

In its original format, under the leadership of Coram (a Voluntary Adoption Agency) Central East consisted of: Bedford Borough Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Central Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire County Council, Norfolk County Council, Milton Keynes Council (joined in June 2016), Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption (VAA), Adoptionplus (VAA) and St Francis' Children Society (VAA)

RAA projects underway are classified by DfE as being either 'scope and define' or 'develop and deliver' RAAs. The Central East RAA was identified as a 'Develop and Deliver RAA' and was awarded a grant for the full amount requested, as it was regarded as being able to move forward quickly towards design and implementation. The second phase of the Central East RAA activity commenced in April 2016, and after a successful bid, further funding was agreed.

Design and development of the Central East RAA focused on the following areas of work:

- **Establishment of best practice through Regional Hub:** Locally nominated Adoption Operational leads across the seven LAs and three VAAs worked together to identify best practice in the delivery of adoption services with a focus on: Adopter recruitment, assessment and training; Family finding; and Adoption support. The Regional Hub started work on pooling, linking and matching children and adopters across the participating LAs and VAAs. While there was an emerging consensus among Operational Leads on the design, due to the Hub's premature closure there was no formalised agreement on the scale, scope and design of the Central East RAA through this work.

- **Cost and funding of Central East RAA:** Coram led work capturing data from participating LAs to establish a baseline in terms of cost, performance and people. This provided an indication of the number of managers and staff, costs and potential performance but when

the work ceased some questions remained open regarding the costing methodology, and the subject of which LA pays what, why and when was not at that time broached.

- **Identification of optimal legal form for Central East RAA:** Coram led an exercise with legal support from BWB to identify the best form for the Central East RAA in terms of ownership, control and the legal entity. The option recommended was one in which LAs to commission a VAA to deliver the RAA through an 'Innovation Partnership'. The option for an LA hosted model was previously discounted on basis that there was no LA appetite for taking on the host role.

June - October 2017: Central Bedfordshire led proposal and Outline Business Case

In June 2017 the LA representatives reconsidered the 'Innovation Partnership' model, and highlighted potential conflicts of interest. At this stage the LAs decided to take on the lead project management role.

Central Bedfordshire Council agreed to play a 'Sponsor' role on behalf of Central East RAA and, in August 2017, appointed iMPOWER on behalf of other participating LAs to support the development of an OBC.

Between August and October 2017 an OBC was co-developed by the participating local authorities (Directors of Children's Services, Operational Leads, Finance Leads) and voluntary adoption agencies.

February – May 2018: Detailed design and development of Full Business Case

Between February and May 2018 the focus of participating local authorities, and Central Bedfordshire Council as lead, was on the following activities:

- Deciding the configuration and scope of the Central East RAA
- Determining the activity and resources required to design the RAA and develop an FBC
- Setting up project governance and five workstreams focused on the following: Practice and organisational design; Governance and legal; Human resources; Finance and performance; ICT and property
- Arranging a further programme of adopter engagement to underpin and inform the design work, and
- Completing the detailed design of the RAA and developing an FBC, including an operating model and implementation plan.

At the outset of this phase of work, the membership of the RAA reduced from the original seven participating authorities (Central Bedfordshire, Bedford, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk) to Central Bedfordshire, Bedford and Milton Keynes. This decision was made by the DCS group on 19.03.18. The decision taken was the outcome of a process which involved capturing the views and positions of each of the original seven on their appetite for future participation, their preferred RAA partners and preferred RAA model

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Following completion of the detailed design of the RAA and the development of a FBC, focus will move to implementation working towards an RAA go-live date of 1 April 2019.

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4. INTRODUCTION AND APPROACH

4.1 Project methodology

Between February and May 2018 work was undertaken to complete a FBC for the Central East RAA, including the detailed design of the operating model.

Project workstreams

This work was delivered through five workstreams aiming to develop the detailed design of the RAA and business requirements. Each workstream had representatives nominated from each local authority according to their role. For example, the People workstream was attended by HR representatives. A set of key questions were identified for each workstream that needed to be answered to deliver this. These questions and the identified method for answering each of these is set out in the table below.

Table 4.1.1: Project methodology

Required for FBC	Key questions identified	Method
Organisational design	1. How will the new service work in the best interests of adopters and children? (pathways and processes, including child's journey to permanence on the LA side) 2. How will the functions/teams be organised in the new service? 3. What are the roles to deliver the service? (structure and management) 4. How many FTE staff are required to deliver across the roles? 5. What will be directly delivered vs. commissioned? 6. What are the main requirements for supporting infrastructure? 7. How will the RAA transition to the new arrangements?	Developed through a series of five design workshops, with staff from all three LAs and two VAAs. Tested and further developed with Implementation Group (Adoption Leads for each LA and VAA representatives). Identified staff capacity requirements and FTE from baseline cost and performance information collected.
Identify governance and	1. How are children and adopters involved? 2. How will the operating model meet the requirements of the DfE?	Developed through engagement with legal

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Required for FBC	Key questions identified	Method
legal arrangements	3. How will strategic decisions be made by all partner LAs and be formed in contract? 4. How will partner LAs manage the contract with the RAA? 5. How will disagreements or variations in performance and spend be managed? 6. How will the RAA transition to the new arrangements? 7. Is TUPE triggered or is secondment an option? (Impact assessment) 8. How will information be shared safely and securely? 9. What contracts must be novated and how?	representatives from participating LAs Tested and further developed with Implementation Group and RAA Board. Informed by example agreements developed by other RAAs.
Identify people implications and requirements	1. What are the job descriptions for each role in the RAA? 2. How will staff be inducted? 3. How will workforce development be managed? 4. How will multiple terms and conditions be managed? 5. How will staff be consulted? 6. How will communication work in the new service? 7. How will the service manager be recruited? 8. What are the business support requirements and roles and how will they be delivered? 9. What liabilities will transfer? (pension, redundancy, insurance and other responsibilities) 10. How will the RAA (and staff) transition to the new arrangements?	Established through a series of three 'people' workshops with HR leads from all three LAs. Tested and further developed with Implementation Group and RAA Board.

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Required for FBC	Key questions identified	Method
	11. Who will manage HR and payroll functions?	
Identify finance and performance arrangements and requirements	1. What are the baseline performance and costs for each LA? 2. How will performance be measured? 3. What performance is expected? 4. What cost is expected? 5. How will the new service be paid for in different performance circumstances? (funding formula) 6. Who will provide financial support services and at what cost?	Established through a series of meetings with finance leads from all three LAs. Collection of financial and performance information from LAs. Modelling of potential cost and performance. Development of a performance framework for Central East
Identify ICT and location requirements	1. Where will each role be located? 2. Which roles will be located locally vs. centrally and at what cost? 3. How will infrastructure overheads be sized and recharged? 4. How will equipment be provided and at what cost? 5. What case management and other systems will be used? 6. What are the data / ICT migration and training requirements? 7. How will we ensure the IT systems are integrated with all partner authorities?	Established through individual meetings with service leads and ICT/data leads at CBC. Shared and tested and with Implementation Group.
Strategic case	1. What is the strategic case for establishing the Central East RAA.	Through identification of the benefits of establishing the RAA, and the 'minimum expectations' of the Department for Education to be met for local authorities to be in compliance with

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Required for FBC	Key questions identified	Method
		government policy and legislation.
Management case	2. To appraise the management case for the implementation and delivery of the Central East RAA (including cost and timescales)	Through appraisal of proposed management of implementation and operational delivery of the RAA.

Service design workshops

Five workshops were held in from February – May 2018 with a focus on establishing the ideal child and adopter experience, RAA pathways and processes and RAA functions and roles. This workstream was comprised of representatives from the two VAAs and nominated staff from within the adoption services in each local authority. This included social workers and management. The working groups developed recommendations to the questions set for the design workstream in the table above.

Table 4.1.2: Service design workshops

Workshop	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3	Workshop 4	Workshop 5
Title	Developing our ideal adopter journey	Developing our ideal child's journey	Developing RAA/ council pathways and processes	Developing adoption Support baseline and options	Developing functions and roles
Purpose	To develop our ideal adopter (and birth parent) journey and identify what this 'looks and feels' like at each stage – to provide a set of principles to guide the design of service.	To develop our ideal child journey and identify what this 'looks and feels' like at each stage – to provide a set of principles to guide the design of the service.	To establish ideal pathways and processes in and out of RAA, and between councils and VAAs across the adoption process.	To establish a baseline for adoption support in terms of volumes, activity and interventions, and options for future delivery.	To develop and agree outline job descriptions for all roles in service and preferred option for configurations of roles and structure.

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Workshop	Workshop 1	Workshop 2	Workshop 3	Workshop 4	Workshop 5
Outputs	Agreed 'Ideal' adopter experience – as first person 'pen picture', and accompanying set of principles; Activities, events, timescales and roles required to deliver our ideal experience (as a process map	Agreed 'Ideal' child experience – as first person 'pen picture', and accompanying set of principles; Activities, events, timescales and roles required to deliver our ideal experience (as a process map)	Proposed approach to managing links and dependencies across child and adopter journeys and between RAA and LAs Agreed RAA roles and functions;	Baseline for adoption support in terms of volumes and activity (collected subsequently from teams). Options for future delivery of adoption support.	Outline job descriptions for all roles in RAA; Preferred option for configurations of roles and teams within service.

Key project meetings

Over this period a range of meetings were held with representatives from all three LAs and VAAs to support the development of the Full Business Case. The detail of these is set out in the table below.

Table 4.1.3: Schedule of meetings, February – May 2018

Meeting	Dates met	Attendees	Role
DCS Group	19.03.18 06.06.18	DCS reps from all 3 LAs	To make key decisions required to produce FBC
Implementation Group	08.02.18 08.03.18 05.04.18 08.05.18	Operational leads for adoption from all 3 LAs	To develop, test and recommend proposals in support of FBC, and provide information required

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Meeting	Dates met	Attendees	Role
Design workshops	07.03.18 21.03.18 04.04.18 18.04.18 01.05.18	Adoption Leads, Team Managers and Practitioners from three LAs and VAAs	To design and co-produce operating model, process and principles.
Finance lead meetings	14.03.18 26.04.18 17.05.18	Finance leads from all 3 LAs	To develop a financial baseline and agree recommendation on RAA financial arrangements
HR lead meetings	01.03.18 15.03.18 12.04.18	HR leads from all 3 LAs	To compare terms & conditions and HR approach.

4.2 Adopter and child engagement

Adopter survey and focus groups, January 2017

During this phase of work the views and experiences of adopters were used to shape the vision and design principles and inform the design recommendations.

This drew on engagement with adopters and adopted people to support the development of the Central East RAA completed by Coram in the previous phase. An adopter survey carried out in January 2017 had 77 respondents, and this was accompanied by a number of focus groups, producing some common themes and findings:

- Most had a good experience and agreed that the adoption services they accessed had been helpful, and that adoption staff had been supportive, informative and understanding.
- Adopters noted that adoption staff played an important part in keeping them motivated during their adoption journey, and adopted adults highlighted that they benefitted from the emotional support provided by staff.
- In addition, both sets of respondents highlighted that they could benefit from the services operating more regionally; adopters were generally happy to travel to make the adoption

process timelier, and adopted adults believed that a larger agency could make things more efficient.

Adopter engagement, November to December 2017 (Adopter Voice)

Engagement with adopters was completed in November and December 2017, in partnership with Adopter Voice, who were funded by DfE to support LAs to engage with adopters and to support the development of Regional Adoption Agencies.

These adopter engagement events captured views and experiences building on the adopter engagement previously undertaken and were held on the following dates at the locations set out below:

- Cambridgeshire (03.11.18) 6 Adopters, 3 engaged electronically
- Bedfordshire (15.11.18) 5 Adopters, 2 electronically
- Buckinghamshire (28.11.18) 2 Adopters (1 approved/matching), 1 electronically
- Norfolk (05.12.18) 5 Adopters, 2 electronically

There were some common themes from this engagement which have informed the approach taken to design:

- Geographical area covered by the RAA – Adopters don't want to have travel further to access support/ therapeutic support.
- Lack of understanding around how to access adoption support - encountering issues with having to access adoption support via social workers – no ability to self-refer
- Concerns about potential dilution of support when transferred to RAA.
- Difficulties in education and lack of support/understanding of difficulties faced by adoptees in school and on use of pupil premium in schools.
- Would like more information on the role of the virtual school with adopted children in school.

Adopter engagement, February to March 2018 (Adopter Voice)

Further engagement with adopters in February and March in partnership with Adopter Voice with a specific focus on adoption support. These adopter engagement events captured views and experiences building on the adopter engagement previously undertaken and were held on the following dates at the locations set out below:

- Cambridgeshire (08.02.18), 2 adopters, 2 engaged electronically
- Central Bedfordshire/ Bedford ,6 adopters, 3 electronically

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Adopter Voice sessions from the end of January to the beginning of March 2018 highlighted a disparity between the experiences of adopters in different local authorities in the region. In some areas, the negative experiences of some adoptive families have coloured their view on post-adoption services and impacted upon their willingness to get involved in supporting other families.

In other areas, access to post-adoption support has been more positive and joined up. In general, access to information on what services are available and how to access support is inconsistent and those services themselves are disjointed.

Adopter engagement, June 2018

iMPOWER facilitated two adopter workshops, hosted by Adoptionplus and St Francis' Children's Society. There were adopters present from each participating local authority and the two VAAs. These workshops captured feedback on the RAA design principles and vision, their priorities for an RAA and their views on the proposed operating model. Details of the two events are set out below:

- St Francis' Children's Society (04.06.2018), 7-9pm 11 attendees.
- Adoptionplus (05. 06.2018), 10am -12pm, 3 attendees

When asked what their priorities for an adoption service would be both groups were in general agreement that the following aspects were important to them:

- Locally delivered support services, with a personal approach from social workers.
- Consistency of social worker practice, the service and the process across the RAA
- Trust between social workers and adopters throughout the process and post-adoption
- Support that promotes long term stability for families in the region
- Communication and good relationships
- Good working relationships with outside agencies (e.g. NHS, CAMHS, education)
- Opportunities to meet other adopters who were going through similar experiences as them, both formally and informally.

Feedback on the proposed RAA operating model, with specialist teams for each function was overall positive in both sessions. Adopters acknowledged that the arrangement would allow staff to share support and expertise across the RAA, but were concerned about potential disruption to the support they currently receive from each LA, and whether the RAA would be used as a reason to reduce service provision. Both groups were supportive of the RAA having a core offer for post-adoption support and the support being offered as part of an early intervention and prevention model.

Both groups also gave feedback on the design vision and principles which have been incorporated in this document.

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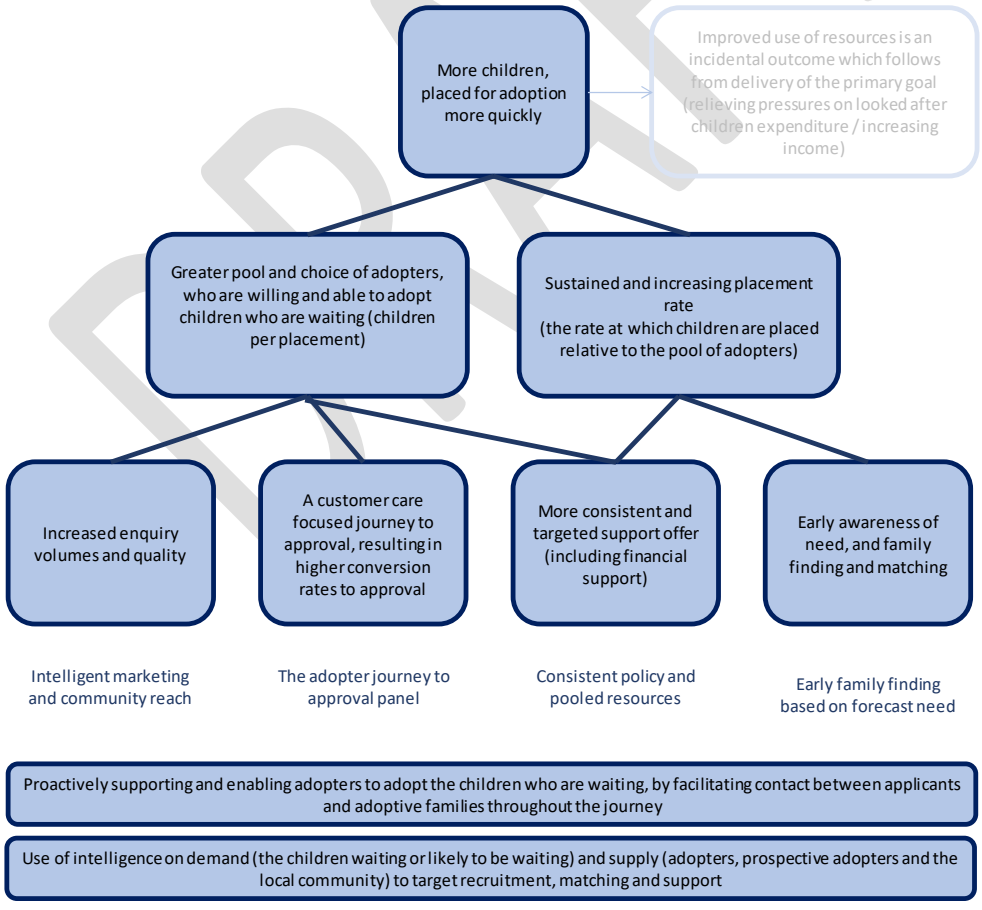
5. STRATEGIC CASE

5.1 Benefits targeted

The proposed RAA operational model has been developed with the aim of delivering a set of identified benefits for adopters, children and local areas. Central to these is the aim of improving the outcomes and experience of children and adopters and enabling a better use of resources. The performance of all three local authorities is strong as demonstrated by Oftsed inspection outcomes (all received 'good' for adoption) and DfE Adoption Scorecard statistics.

At the recommendation of the Implementation Group the proposed model provides the best opportunity to further improve adoption performance and outcomes achieved for children and adopters these benefits, which will be tracked through the application of an outcomes and performance framework (**Appendix B**). The diagram below sets out how the proposed RAA will maximise the opportunity to realise benefits for children, adoptive families and local authorities. *Figure 5.1.1: Benefits targeted from proposed RAA model*



By improving adopter recruitment (choice), improving linking and matching by operating at greater scale and making use of best practice across the three LA areas, the new RAA will aim to deliver the following benefits:

- More children finding a permanent home;
- Reduction in the time children have to wait to find a permanent home;
- Fewer disruptions and breakdowns due to more effective and pre and post adoption support;
- Delivery of cost savings/avoidance as a result of fewer children in care and/or children spending less time in care;
- Delivery of financial economies and efficiencies from improved practice and performance (reduced delivery costs per placement) – management, operational and infrastructure;
- Additional income from 'exporting' more adopters;
- Improved outcomes for children and wider society as a result of adoption and more timely adoption, and;
- Improved quality and consistency of experience across the adoption journey for children and adoptive families.

5.2 Department for Education (DfE) strategic direction

Government policy requires LAs to establish Regional Adoption Agencies and DfE is supporting LAs to establish these through financial grants, guidance, and coaching. There are also statutory levers through which local authorities may be compelled to establish RAAs. As of May 2018 there were 10 operational RAAs including 49 LAs. The projects under development cover a total of 90 LAs leaving only 13 LAs which are not part of an RAA.

In October 2017, DfE set out a number of minimum expectations for how RAAs must be configured (shared by Robert DeMont on 12th October 2017), which have informed the development of the proposed operating model. The requirements are as follows:

- **Single line of accountability:** The new body must be in a position to act as a single entity on behalf of the individual authorities.
- **Core functions are transferred to the RAA:** As set out in the policy paper 'Regionalising Adoption', RAAs need to be responsible for recruitment, matching and support.
- **Pan-regional approach:** The new body should have a regional reach as far as its key functions are concerned, particularly on family finding and matching.
- **Recruitment, support and matching:** It is essential that RAAs drive forward the recruitment of new adopters utilising a wider geographical base audience to increase the

scope for more matching and ultimately increasing placement opportunities. It is believed that this will be particularly helpful in assessing adopters for harder to place children.

- **Management:** Each RAA should appoint a Head of Service with line management responsibility for staff within the RAA.
- **Pooled funding:** LAs need to pool their adoption funding into one funding pot that is managed by the RAA.
- **Partnership with the voluntary sector:** VAAs have an important role to play in the provision of adoption services. RAA plans need to involve them in the design and implementation work, and to consider their role in the delivery of services.

The table below considers the proposed RAA model against each of these criteria:

Table 5.2.1: RAA compliance with DfE requirements

DfE criteria	CE RAA compliance
Single line of accountability	There will be a Head of Service with a direct line of accountability to the host authority Director of Children's Services and the RAA Board.
Core functions are transferred to the RAA	Adopter recruitment and assessment, Family Finding, and Adoption Support are managed and delivered by the RAA.
Pan-regional approach	The RAA covers Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes.
Recruitment, support and matching	The RAA will be recruiting adopters on behalf of the three local authorities and will manage assessment, recruitment, matching and adoption support.
Management	There will be a single Head of Service for the RAA and an Operational Board.
Pooled funding	There will be a single RAA budget with an agreed funding formula and mechanism to share risks and rewards. There will be no inter agency fees between the RAA members.
Partnership with the voluntary sector	The two VAAs have been included in the design process and will have representation on the RAA board.

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6. FINANCIAL CASE

6.1 Introduction

The financial case sets out the costs of the proposed new RAA operating model compared with the baseline budgets of the three existing adoption services, to demonstrate affordability. This section also summarises the potential financial benefits and risks identified.

6.2 Establishing the Budget Baseline

A financial baselining exercise was undertaken to cost the three existing LA adoption services. This work was part of the Finance Workstream which was led by the Project Manager who worked with a finance lead from each LA. The following approach was used:

- The cost base used was 2018/19 base budgets
- In addition to staff and non-pay items in the adoption budgets (direct costs) – material staff and non-pay costs from other budgets in the relevant department were included – for example staff shared with fostering services or advertising budgets (indirect costs)
- Central overheads were excluded as were management costs for any roles senior to the Service Lead
- To give consistency - where some direct budgets included items (such as property related expenses) that others did not include these were excluded from baselines.

For completeness and transparency, a standardised cost collection template spreadsheet was used with accompanying guidance notes. 2017/18 projected actuals were also collected for comparisons and reconciliations were provided to explain variations between outturn 2017/18 and 2018/19 budget. The non-pay budgets were summarised by the Project Manager and compared for completeness and consistency by the finance leads.

Appendix D provides more details of the financial information returned of each LA and a detailed combined baseline statement is provided at Appendix E. A summary of the combined baseline is provided in the table below:

Table 6.2.1: Summary Baseline

		CBC	BB	MK	Total
		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Direct Adoption net Budgets 2018/19		955	811	974	2,740
Less: Adoption Allowances		-388	-330	-499	-1,217
	Relevant direct budget	567	481	475	1,523
Less: Items removed from baselines		-39	-6	-5	-51
	Direct Budgets in LA returns	528	475	469	1,472
Add: Relevant/Material Indirect costs		21	44	4	69
	2018/19 Baseline/LA returns	549	519	473	1,541
		36%	34%	31%	

This agreed baseline sets the affordability envelope for the RAA based on 2018/19 costs.

6.3 Costing the New Operating Model

The RAA design process and resulting new operating model is described in Section 8. This process included identifying a new staffing structure (Section 8.6). The staffing levels required were determined by the Implementation Group (Adoption Service Leads from Central Bedfordshire, Bedford and Milton Keynes). Regard was given to the tasks defined for each position as well as the anticipated level of activity. This was then compared with the existing overall level of staff and staff budget to sense check it and to assess affordability.

The staffing structure was costed using weighted gross salaries (including on costs) for each role derived from the 2018/19 budget information collected. This was multiplied by the number of FTEs required for each role in each of the specialist teams identified. The full costing staffing structure agreed with the Implementation Group is provided in **Appendix C** and this is summarised and compared with the baseline staff budget as follows:

Table 6.3.1: Staffing Budget

Staff Summary		**Budget Baseline**		**RAA Budget**	
		FTE	£	FTE	£
Head/Team Leaders		2.80	186,446	4.00	278,009
Qualified		17.60	878,679	16.00	795,116
Unqualified/Other Professionals		4.38	147,370	5.00	162,520
Support		3.86	89,199	3.50	85,233
		28.64	1,301,694	28.50	1,320,879
Shortfall					- 19,185

The non-pay expenditure (after netting off Adoption Support Fund income) is only 14% of the total net baseline budget. The non-pay budget for the RAA was built-up by aggregating the three existing non-pay budgets. There has been no attempt at this stage to “re-zero” the non-pay budget and, although there may be opportunities to rationalise the use of budgets, there was no immediate identifiable savings.

The most significant non-pay budget relates to expenditure on contracted professional services including those supplied by VAAs (therapy/counselling etc) to provide adoption support. This is £412k but is largely funded by individual claims and receipt of Adoption Support Grant (£359k)

The overall RAA budget, including pay and non-pay, is £1.92m with £0.34m budgeted for ASF leaving a net budget of £1.54m. This is £19k more than the financial baseline . The summary RAA budget is provided below, with staffing numbers arranged by function.

Table 6.3.2: Summary RAA Budget

Expenditure		FTE	Full Year
Employees			**£000s**
	Head of Service	1.00	77
	Recruitment of Adopters	11.50	500
	Family Finding	6.00	296
	Adoption Support Service	8.00	368
	Panel Management/other support	2.00	79
		28.50	1,321
Inter Agency Fees			0
Other Expenditure			
	Staff Related		47
	Panel Member Fees/Expenses		45
	Contracted services		412
	Subscriptions/Licenses		25
	Other Expenditure		36
	Other support to Clients		33
			598
	Total Expenditure		1,919
Income			
	ASF		-359
	LA Baseline Contributions		-1,542
	Shortfall		19

The £19k shortfall is related to the staff budget. This will be reviewed as the staffing arrangements are considered in more detail during implementation, however, at this stage the Implementation Group were not able to identify savings to cover this shortfall.

6.4 Financial Benefits and Risks

Financial Benefits

Achieving better value for money is a key component of the performance framework and as the RAA is established and operational, this will be tracked through the Key Performance indicators. Improved value for money is planned to be achieved by:

- Increased numbers of adopters recruited by better and more targeted recruitment, more timely and supportive assessment, training and approval processes
- Recruiting and supporting adopters capable of caring for children with more complex needs – reducing the need to place these children elsewhere or remaining in Fostering
- Improving assessment/training processes, matching and support to reduce breakdowns
- Promoting adoption as a permanence solution and early interventions/tracking to reduce children's time in care

- Improved matching and placement processes to reduce the time for Child to be adopted

Predicting the workload of the RAA and the number of LACs suitable for adoption is challenging. There are factors, particularly the decisions made by the Courts, that can cause numbers to vary greatly which are outside the full control of the LAs and adoption services. It is apparent from the work undertaken to establish the RAA activity baseline for each LA's activity is very variable year on year for both adopters recruited and child placements made. It is also evident that performance data is not readily available and consistent.

In view of the above, it is not proposed to quantify the operational or wider financial benefits of establishing the RAA. However, it is logical that the benefits of scale and the planned improvements to processes will lead to better use of resources and potential wider cost avoidance by more children being adopted from care whatever the underlying social or legal environment. Bearing in mind that average care costs for looked after children are in the order of £35k per year, the generation of even a few extra adoptions per year can cumulate to a significant cost avaoidance.

Table 6.4.1: Illustration of potential cost avoidance as a result of placement growth

	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Child Placement Growth	0.0%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%	4.0%
Activity Base - Child Placements	60	62	65	67	70
Change between Years		2	2	3	3
Change from Base year		2	5	7	10
Impact on LA Costs	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
- LAC Care Cost Savings		-84	-171	-262	-357
- Adoption Allowances		12	24	37	51
Net Cost Avoidance		-72	-147	-225	-306
Key Assumptions	£000s				
Average LAC care costs	-35				
Saverage Adoption Allowances	5				

The scenario above assumes a 4% increase from Year 2 in LAC placements from the base level of 60 placements. This assumes that this growth is met by RAA generated Adopter Households and that the additional activity can be provided by improving productivity of the planned workforce. By year 5 this growth represents 10 additional adoptions. After allowing for average costs of adoption allowances this represents net cost avoidance on care costs of an estimated £306k per year.

Improving performance management by closely monitoring and reporting on performance against key performance indicators is an important benefit of the RAA compared with the current situation. The RAA Board will need to exercise judgement in the future balancing

pressures to achieve operational savings with the impact upon the quality of support provided to adopters and children and the likely impact on LAC numbers.

Another key financial benefit of the RAA is reducing the risk of variations in activity year on year resulting in large "swings" in net Inter Agency fees – the difference between fees incurred by placing children outside the LA and fees received for placing children from other LAs with the LA's adopters. The table below summarised net IAF over the last three years:

Table 6.4.2: Net Inter Agency Fees

	2015/16 Actual	**2016/17 Actual**	**2017/18 Projected**	**2018/19 Budget**
	£	£	£	£
Central Bedfordshire	214,858	28,468	-151,527	0
Bedford Borough	57,500	118,421	29,700	0
Milton Keynes	-87,388	-127,079	-10,319	0
	184,970	19,810	-132,146	0

Note : This excludes Inter Agency Fees Grant

Central Bedfordshire in particular has experienced a large swing from year to year. Under the RAA Agreement, there would be no inter-agency fees between the three LAs and a single net budget for IAF which is set at zero in the 2018/19 baseline and RAA initial budget. Therefore the risk of an overspend on this significant and variable budget line is effectively shared between the LAs.

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Key Financial Risks

Inter Agency Fees

The running costs of the RAA are predominantly staff and are largely fixed within the expected range of activity. The key financial risk when the RAA is operational is a variation in activity leading to an overspend on inter agency fees. As IAF fees are individually material (£27k for a single child) small variations in numbers can lead to a relatively large surplus or deficit against the net IAF budget. Numbers could vary due to shifts in:

- Performance - recruiting and placing more or less local adopters, or
- Demand – a change in the numbers of looked after children where adoption is identified as the best permanency solution.

The RAA net inter agency fee budget has been set to zero (as shown in Table 6.4.2) in line with the three LA adoption budgets. Overall it is quite a prudent position as it does not anticipate achieving all or part of an overall net income of £132k as was outturn in 2017/18. Clearly RAA performance and demand, and the inter agency fee budget, will need to be monitored closely as the RAA beds-in. However, as stated above the pooling of the inter agency fee risk in the RAA with the larger numbers of children placed in a year will help to eliminate some of the swings that individual LAs have had in the last few years (see table 6.4.2 above).

Indirect Budgets

The finance workstream were concerned to highlight that there is a component of the financial baseline which is not directly in the adoption budget and can therefore not automatically be "released" for the RAA. These are relatively small in the overall baseline and are analyses in the table below:

Table 6.4.3: Indirect Adoption Costs

Indirect	FTE	£	
Marketing/Training staff	1.38	56,227	Staff shared with Fostering
Indirect support staff	0.36	3,966	Business support staff
Indirect non-staff		9,000	Advertising budget shared with Fostering
Total Indirect	1.74	69,193	

The advertising budget at CBC is shared with Fostering and can therefore be made available for the RAA. The other indirect costs are staff in shared posts or providing business support. These posts support adoption but practically as shared posts may not be able to move to the RAA. Resources may however be able to be freed by internal reorganisation or redeployment this staff time.

Host Support Costs

The RAA host, CBC, will require additional finance, IT, data support and HR to operate the RAA and provide the performance information to the RAA Board, Operational Board and Head of Service. This will be key to achieving the benefits and transparent partnership working. This

will need to be worked through with service agreements to define the services provided and the cost. However, a provision of £60k seems a reasonable estimate. There appears little scope in the relatively small RAA non-pay budget to absorb these costs and therefore this is added to the RAA budget either to be met by an additional charge or by identifying staff savings to keep overall costs within the affordability envelope.

Other key financial risks concern the accuracy and completeness of budgets and the potential for an overspend on the Implementation Budget. The risk log in Section 7.4 outlines the financial risks to the RAA and participating LAs.

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7. MANAGEMENT CASE

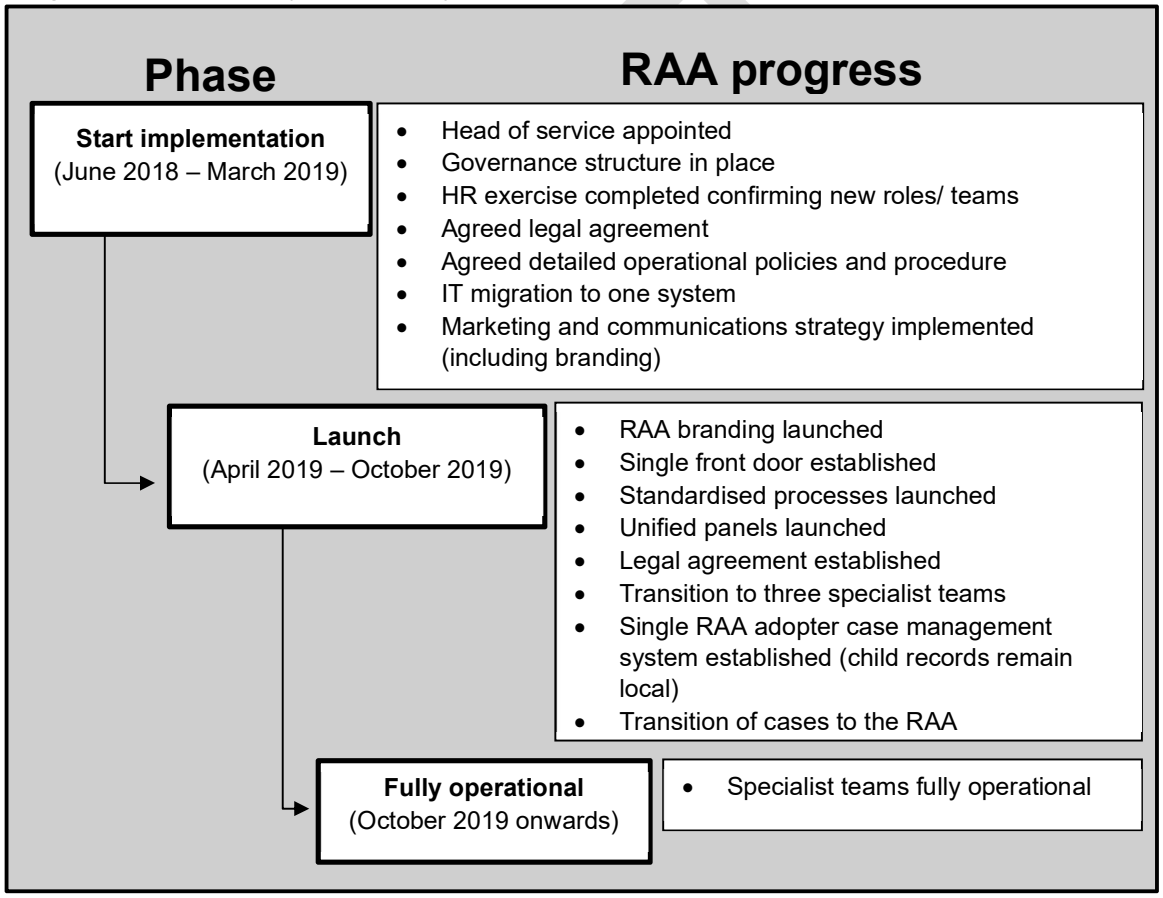
7.1 Introduction

This section sets out a management case to demonstrate how the RAA operating model will be implemented. It also sets out the key risks associated with the RAA and detail on how these will be managed. The proposed RAA operating model is detailed in the following section (Section 8 – Proposed operating model).

7.2 Implementation plan

The RAA will be implemented in three phases which are illustrated in the diagram below:

Figure 7.2.1: Phased implementation from June 2018



The aim is that the RAA will go live on 1 April 2019. This will involve:

- Launch of a single front door and managers and RAA branding
- Completion of HR exercise for all staff in scope, with all informed on role and team in proposed structure

- Commencement of a six month transition period for staff to transfer from their existing roles and team to the proposed model and structure (including case transition).

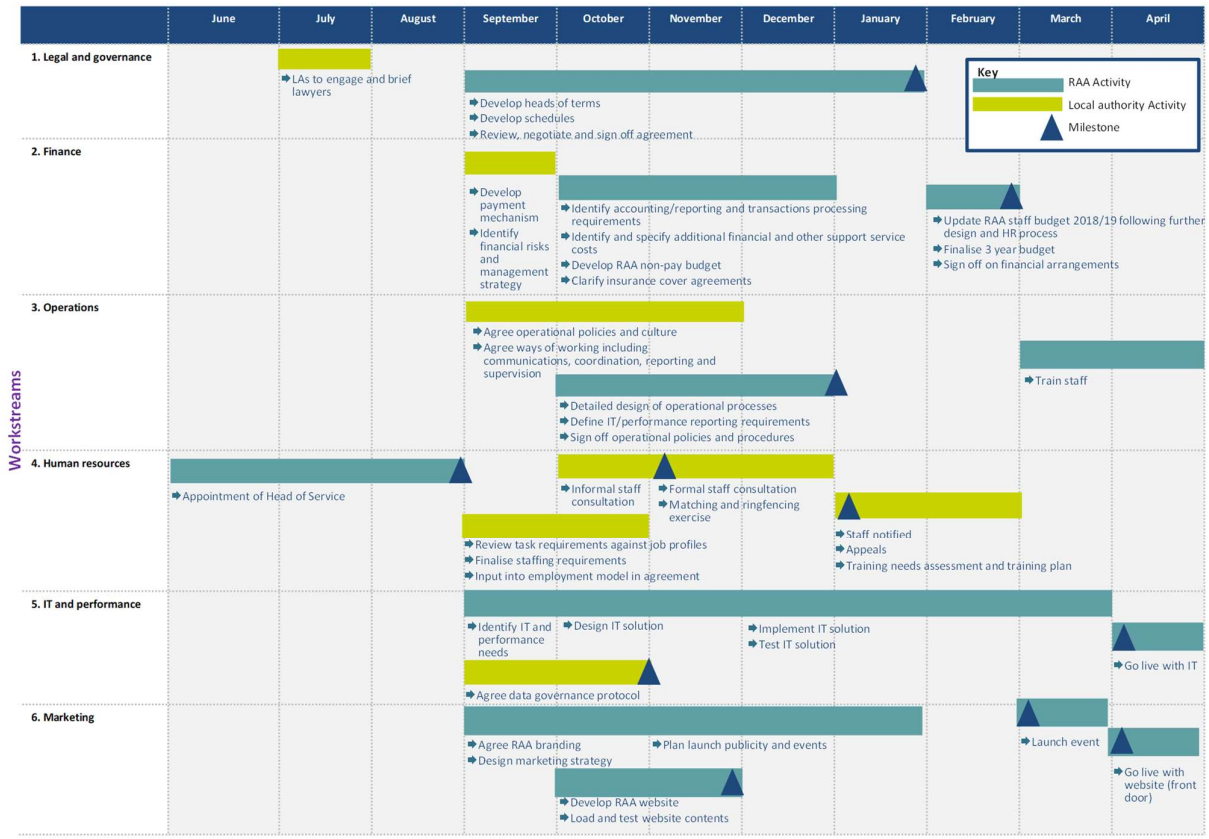
June 2018 to March 2019 – First phase of implementation

In June 2018 a phase of activity will commence to manage the implementation of the RAA. To achieve this six workstreams have been identified:

1. Legal and governance
2. Finance
3. Operations
4. Human resources
5. IT and performance
6. Marketing

Implementation of the RAA begins in June 2018, with a launch date of April 2019. During this time, the Implementation Group, made up of adoption leads from each local authority and the two VAAs will continue to oversee and advise on the implementation phase. Additionally, the RAA Board will meet monthly to make key decisions on implementation activity.

Image 7.2.2: Storyboard of the implementation plan



Implementation workstreams

A summary of the activity required to deliver each of the six identified workstreams is set out below:

Workstream 1: Legal and governance

The legal and governance workstream will need specialist legal advice to facilitate the drafting of the terms of the agreement. This workstream is primarily responsible for developing a terms of reference and governance agreement for the RAA. It will require resource from each local authority. The tasks of this workstream are:

- To engage and brief lawyers
- To develop a heads of terms
- To draft an agreement
- To develop schedules
- For local authorities to review and negotiate the terms
- To finalise an agreement, with sign off from each local authority.

Workstream 2: Finance

The finance workstream will build upon the work started in the FBC phase. As well as finalising the RAA budget there will be further discussion on the potential future payment mechanism and risk sharing processes for inclusion in the RAA Agreement. Another key strand of the work will be understanding what additional finance and other support the host will require to operate the RAA and costing this into the RAA budget. The tasks of this workstream are:

- To develop a detailed RAA non-pay budget
- To identify accounting/reporting and transactions processing requirements
- To identify and specify additional financial and other support service costs
- To update the RAA staff budget 2018/19 following the design and HR process
- To finalise the RAA three year budget
- To develop a payment mechanism
- To clarify insurance cover arrangements
- To identify financial risks and devise a risk management strategy
- To finalise and agree a funding formula for the RAA

Workstream 3: Operations

The operations workstream is focused on how the RAA will work in practice, agreeing working culture and processes. The main tasks are:

- To agree operational policies and culture
- To agree ways of working including communications, coordination, reporting and supervision
- To define the IT system and performance reporting requirements
- To confirm the detailed design of operational processes, agreed by each local authority
- To train staff after roles have been allocated.

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To maintain quality across the service, it is crucial that there is an RAA-wide culture and way of working, that the Head of Service will be responsible for maintaining.

Workstream 4: Human resources

The human resources workstream includes recruitment of a head of service, staff consultation, a formal matching and ring fencing exercise and identifying the development needs of the workforce to ensure the adoption service meets its vision and design principles. This will require the input and resource of the HR departments in each of the local authorities. The tasks of this workstream includes:

- To recruit a head of service
- To review and amend the task requirements against current job profiles
- To finalise the staffing requirements of the RAA
- To provide specialist advice to the governance workstream in regard to the employment model
- To conduct an informal staff consultation
- To conduct a formal staff consultation
- To undertake a matching and ringfencing exercise
- To notify staff of job roles in the new RAA
- To conduct an appeals process
- To produce a training needs assessment and training plan for staff

It will build on the work already undertaken by HR staff at each of the local authorities during the formulation of this FBC.

Workstream 5: IT and performance

The IT and performance workstream will require specialist IT advice. It will also be essential that the IT departments and the chief information officers for each local authorities participate in the process. The tasks of this workstream are:

- To identify IT and performance needs of the RAA
- To design the IT solution
- To implement and test the IT
- To go live with IT
- To agree information governance protocols

The RAA requires a single IT solution to manage the recruitment of adopters and track the status of their application. Therefore, it is suggested that the host authority, Central Bedfordshire, will manage data about the RAA adopters on their current case management system and also that open adopter cases are migrated across.

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Workstream 6: Marketing

The final workstream is marketing, which will be responsible for developing the RAA brand and the curation of the RAA website which will act as a single front door for the RAA. The tasks of this workstream are:

- To agree the RAA branding (including name)
- To design the marketing strategy
- To develop the RAA website
- To load and test the website content
- To go live with the website
- To plan the RAA launch publicity campaign and events
- To launch and communicate the new brand with all relevant stakeholders

Marketing and communications will be important for the RAA to remain competitive and drive recruitment of adopters. Therefore, the creation of a single front door via the website, agreed branding and launching the RAA are important tasks to complete in the intervening period before the launch in April 2019.

7.3 Proposed implementation Budget

DfE are providing a grant to meet the costs of developing the RAA to go-live. Confirmation of the amount of grant available is still awaited but it is expected to be £120k. A key component of the budget will be paying for the Head of Service to be in-post from September 2018 to lead the project and have a key role in the detailed design.

Table 7.3.1: Implementation budget

	£000s	£000s	Notes
Estimated DFE Grant		-120	
Head of Service	45		Assumes in post 1 Sept - 31 March
PM	20		Assumes time to handover
IT	20		Estimate for IT support
Legal	10		LGSS Legal to provide additional support
Branding/Web/Launch	25		Estimate
		120	

The amounts provided for IT, legal and developing the brand and website are estimates based on the experience of other projects.

There is a risk that the DfE grant will be reduced and that cost estimates are insufficient when the work is fully scoped. There is also a risk that if the project is delayed the implementation costs will rise mainly due to the salary component.

7.4 Key risks and proposed management

A range of risks have been identified in relation to the development and implementation of the Central East RAA. These are set out in the table below. For each risk the following is provided:

- Rating based on impact and likelihood (RAG rated, Green = low, Red = high, Amber = medium)
- Mitigating actions.

Risk matrix

Table 7.4.1: RAG rated risk matrix

Risk	Impact	Like-lihood	Mitigation
Performance			
Courts increase evidence threshold for placement orders and / or lose confidence in ability of the RAA's LAs to find and support appropriate and stable placements			Develop and strengthen relationships with the courts; build a good track record with of achieving good outcomes for children and monitor trends carefully
Rise in adoption breakdowns under RAA			Proposed model incorporates a specialist adoption support team drawing on national best practice, experience and expertise – with a central focus on monitoring and reducing adoption breakdowns.
Information sharing between LAs is restricted due to information governance protocol			Once implementation commences a governance protocol will be developed with input of Adoption Leads to meet requirements of RAA. This will include a GDPR risk assessment.
Under the RAA model the LA (who has first contact with children) and the RAA (who will recruit adopters) will be split which could impact on process and relationships required for successful matching and timescales			Processes for managing the child and adopter journey, and the delineation of responsibilities has been carefully designed with the input of managers and staff to manage this risk.
Decline in performance			Performance monitoring against KPIs to inform management action and careful planning of the

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Risk	Impact	Like-lihood	Mitigation
			implementation period post go-live to ensure 'business as usual' is preserved.
Delay to commencement of go-live date			Project governance structure and project management to ensure the project is on track.
Finance			
Implementation costs exceed the DfE grant available			Review project budget when Implementation grant is confirmed and review spending priorities if additional costs are identified.
Savings cannot be identified within the RAA budget to cover the identified additional staff costs			Savings may be found when a more granular budget is prepared including part time posts, the current proposed staffing budget is only £19k more than current budget levels and any residual overspend will need to be contained within the overall budget.
Indirect costs cannot be released from the LA budgets			Identify opportunities to utilise or redeploy relative small numbers of staff as design and HR processes are progressed.
Host additional costs of providing finance, IT and HR support			Costs are not expected to be more than £60,000. Consideration will need to be given to additional contributions if these costs cannot be met within the overall budget.
Hidden and unexpected costs affect the RAA budget			In depth scrutiny of existing non-pay costs prior to setting a budget and contractual provisions to review LA baseline

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Risk	Impact	Like-lihood	Mitigation
			funding if and when additional costs are identified.
Variations in inter agency fees			The current budget is set at £Nil in line with the 3 LA budgets, activity will be closely monitored under the performance framework and early identification of possible IAF will be investigated to inform management decision.
Cost of reorganisation of the workforce			Change in overall FCEs is low and natural wastage or redeployment can be used to avoid additional costs falling on LAs budgets.
Workforce			
Workforce model results in disputes.			Secondments will be for a limited period of time.
Unable to attract and retain the best adoption staff			Ensure RAA provides an attractive and supportive offer to existing and prospective staff
Fail to achieve buy in from RAA staff			The model has been designed by staff, additionally iMPOWER led staff engagement at the three sites at the end of the design process. A communication plan will be developed and put in place in the implementation period as well as informal and formal staff consultation.
Wider stakeholders			
Fail to achieve buy in of LA / VAA operational staff (e.g. Children's Social Workers)			The VAAs are represented on the RAA board and have been included in the design process. The Head of Service and Team Managers will work closely with

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Risk	Impact	Like-lihood	Mitigation
			LAs to ensure views and perspectives are captured. These will also be supported through the RAA Board and Operational Board.
VAA presence in region is threatened or destabilised			Ensure VAAs continue to participate in the implementation phase in addition to the design

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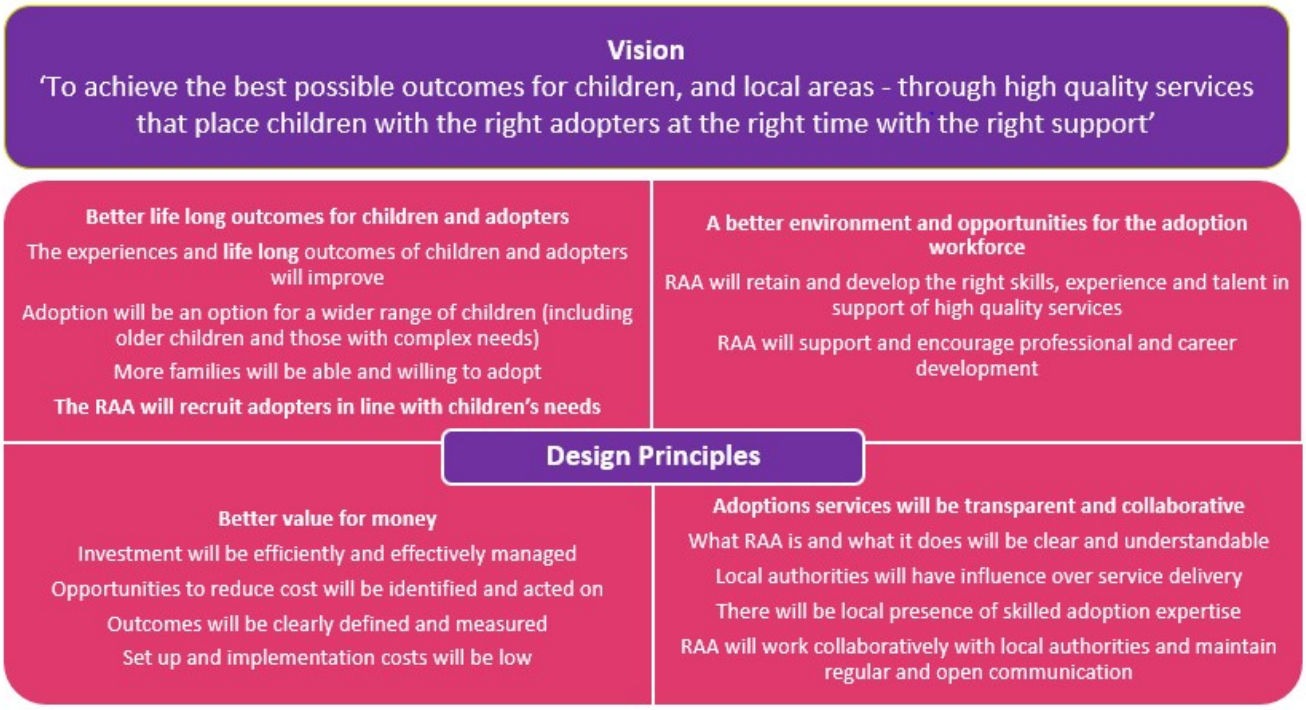
8. PROPOSED OPERATING MODEL

8.1 Vision and design principles

A vision and set of design principles have been developed for the RAA. These have been informed by adopter engagement and aim to be child and adopter centred. These are intended to underpin all design work on the RAA and its future delivery:

Figure 8.1.1: Vision and design principles



8.2 RAA delivery scope

Design work from February to May 2018 has established a proposed scope of delivery and design for the RAA, including allocation of roles and responsibilities between RAAs, LAs, and RAA functions to be delivered locally and centrally. These proposals are summarised in the tables below.

Key for the tables below:

L = Lead role	S = Supporting role	N/C = Not covered	X = Delivered centrally

A. Recruitment, assessment and permanency planning

This table sets out the proposed roles and responsibilities for LAs and the RAA across recruitment, assessment and permanency planning. Detailed breakdown of the RAA's role in permanency planning, and the of the process, system and other interfaces between the RAA and LAs, will be further developed in the next phase.

Table 8.2.1: Scope – recruitment, assessment and permanency planning

Function	RAA	LA	Local	Central
Recruitment and Assessment				
Targeting guidance based on children waiting or with a possible plan	S	L		X
Marketing and recruitment strategy	L			X
Adopter recruitment and enquiries	L			X
Assessment of prospective adopters	L		X	
Completion of prospective adopter report	L		X	
Agency decision maker for approval of adopters	L		X	
Post approval training	L		X	
Early linking of prospective adopters with children waiting or with a possible plan	L		X	
Post placement training for prospective adopters	L		X	
Permanence Planning				
Early identification of children	S	L	X	
Tracking and monitoring of children possibly requiring adoption	L	S	X	
Support and advice to social workers on the adoption process	L	S	X	
Sibling or other specialist child assessments	S	L	X	
Direct work to prepare child for placement	S	L	X	
Preparation of the child permanence report	S	L	X	
Agency decision maker for "should be placed for adoption" decisions	S	L	X	
Case management prior to the point agreed by the LA ADM	S	L	X	
Case management from point agreed by the LA ADM	S	L	X	

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B. Matching, placements and agency adviser role

The table below sets out proposed roles and responsibilities for LAs and the RAA across matching and placements, including RAA functions which will be delivered centrally and locally:

Table 8.2.2 Scope – matching, placements and agency adviser role

Function	RAA	LA	Central	Local
Matching and Placements				
Family finding	L			X
Looked after child reviews		L	N/C	
Shortlisting	L	S		X
Visiting potential adoptive families	S	L		X
Organising child appreciation days	L		Standard Approach	X
Adoption panel administration and management	L		X	
Agency adviser role	L	L	X	Advice
Agency decision maker for matching prospective adopters and child		L	N/C	
Placement planning meeting administration and management of introductions	L	S		X
Statutory support to family post placement	S	L		X
Ongoing support to family post placement and planning	L	S		X
Delivery of adoption support	L		X	
Preparation of life story (book and letter)	S	L	N/C	
Life story work	S	L		
Independent review officer monitoring the quality of child's care and care plan		L		
Support for prospective adopters in preparation and submission of adoption order application – including attending at court	L			
Preparation of later life letter	S	L		
Work with birth parents	S	L		
Medical advice	L	L		
Legal advice	L	L		

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C. Adoption support

The table below sets out proposed roles and responsibilities for LAs and the RAA across adoption support and non-agency adoptions including which RAA functions will be delivered centrally and locally.

Table 8.2.3: Scope – Adoption support

Function	RAA	LA	Central	Local
Adoption Support				
Assessment of need including reassessment	L	Sign off / QA	X	Local approach
Developing and delivering adoption support plans	L	Sign off / Endorsement		X
Agree and administer financial support to adoptive families pre and post adoption order		L	N/A	
Adoption support delivery including: 1. Support groups 2. Social events 3. Post adoption training 4. Independent birth relative services 5. Support with ongoing birth relative contact 6. Adoption counselling and training 7. Adults' access to records 8. Intermediary services	 1. L 2. L 3. L 4. L 5. L 6. L 7. L 8. L			 **1.** X **2.** X **3.** X **4.** X **5.** X **6.** X **7.** X **8.** X
Financial support to adopters including adoption allowances and annual means test		L	N/C	
Non-Agency Adoptions				
Step parent/partner adoption assessments	L		X	Delivered locally
Inter-county adoption assessments and post approval and post order support	L		X	Delivered locally

8.3 Ideal child and adopter journey and principles

The design work started with, and has remained anchored in, the experiences of children and adopters.

A range of LA / VAA staff were engaged through workshops from February to May 2018 to identify the ideal experience and journey through the service from the perspective of children and adopters. This aimed to ensure that the principles and practice underpinning the RAA are based on collaboration between professionals, and harnessed the collective knowledge and expertise of those delivering adoption services.

At the service design workshops a range of professionals (including VAAs, adoption service and children's social worker representatives) developed the ideal experience for each key stage of the journey to adoption, from the perspective of children and adopters. To do this the group drew on feedback from adopters and the collective understanding of best practice in adoption.

This has provided the basis for the design of RAA processes, pathways, roles and functions set out in this document and appendices.

To capture and communicate the ideal experience 'pen pictures' were developed for children and adopters, written in the first person. These are set out in full in **Appendix A**. In the sections below the ideal experience of each stage in the journey for children and adopters is distilled into a number of key principles which have guided and informed the development of processes, roles and functions.

Table 8.3.1: Key principles for delivering the ideal child journey (based on child 'pen pictures')

Stage	Key principle
1. Child becomes known to social care	• Talk to and listen to me about what I want/ don't want • Understand my fears and anxieties • Write down what I have told you about my thoughts and feelings in my own words • Check back what you have written about me with me • Do all possible to make me feel supported and safe • Give me the right information about how you are helping me and what this might mean in the future • Help me to understand what decisions have been made about me and why
2. Pre-care proceedings and planning initiated	• Make sure I have a say in my future • Keep explaining to me what is going on with me and my family and what my options are • Make me feel safe and reassured • Keep me with my sibling • If you are representing me explain your role to me clearly and help me to understand what is happening at each stage • Help me to start writing my life story to help me understand what I have been through when I'm older • Help me to understand what will happen next

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Stage	Key principle
3. Care proceedings and planning	• Make sure my foster parents can support me and listen to me • Make sure I can still see my birth family • Let me know what is happening to my family/ parents • Reassure me that what is happening to me is not my fault • If I'm confused, angry or frustrated understand why and help me to deal with this
4. Family finding	• Make sure my thoughts and feelings are considered • Try to find me a forever home where this is possible and appropriate • Keep me together with my brother or sister if this is what I want • Help me to carry on writing my life story • Support me to keep in touch with my foster carers if this is important to me • Explain what adoption is and what it could mean for me and manage my expectations • Help me to say goodbye to my birth parents
5. Matching	• Help me to find a forever family • Be honest with me about families that I could be matched with • Make sure I'm well prepared for events and activities where I could meet a forever family • Make any events and activities I participate in as fun as possible • Make sure that you manage my expectations
6. Placement	• Give me the chance to meet and get to know my adoptive family before I move in • Ask me whether I'm happy with my new adoptive family • Be there for me to talk to if I have any worries or concerns or want to talk to someone outside of my family • Explain the court process to me • Make the court hearing when I become adopted a celebration
7. Adoption support	• Make sure you listen to my wishes and feelings • Make sure there is someone I trust that I can talk to at any point I need to in the future • Let me know how my birth parents, siblings and foster parents will be told about how I'm doing • Keep me in touch with my foster carer if this is what I want • Keep me in touch with my birth family if this is what I want • Let me speak to the worker who took me through the process when I want to and don't forget about me • Help me to deal with my feelings, issues and emotions now and in the future.

Table 8.3.2: Key principles for delivering the ideal adopter journey (based on adopter pen pictures)

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Stage	Key principle
1. Pre enquiry	• Provide information on adoption in different ways and through different media • Make sure information available online directly addresses my concerns and queries • The CE RAA stands out as the best option for me • There is one central point for me to access information, enquiry and the adoption process
2. Enquiry	• Make RAA website and webpages easy to find and navigate • Make sure information about next steps and contact details is clear • When I call through make sure I don't have to wait for long and that my call isn't passed around • Be friendly and warm when you take my call • Have answers ready for the sort of questions I'm likely to ask • Reassure me if I have any concerns • I can access information at a range of times, including outside of office hours (i.e.9am – 5pm). • I have the opportunity to talk to other adopters who have been through the process • I have the opportunity to talk to staff from the adopter service, face to face
3. Preparation for training and assessment (Stage 1)	• Give me and my family a clear overview of timescales, processes etc from the outset • Help me to prepare for adoption process e.g. with reading • Be sensitive, honest, open and transparent about the process with me • Challenge my assumptions and preconceptions about the sort of child/ children I'm looking for. • There is one point of contact for us across the whole process • I receive honest feedback around my progression
4. Training and assessment (Stage 2)	• Make me involved and part of the process throughout and update me regularly • Make sure training is useful and relevant, involves adopters and is delivered by experienced, insightful trainers • Help me to challenge my assumptions (or thinking?) about adoption and consider all of the options open to me • Ensure assessment is managed sensitively and that my worker can support me through it

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Stage	Key principle
	• Make me fully aware of the type of questions I'll be asked at panel • Make me feel comfortable and welcome at panel meeting. • I receive training and support which answers my questions and concerns • There is an opportunity for me to meet older adopted children. (e.g. teenage interview panels) • Make me feel comfortable to take a break before continuing the adoption process
5. Matching	• Give me clear and detailed information about the matching process and what I can expect • Give me the opportunity to speak to people who have been through a similar experience • Give me the opportunity to meet with potential matches face to face where possible/ appropriate • Give me further opportunities to get to know prospective matches, find out about them and their story and meet their foster carers and social workers. • Give me opportunities to see children in different environments (e.g. doing something they enjoy) so that I can get to know them • Give me clear and honest feedback if I am unsuccessful at being matched with a child.
6. Placement	• Be clear and upfront with me about the sort of challenges I could face now and in the future and how to pre-empt these • Give me support and advice on what the needs of my child may be and how to meet these particularly in relation to attachment and emotional health • Give me a support package which is tailored to the needs of me and my family • Support is available to me when I need it • It is clear who the various people are in the process and what their role is. • As few people as possible are involved in the overall process • I have support from a peer mentoring scheme
7. Post adoption support	• Be there to support me if I have problems or concerns in the future • Give me the chance to access support and advice from other adopters who have been through similar experiences.

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Stage	Key principle
	• Help me to identify my needs as early as possible so I get the support I need as early as possible • It's easy to access information on post adoption support, even if I have recently moved into the area • Support will be tailored and relevant to me and my family • I know what support is available to me

8.4 Key processes and pathways

In the service design workshops attendees used the agreed 'ideal' child and adopter experience to map the activities, processes, pathways and processes which the RAA which would best deliver this experience.

This involved practitioners working through the 'pen picture' for each stage and identifying the ideal pathway and best practice needed to deliver that pathway across the child, adult and birth parent journey.

The detailed map in **Appendix G** sets out the detail activities and processes proposed to support the child and adopter journey and the links/ dependencies across both.

The map in **Appendix G** provides a procedural 'blueprint' for the RAA and a basis for the development of the detailed RAA model (from process / policy documents to ICT requirements) which is directly informed by and built around the needs of children and adopters.

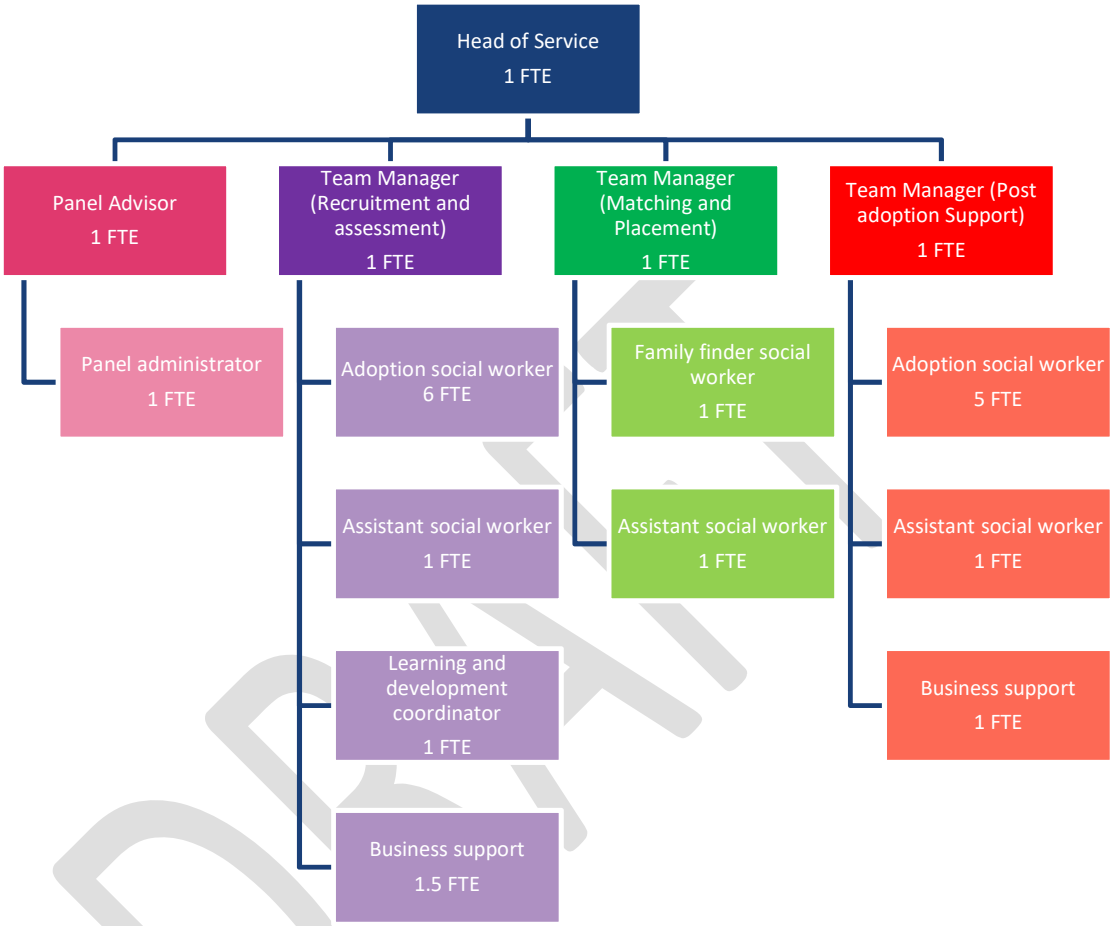
8.5 RAA operating model

Proposed RAA staff structure

In the proposed model the roles detailed in the previous section are organised into three teams

- **Recruitment and assessment team:** Team Manager, Learning and Development Officer, Marketing Officer, Adoption Social Workers, Assistant Social Workers, Business Support
- **Matching and family finding team:** Team Manager, Family Finder Social Workers, Assistant Social Workers and Business Support
- **Adoption Support Team:** Team Manager, Adoption Support Social Workers, Business Support
- Other roles reporting directly into Head of Service including Panel Adviser and Panel Support.

Figure 8.5.1: RAA proposed staff structure



8.6 Organisational roles and capacity

In the design workshops representatives from across all three local authorities identified the functions and roles required to deliver the activity and processes detailed in the ideal child and adopter journeys. Using baseline performance information and assumptions on capacity from Team Manager insight and other Regional Adoption Agencies capacity required for all roles was quantified.

Table 8.6.1: Organisational roles and capacity

Head of Service		
	FTE	**Assumptions**

• Provide strategic and operational leadership and management to the regional adoption agency, its managers and operational teams • Provide clear and visible leadership for the service in the delivery of regional adoption and permanence services • Act as the principle advisor to the CE RAA board on key issues relating to the adoption service so it can be flexible to local, regional and national trends, regulation and legislation. • Liaise and collaborate with stakeholders in each of the partner LAs. • Identify improvement needs and lead transformation programmes to secure high quality, robust, effective and efficiently delivered services. • Manage relationships with children's services in the three participating authorities. • Decide evaluation measures for commissioning • Responsibility for financial reporting • Responsibility for managing key performance indicators of the CE RAA • Responsibility for shaping and embedding a regional culture and vision within the CE RAA • Participate in regional commissioning meetings • Responsibility for Ofsted data requirements and reporting • Attend and chair operation board meetings	1.0	N/A

Recruitment and assessment team			
	Roles	**FTE**	**Assumption**
• The recruitment and assessment team has responsibility for the adopter journey until the adoption order is granted. • The remit of this service is to undertake all tasks in relation to marketing, recruitment, preparation and assessment of adopters. • Workers will maintain case responsibility for the adopters until the adoption order is granted, after which any further support will be transferred to the adoption support team.	Team manager	1.0	Expectation that there will be 60 adopter assessments across the RAA per year. Therefore the caseload for recruitment and assessment social workers is 10 per worker, per year.
	Recruitment and assessment social workers	6.0	
	Assistant social workers	1.0	
	Marketing and communications officer	1.0	
	Learning and development coordinator	1.0	

• The marketing officer has responsibility for promoting the RAA and keeping the website and social media up to date. • The learning and development coordinator has responsibility for ensuring that adopters can access relevant training throughout their adopter journey.			

Matching and Placement team			
	Roles	**FTE**	**Assumption**
• The remit of this service is to support the local authority care planning process for children where a plan of adoption is being considered, and to offer advice as appropriate in relation to sibling assessments, potential placement options, early permanence and preparation work with children. • The service will be responsible for undertaking all family finding activity for children within the RAA. This will include ensuring that there are protocols within the RAA to identify 'in house matches' for children. • The matching process and practice will be the same for families being considered from within the RAA pool and those outside of it. Decisions of matches will be based on the suitability of adopters to meet the assessed needs of the child.	Team manager	1.0	Expectation that there will be 75 placements across the RAA per year. Therefore family finder social workers are expected to carry a caseload of 20 per year.
	Family finder social worker	4.0	
	Assistant social worker	1.0	

Adoption support team			
	Roles	**FTE**	**Assumption**
• The remit of this service is to provide adoption support services pre- and post-order to	Team manager	1.0	Expectation that there will be 68 post adoption assessments across the RAA per year. Therefore,
	Adoption support social worker	5.0	

all those affected by adoption including children, adopters, birth family members and adopted adults. The service will provide advice and undertake assessments of adoption support needs as required. • This service has responsibility for identifying adoption support needs during the adoption process, providing support to families who have adopted through the RAA in the first three years and for non-RAA families after the three year period. It will also have responsibility for supporting birth families through the letterbox service. Additionally, adopted adults can be supported to access their birth records. • The service will develop a model of adoption support delivery to promote a positive, preventative and collaborative approach to adoption support. (See 7.7)	Assistant social worker	1.0	adoption support social workers will carry a caseload of 11 per year.

Other RAA roles			
	Roles	FTE	Assumption
• To provide support to the three specialist teams as directed.	Business support	2.5	
• The remit for this team is to coordinate panel activity including the quality assurance of reports presented to panel and participating in the panel process (as appropriate).	Panel advisor	1.0	
	Panel administrator	1.0	
	Panel member	Paid by the session	

Table 8.6.2: Total capacity required in service (FTE)

Proposed staffing	Recruitment and assessment team	Family finding team	Adoption support service	Panel service	Total staff
Head of service					**1.0**
Team manager	1.0	1.0	1.0		**3.0**

Social workers	6.0	4.0	5.0		**15.0**
Assistant social workers	1.0	1.0	1.0		**3.0**
Marketing officer	1.0				**1.0**
Learning and development coordinator	1.0				**1.0**
Business support	1.5		1.0		**2.5**
Panel advisor				1.0	**1.0**
Panel administrator				1.0	**1.0**
Total	**11.5**	**6**	**8.0**	**2.0**	**28.5**

The total staff (2018/19 budget) in the individual local authorities is 28.6 FTE. With the proposed RAA design this reduces marginally to 28.5 FTE staff members in the RAA. This is a small change, the RAA provides an opportunity for the adoption service in the three LAs to innovate, transform and drive improvements without increasing the cost base.

Table 8.6.3: Comparison of FTE in the LAs 2017/18 vs proposed RAA structure

Staff Summary	LA Totals (FTE)	RAA proposal (FTE)
Head/Team Leaders	2.80	4.00
Qualified	17.60	16.00
Unqualified/Other Professionals	4.38	5.00
Support	3.86	3.50
Total	**28.64**	**28.50**

8.7 RAA adoption support baselining and proposed delivery

As part of this design exercise Local Authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies helped to baseline existing adoption support services across all three LAs and to develop outline specification for the delivery of adoption support in the proposed RAA.

Support currently provided

Central Bedfordshire, Bedford and Milton Keynes all offer similar levels of support to their adopters and families, throughout the adoption process as set out below. The key variation is the level of support that is offered in house, versus support that is commissioned to external organisations.

Table 8.7.1: Universal adoption support services, by local authority area (with some notes).
LA = delivered internally, C = commissioned externally

Service type	Service	Central Bedfordshire Council	Bedford Borough	Milton Keynes Council
	Adoption consultation	✔ - LA (all)		

Universal Support	Coffee mornings	✔ - LA (all)		
	Age focused youth groups/socials	✔ - LA hosts events for children during school holiday	✔ - LA	✔ - LA provides groupwork for children
	Referral to ASF for funding	✔ - LA (all)		
	Quarterly newsletter	✔ - LA (all)		
	Access to training	✔ - LA (all)		
	Annual conference for adopters	✘ (CBC and BB)		✔ - LA & C
	Psychotherapist services	✘ (CBC and BB only post assessment)		✔ - C
	Adult record tracing	✔ - LA (all)		
	Assessment of need	✔ - LA (all)		
	Annual party for families	✔ - LA (shared Summer and Christmas events between CBC and BB)		✔ - LA
	Evening social events for adoptive parents	✔ - LA attendance, some funding provided	✘	✔ - LA attendance, no funding provided
	Facebook groups for local adopters	✔ - LA (locally organised)	✘	✔ - LA (locally organised)
	Early help services	✔ - LA (all)		
	Adopter support groups	✔ - LA (all)		

Table 8.7.2 Targeted adoption support services, by local authority area (with some notes).
LA = delivered internally, C = commissioned externally

Service type	Service	Central Bedfordshire Council	Bedford Borough	Milton Keynes Council
Targeted support (after assessment)	Allocated social worker	✔ - LA (all)		
	Post-adoption contact for LA child	✔ - LA (all)		
	Adoption allowances, review of financial agreements and enhancements	✔ - LA (all)		
	Theraplay practitioners with bespoke support to family and child	✔ - LA & C (CBC and BB)		✔ - LA

	Play therapy sessions for children	✔ - LA (all, MK only due to capacity)		
	Groupwork for children	✔ - C		✔ - LA Blue group for children to manage emotions
	Therapeutic life story work	✔ - LA	✔ - C	✔ - LA & C
	DDP	✔ - C (CBC and BB)		✔ - LA & C
	Support and advocacy for accessing services	✔ - LA (all)		

Table 8.7.3 Specialist adoption support services, by local authority area (with some notes).
LA = delivered internally, C = commissioned externally

Service type	Service	Central Bedfordshire Council	Bedford Borough	Milton Keynes Council
Specialist	**Therapeutic assessments**	✔ - C (all)		

Number of assessments and plans produced in 2017/2018

Table 8.7.4: Number of post adoption assessments, by local authority 2017/18

	Central Bedfordshire Council	Bedford Borough	Milton Keynes Council	Total number of assessments in RAA area 2017/18
Post adoption support assessments 2017/18 (approved)	18	14	35	**67**

Current process for adoption support in each LA:

Central Bedfordshire Council

In Central Bedfordshire, they have duty social workers 9am – 5pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The on duty social worker will receive calls or emails and put a case note on MOSAIC.

There will be a discussion with the manager to decide whether the family needs adoption support, if they do they will be allocated a social worker. The social worker will complete the assessment and follow through until completion.

Bedford Borough Council

In Bedford, they have duty social workers 9.30am – 12.30pm, Monday to Friday. The on duty social worker will receive a call from an adopter requesting support and log the information onto their AZEUS data management system.

The duty social worker will discuss the case with a manager and consider whether an assessment for support is needed, after this they are allocated to a social worker.

Milton Keynes Council

In Milton Keynes, they have a duty social worker 1-5pm, Monday to Friday. They take the call from an adopter requesting support, they log adopter information onto the LCS system and refer them to the adoption consultation surgery.

The adopter consultation surgery takes place fortnightly at St Francis Children's Society, senior social workers and a psychotherapist attends, the assessment of need takes place during their slot.

A social worker is not allocated until after a final assessment has taken place, the senior social worker who does the initial assessment holds the case until a recommendation is made.

Current staffing for adoption support

Table 8.7.5: FTE staff delivering adoption support, 2017/18 by LA

	Central Bedfordshire Council	Bedford Borough Council	Milton Keynes Council	Total
FTE 2017/18	2.4	2	3.5	**7.9**

Proposed RAA delivery of adoption support

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide post adoption support services for children adopted in their area within the first three years of the adoption order being granted. After that time, families can access support in the local authority area in which they live. It is important that adopters in the RAA have access to the same quality and variety of support, regardless of which local authority area they live in. In the proposed RAA there is an opportunity to utilise trained specialist staff and providers to deliver support.

During the design process, the three local authorities, St Francis' Children's Society and AdoptionPlus designed an ideal adoption support offer for adoptive families, adopted children and birth parents. The ideal design is outlined below (Tables 6 and 7).

Table 8.7.6: The ideal adoption support offer in the RAA for adoptive families

Adoptive family (child and parents)	
Universal service	Evidenced therapeutic parenting programme Strengthening families training Children and family group Parenting for attachment programme Social events (Easter, Christmas, Summer and school holidays) Letterbox service Contact support Mindfulness group Support on how to talk to children about their lifestory Schools that are aware of adopted children's needs Events targeted at teenagers Groupwork for adopted children Adopted child records (when the child requests as an adult) Adopted adult coffee morning
Targeted service (after an assessment has been made)	Educational psychologist Specialised therapy Clinical assessment Therapeutic life story work Counsellors for adoptive parents for unresolved trauma Financial support (eligibility may vary between boroughs, needs to be uniform) Multidisciplinary assessment Multidisciplinary treatment CAMHs surgery and psychological consultation Counselling for adopted adults
Informal network	Facebook groups for adopted adults Facebook groups for adoptive parents Coffee mornings and peer group meetings for adopted adults Coffee mornings and peer group meetings for adopted adults

Table 8.7.7: The ideal adoption support offer in the RAA for birth families

Birth relatives	
Universal service	Support to write letterbox Birth mother support group Birth father support group Birth relative support group Contact
Targeted service (after an assessment has been made)	Therapy/Counselling for siblings of adopted children 1-2-1 therapeutic counselling
Informal network	Facebook support groups

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8.8 RAA performance framework

This section sets out an Outcome and Performance framework which is recommended by the Implementation Group to evidence that the aims, outcomes and objectives of the RAA are being met and achieved, or to identify where there is variation and inform early management action. This is based on the Vision, anticipated benefits and design principles of the RAA set out in this document.

This section outlines the key performance indicators and other measures which will be used to monitor the activity of the RAA. The collection of this data will enable monitoring to be undertaken at several different levels:

- Performance in relation to key indicators
- Flow and demand
- Differences in demand across the RAA area
- Needs analysis of children with a plan of adoption
- Needs analysis of adopters
- Benefits realisation – is the RAA making a difference?

Table 8.8.1: Proposed performance and outcomes framework

Outcome (taken from design principles)	Key performance indicator
Better life long outcomes for children and adopters	• Timely decision making in LAs around child's permanency plan • Adoptive placement disruption rate • Number of children who were placed in an early permanency placement • No. of children identified for adoption as a % of LAC and by characteristics. • Average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive parents for children who have been adopted • Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (in days) • Children who with less than 18 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (%)
The RAA will recruit adopters in line with children's needs	• The percentage of BME children leaving care who are adopted • The percentage of children aged 5 or over leaving care who are adopted • The percentage of children with a known disability/complex needs who are adopted • Number of families on the adopter list
Better value for money	• Reduction in LA expenditure on fostering placements for children with an adoption plan • Use of inter-agency placements as a proportion of all placements
A better environment and opportunities for the adoption workforce	• Vacancy rate • Turnover rate • Percentage of staff that feel supported • Percentage of staff who feel they receive suitable training opportunities

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Outcome (taken from design principles)	Key performance indicator
Adoption services will be transparent and collaborative	• Number and percentage of birth families accessing pre-adoption support • Percentage of birth parents who feel they have been supported to understand why their child has been adopted • Percentage of adopters accessing post adoption support • Satisfaction of adopters with pre-adoption support • Satisfaction of adopters with post-adoption support

Appendix B sets out a full performance framework breaking down the performance indicators above in more detail.

8.9 Governance and legal framework

At the OBC stage the Directors of Children's Services agreed – in principle and subject to further information - that the preferred model is one based around an LA hosted or facilitated model, after an appraisal of the advantages and disadvantages. This decision has not been revised in the FBC. This section describes the legal framework and governance structure.

Legal Framework

The hosted arrangement proposed would have the following key features:

- No new legal entity or member joint committee
- A legally binding agreement between the three LAs to operate the service jointly
- One LA will act as the Host:
    - Employing and line managing the Head of Service
    - Providing some support services to the RAA - such as financial management and HR
    - Acting as the commissioner/procuring authority for new service contracts
- Staff will remain employed by their current employer with duties and obligations to manage and be managed by staff in other LAs being set-out in the Agreement

The Agreement

The legal agreement between the three LAs will set out how the service will operate (service specification), governance arrangements, the payment mechanism and clearly set out the duties, obligations and responsibilities of each party. The expected list of contents based on outlines other RAA legal agreements is attached at **Appendix F**. Some of the important terms are set-out below:

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Term/withdrawal/Termination

Parties would enter the agreement for a minimum term – this is usually two or three years. For withdrawal or termination an LA would usually have to give one year's notice.

Payment Mechanism

It is proposed that the contributions from each LA towards the RAA costs are fixed for at least a two-year period. The contributions shares would be based on the 2018/19 agreed baseline. This gives the RAA a stable period financially and allows RAA activity and performance to "settle down".

There would be no Inter Agency Fees between the RAA bodies and there would be a single IAF budget for the RAA.

After the two years fixed period the RAA payment mechanism could move to an activity led model – for example with the RAA contributions determined by the number of placements (possibly using a three year rolling average) or introduce an additional charge if an LAs activity exceeds an agreed threshold. It is preferable to agree this approach and build it into the Agreement.

Risk Sharing

The single RAA budget with no inter agency fees between the RAA members is essentially a risk pooling arrangement. With more activity compared with the individual LAs there is less likely to be large variations in activity year on year. The larger pooled budget provides better opportunities to manage cost pressures.

Where the RAA makes in-year surplus or loss the Agreement will state that this is shared between the parties in proportion to agreed contribution shares. If the RAA makes a surplus it could be distributed in proportion to budget shares but it would be prudent to commit in the Agreement to place any surplus in an earmarked reserve to offset any future year losses or to meet investment requirements.

Governance Structure

Strong governance, clear lines of accountability and rapid upward and downward communication will be key to the success of the RAA with three LAs working closely together.

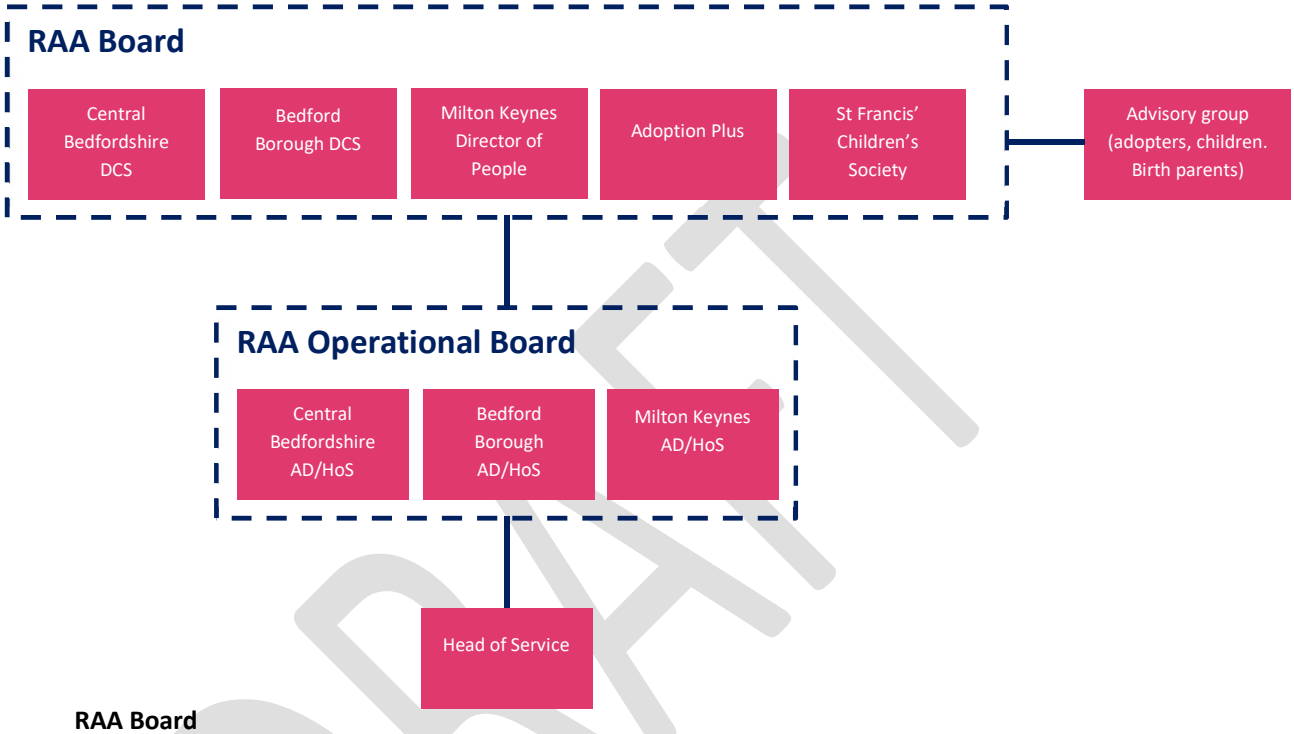
The Agreement sets out the governance structure for the RAA. It is proposed that there are three key components:

- The RAA Board

- RAA Operational Board
- Head of Service

The diagram below sets out the proposed RAA governance structure.

Table 8.9.1 : RAA Governance Structure



RAA Board

The RAA Board would consist of the three responsible Chief Officers, representatives of the partner VAAs and an adopter representative. The Board would meet quarterly and would guide the RAA at a strategic, approving development plans, policies and level and setting the budget.

Operational Board

The Operational Board would link the RAA into senior managers within each LA with responsibility for adoption. It would therefore consist of officers at AD or Head of Service level. This Operational Board would meet at least bi-monthly and would be the principle body for monitoring performance and resolving problems. The RAA Head of Service would be part of this Operational Board.

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RAA Head of Service

The RAA Head of Service would be responsible for the day to day operation and performance of the RAA and developing it in line with an agreed development plan. The Head of Service would be line managed by an Assistant Director or Head of Service at CBC.

Adopter reference group

The adopter reference group will bring together adopters engaged in the design process to inform and guide continuous service development and improvement. A representative of this group will be present on the Board.

8.10 Employment Model

The proposed organisational model requires the appointment of a Head of Service and the creation of three specialist teams working across the three LA sites. The creation of the RAA will involve considerable change for staff and therefore a rigorous HR process will be undertaken. This will include extensive staff consultation and a formal matching and ringfencing process to identify staff to posts in the new structure.

As the RAA is proposing a hosted model there are three possible employment models which could be used to operate the service. These are:

- Transfer – All staff engaged in work in-scope to the RAA working at Bedford Borough and Milton Keynes are transferred (under TUPE) to CBC as the host authority to operate the new RAA shared service
- Secondment – Adoption staff in Bedford Borough and Milton Keynes are seconded to CBC to operate the RAA for a fixed period (say 2 years)
- Management/Collaborative arrangement – All staff remain in their current employment and the legal agreement between the parties in the RAA sets out the arrangements for staff to be directed and managed by the RAA management.

The table below summarised the advantages and disadvantages of each approach:

Table 8.10.1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Different Employment Models

Employment Model	Advantages	Disadvantages
Transfer	• Employees under single employer – Single line of accountability on management and employment matters	• Would trigger TUPE regulation • Most demanding to implement – For example pension transfer • Employment risks transfer to the host and there are risks in the TUPE process

	• Single system for recording leave, sickness and performance • Change permanently to new structure without the need for future disruption • Potential route for future assimilation of staff to host terms • Process is known, legal drafting available and HR have experience of this process	itself – Measures would need to be consulted upon • Potentially most "threatening" to staff • Cannot be easily reversed or amended • Employment risks – equal pay/assimilation fall on host • Would require specialist legal advice (costly)
Secondment	Less demanding to implement than 'transfer' • Precedent in other RAAs and their legal Agreements • It is reversible if needed and will allow the structure to be tested before making changes permanent	• Secondment must be for a set period (although can be extended) • Only a temporary arrangement – further disruption will occur when there is a move to a permanent solution • Management of staff with different employer o Risks when employment issues or disputes arise o Need to operate three systems for leave, sickness and performance
Collaborative Management agreement	• No changes to employment status proposed • It is reversible/enables the structure to be tested before making changes permanent	• Proposed design is highly integrated, and managers will have staff with different employers o Risks when employment issues or disputes arise o Need to operate three systems for leave, sickness and performance • No precedent in live RAAs and therefore "legals" are not worked up • DfE are concerned whether it is compatible with single line of accountability and ability to effectively direct resources

It has been a working assumption in the project that disruption to staff and their employment should be minimised and therefore the preference has been to develop a collaborative model that does not require either transfer or secondment. However, the design process has led to a model which may make this difficult to set-out in a legal agreement and to operate in practice.

- The specialist teams, headed by a Team Manager, will include staff from all three LAs. Under the collaborative model, the legal Agreement would need to set out the obligations on the Head of Service and Team Managers to manage staff who report to them to enable the efficient and effective running and development of the RAA.
- The Agreement would also need to make it clear that when potential employment issues arise, such as absence, sickness or capability, there will be an obligation on the

manager (and their employing LA) to engage with the relevant employer and HR to work with the Manager to resolve the issues within the relevant employment processes.

Only one other RAA scheme (Adopt South) is proposing this employment approach and is understood to be accepted by DfE. However, their proposed operating model is dominated by a hub in a large host LA (Hampshire) and also has a much clearer and discretely managed role for other local LA based teams. This is much easier to define in a legal agreement than the integrated model proposed at Central East.

One key issue with the collaborative employment model and secondment model is what happens when a staff member leaves – who employs the replacement? Likewise, if new posts are required – who employs these? One solution is that the host should employ the Head of Service and all new RAA employees on CBC terms and conditions. This is the approach taken at operational RAAs (Such as ACE and Adoption Counts) where the secondment model is in place.

Based on the analysis of advantages and disadvantages of different employment models above, there is a strong case for 'Transfer' being the most appropriate with the operating model proposed. This would definitely be more demanding to implement and likely to cause staff most concern. However, once implemented it would be an easier model under which to manage staff and operate the RAA on a day to day basis. Secondment is the next best model as secondments are an established legal route for staff to work under the direction of another organisation whilst retaining their local employment status. Secondment would have the complication of managers directing staff who have different employers and this does add complexity and risk. Secondments are also not a long term solution and would need to revisited.

Of the 10 open RAAs (as at May 2018), five are believed to have undertaken full transfer of staff and five operate with staff secondments. The DfE have some reservations about the proposed collaborative model and have expressed some concern that the arrangement with RAA's managing staff employed in another LA may not provide the single line of accountability and ability to redirect resources which they expect in an RAA. In view of this and the analysis in the table above, it is proposed that either transfer or a secondment model be adopted.

The operational model relies on agile working and plans to use the three existing work bases at the LAs rather than centralising all staff. It is envisaged that most staff will have an opportunity to work from their existing base to minimise disruption.

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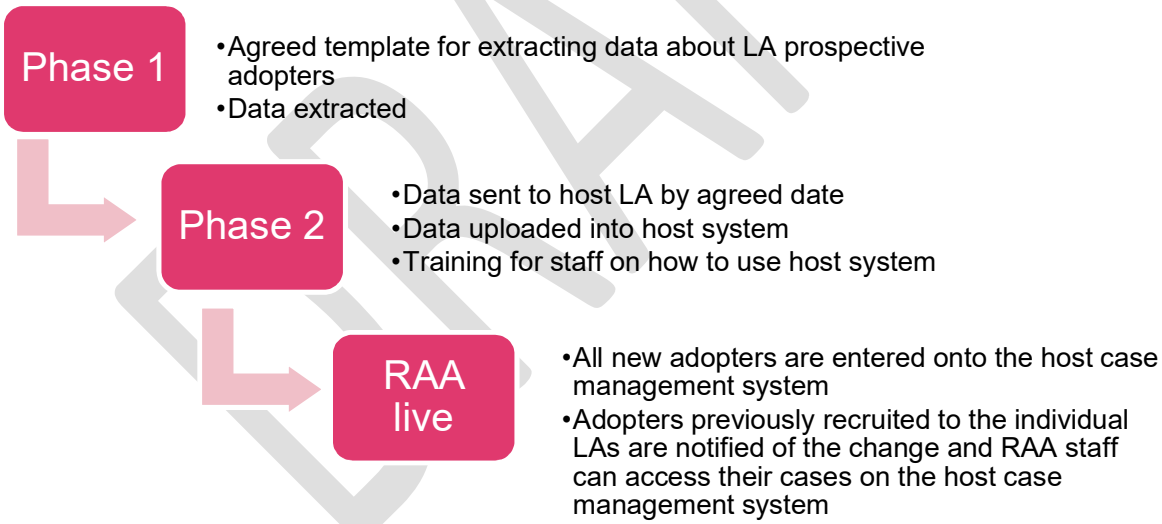
8.11 ICT requirements and implications

Case Management

Currently, the three local authorities manage adoption on different case management systems. While it would be a long term aim to have all local authorities working on the same case management system in support of the child and adopter journey, this is unlikely to be achievable in the short term.

In the proposed RAA design, family finding function and roles will remain based in each local authority, therefore the child LAC record and the adopted child record for that individual will remain on the respective case management systems. However, adopter information is owned by the RAA centrally, therefore it is important that these records are held on one case management system. During the implementation phase, each local authority will need to extract adopter information to migrate onto one system for the 'go live'. A data governance agreement must be in place before any changes take place.

Figure 8.11.1: Adopter information migration plan



The migration process will require resource, dependant on the number of adopters on file in each local authority.

Access to data

Each role within the RAA will need different levels of access to information relating to the child and adopter (Table X).

Table 8.11.2: Access needs, per RAA job role.

RAA Job role	Child LAC record and new adopted child record		RAA adopter record		Historic adopter record (pre-RAA)	
	Amend and View	Submit information request	Amend and View	Submit information request	Amend and View	Submit information request
Head of service	✔	✘	✔	✘	✔	✘
Team Manager (Recruitment and Assessment)	✘	✘	✔	✘	✔	✘
Team Manager (Matching and placement)	✔	✘	✘	✔	✘	✔
Team Manager (Adoption support)	✘	✔	✔	✘	✔	✘
Adopter Social Worker	✘	✘	✔	✘	✔	✘
Family Finder Social Worker	✔	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘
Adoption Support Social Worker	✘	✔	✔	✘	✔	✘
Assistant Social workers*	✔	✘	✔	✘	✔	✘
Business support	✘	✘	✔	✘	✘	✘
Learning and development coordinator	✘	✘	✔	✘	✘	✘
Marketing and recruitment officer	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘

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Panel Member**	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Panel Advisor	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓

***** Assistant social workers will have the same access as their qualified social worker counterparts.

****** The panel member will have access to the files prepared by the panel advisor, stored in a shared drive.

For those members of staff who only need to access adopter information, logins for the host system are required. Central Bedfordshire Council is the proposed host and have capacity within their current contract to add up to 50 new registrations to their case management system. Therefore, these staff can be added with no cost implication for the RAA.

However, for staff who need access to child records, they will need to be given permission to view and amend records in all three local authority case management systems. This is except for Family Finder social workers, who already have access to their LA systems.

The Chief Information Officers in each local authority will have to agree to allow access to the chosen file sharing application, from local authority devices (some have firewalls). For staff who submit information requests, an area in a file sharing website such as Box, will need to be set up for these documents to go to. Staff within the RAA will need access to a shared drive as a basic requirement for the functioning of the adoption service.

IT equipment

There is a disparity in IT equipment and provision among the three local authorities. In the proposed plan, staff are required to work remotely and use hot desking facilities in the three local authorities. A minimum requirement will be for staff to have a laptop and internet access. Though there is a disparity between the local authorities, both Bedford and Milton Keynes have IT equipment upgrades planned, therefore spend on IT equipment is already expected so there is no additional investment required.

Table 8.11.3: IT equipment in each local authority

IT equipment	Central Bedfordshire	Bedford Borough	Milton Keynes
Smartphone	✓ - all staff	✗ - No social workers have smartphones	✗ - No staff have smartphones
Laptop	✓ - all staff	✓ - all staff	✗ - one member of the adoption team has a laptop, four members have a work iPad which is

			used by all staff when necessary.
Ability to access internet outside of council property on work devices	✔ - staff can hotspot from smartphone	✔ - staff provided with dongle	✔ - staff with the iPad can and staff can work remotely using their own personal laptops or computers.
IT upgrade expected	✘	✔ - Bedford 2020	✔ - All staff will be given a laptop, unknown timeline.

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9. APPENDIX A – ADOPTER AND CHILD PEN PICTURES

9.1 Ideal child experience: pen pictures

1. Child becomes known to social care

Pen picture:
I was frightened and I needed someone I could trust. Me and my brother John met Jane who was a kind, easy to talk to person who made me feel safe. She talked to us and asked us how we felt and what was making us happy and sad. She wrote down some of the things that we said and checked with us that she had written down the right things. She explained to us that our family needed some help and we talked about some of the problems we had with mum. She said that she would make sure that we had everything we needed to be safe and protected. We were given information about the future and what might happen to us and our family. We were given a booklet which explained how our family were being helped and what this meant for me.

2. Pre- care proceedings and planning initiated

Pen picture:
Jane, the same worker I had spoken to before, was honest with me and explained the different people who wanted to talk to me, who they were and why they wanted to talk to me. Jane checked with me to make sure she had got things right about me, John and my family. She made me feel that I was being listened to and could have a say in my future. Jane gave me, John and my family help and support so that I could stay with my mum. Jane explained all the options for the future to me and John so we knew what could happen. I was scared about leaving my home and everything that is familiar even though I was sometimes scared and unhappy there. I was also scared about being separated from John. Jane was always there and made me feel safe and reassured that me and John would be okay. Jane helped me to start writing my life story.

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3. Care proceedings and planning

Pen picture:
Things got worse at home, I was scared and unhappy a lot of the time. John and I moved away from my mum and moved in with David and Pam, our foster family. I felt sad to leave mum but they were nice and made us feel like part of their family. Jane listened to me and explained the options for what could happen to me and John. Jane explained about a forever home. She asked us what we wanted and hoped for in the future, I said a lot more about what I wanted to David and Pam my foster parents, so I asked them to speak to Jane about what I wanted and she listened to them. Jane let me know that my mum is okay and isn't worrying or unwell. She made me feel like none of this was my fault. I looked forward to seeing my mum in contact. I sometimes felt very sad, frightened and confused and I got angry but I didn't know what to do. I needed someone to help me to feel better. A lady came to see me they called her a Children's Guardian and she talked to me about my mum, home and what I wanted for the future. Jane told me about the judge and that she would listen to everyone including my mum and she would decide where me and John would live. I felt like Jane really listened to me and understood my fears and anxieties

4. Family finding

Pen picture:
Jane told me that she (and the people she worked with) were trying to find me a forever home with John, and that keeping me with John was a priority. I was really excited about this but also scared that I would be separated from John or wouldn't get to see my mum. Jane said she the other people trying to help me would do their best to keep John and I together, and I trusted her. Jane used all the things I'd said to her to continue writing a life story with me. It was really fun! She checked this with me and I thought it was great. She let me choose photos. I was also scared that if I found a forever family I wouldn't get to see my mum or foster carers again but Jane said I could stay in touch with them in the future, and that they could help me and John to find our forever family. Jane helped me to say goodbye to my mum. It was really sad and difficult, but Jane helped me and made me feel supported.

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Pen picture:
Jane made me feel that I understood what was happening, what adoption was and it might mean for me and John. I still felt sad and scared, and sometimes didn't tell anyone. But I felt like I could trust Jane. She explained about the family activity days and asked me to go to one – I said yes. Jane also helped me to develop a 'story stem' and shared information about me and brother with other families.

5. Matching

Pen Picture:
Jane explained all about the activity day, what it was and who was going. David and Pam took me and John along to this. I was excited but also scared. I was playing with some toys at the activity day when I met Linda and Peter. They talked to me and I liked them a lot. They seemed friendly and kind and we got on really well. Jane gave me some pictures and a video recording of Linda and Peter. Jane explained the next steps and about a thing called a 'panel' and that this was trying to see if Linda and Peter were right for me

6. Placement

Pen picture:
Over the next few weeks John and I met with Linda and Peter a few times. They were really nice and we got on really well. Jane asked us what we thought about Linda and Peter being our forever family, I was really happy, Jane told us all about Linda and Peter and showed us a film they had made for us! She also explained how and when my mum and foster carers would be told what I had been doing and said that there was some one for us to talk to if we had any concerns. We moved in with Peter and Linda. It was strange at first. Jane explained everything that she and other people she worked with would do for me, John, Peter and Linda to make sure we were happy. We had a court hearing where the judge agreed that Peter and Linda would be my forever family. Jane explained how this would work so I felt like I understood what was going on. The court hearing was fun and we had a party with my new family.

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7. Post adoption support

Pen picture:
In the first few months I felt like I needed to speak to someone as I sometimes felt nervous and scared after everything we'd been through. I spoke to Jane and she was really reassuring and supportive. She said there was someone who could help with how I was feeling and asked if I wanted to speak to them. They came to see me a few times and helped me to find a way to think about and deal with my feelings. I kept in touch with my mum. I sent her letters and photos and she sent me photos. I felt like she was still part of my life. I also kept in touch with David and Pam (my foster carers) and met them with my family a few times a year. It was nice to see them and they helped me to understand my 'life story.' Sometimes I still felt like I wasn't like the rest of the kids at school and I was different because I was adopted. I met some other people who had been adopted at a fun day for adoptive families and found it really useful talking to them about how I felt and what I had been through. I felt like I hadn't been forgotten by Jane and the other workers who had helped me to find a forever home, and I felt that I had someone there outside of my family if I ever had a problem or a crisis that I couldn't talk to my family about. Over time living in my forever family felt normal, I was happy.

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9.2 Ideal adopter experience: pen pictures

1. Pre-enquiry

Pen picture:
I've noticed a lot of motivational stories from people like me on Twitter and Facebook who had adopted children. When I started to talk to people I knew about adoption, I was amazed to find out that quite a few friends and colleagues knew someone who had or had been adopted. Then I started to pick up on stories about adoption on TV, movies and magazines. I wanted to know more so I started to do some research online it was easy to find the information I needed and the information was really relevant. The website included authentic stories from the perspective of adopters and answered some of the questions I had around who I would be working with and how other people had found the service. It also had information that tackled some of my concerns and did some myth busting around issues such as how old I had to be, who can adopt and how long the process was. It was good because I saw people on there that looked like me, I started to think adoption could be right for me so I decided to make an enquiry.

2. Enquiry

Pen picture:
I went onto the website and it was easy to find the RAA adoption page. There were a variety of options for me to get further information from, there was an opportunity for me to chat to someone online or by phone and at a time that suited me. There was also an adopted open evening advertised, so that I could meet some of the staff and those who had been through the process to make sure adoption was right for me. It was clear what times the information services would be operating. I called and got straight through to someone without having to wait long or be passed around. The person I got through to was friendly, warm and knowledgeable. They answered some of my questions about adoption and reassured me on some of my concerns. I had a follow up visit with a worker quickly after. They explained that I had a choice, clearly described the process and put me at ease. The worker gave me an information pack which included information about the process for my whole family and I was given the opportunity to speak to other adopters. At the end of this stage, there seemed to be few barriers and I had a good sense of how likely I would be to be successful in the process and had a clear view of what would be involved. It all progressed at a pace that I was happy with and my experience was positive.

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3. Preparation for training and assessment

Pen picture:
I put in my registration of interest to start stage 1. At this stage the worker gave me and my family a clear overview of what was involved, timescales, processes and dates. I was also guaranteed a single point of contact for the whole process, who could answer any questions I had along the way and keep me on track with my application. They got me started on the preparation process by giving me a variety of learning opportunities, including reading, videos and interactive online activities. The training confirmed that adoption was right for me. During this stage I didn't have to wait more than 2 days for a response to my enquiry. The process took around 2 months in total, and felt tailored to my needs. My worker, Mary, managed this process sensitively and had the 'human touch' and was open, honest and transparent. On reflection I came to adoption with some preconceptions about the types of children I would adopt, but after the service introduced me to a range of different families, I realised there was a range of children out there who might fit in my family. Therefore, I decided to proceed to stage 2. I put in an application form and they got back to me two days later to confirm we'd be going ahead.

4. Training and assessment

Pen picture:
At the beginning of this stage my RAA worker helped me to feel that I was ready and explained the key next steps and timescales, and made me feel involved and part of the process throughout. They were really sensitive to how I was feeling at this stage and it was helpful to have someone on my side while I went through this intrusive process. The training programme was really useful and involved adopters, young people and birth parents. It felt assured that the trainers were experienced and had relevant insight to share that wasn't 'off the shelf' or from a textbook, as they were also from the RAA it was good to meet people I would be working with. The stories I heard from adopters were really inspirational and many of them are still close friends today. The assessment was quite intrusive, and lots of personal questions were asked, including questions about my medical history, however my worker was really sensitive and guided me

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Pen picture:
through the process. The output was my prospective adopter report which was presented at my adoption panel. I was made fully aware of the panel procedure and the type of questions I would be asked. I felt reassured by the video of the panel process, so it was not as daunting when I went in. At the panel itself I was made to feel comfortable and welcome - it wasn't as intimidating as I'd feared. I was over the moon when they recommended me for approval. This stage took around 4 months in total.

5. Matching

Pen Picture:
At the beginning of this stage my worker explained clearly how the matching process would work, the key milestones and next steps. I also received an informative leaflet which set out clearly what I could expect to happen next and was invited to a 'waiting adopters group' where I could meet people at a similar point in the process. While I was waiting to get matched with children, my worker kept in touch with me. I didn't have to wait long for a match. My worker mentioned an activity day and helped me to prepare for this, because I found the idea a bit strange at first. She also linked me up with a "buddy" who told me about their experience at activity days and put me at ease. There were a number of different activities on offer across the region and I found one which worked for me. I went along to an activity day and met my little Sarah and John. Sarah was a lot older than the child I had imagined but like a lot of the children from the adoptive families I'd met before. We all clicked immediately! After a discussion with my worker I was able to look at Sarah's and John's adopter profile and family book which included a short biography and all the information I needed. I then met some key people in Sarah and John's life including their foster carers, school, nursery and social workers – several of us met on an 'appreciation day.' I spoke to their foster carers regularly in the time leading up to the match – we even organised a 'chemistry' day where I bumped in to them in the park and had a chat. It was nice to see the child in a different context, doing activities that they enjoyed.

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Soon afterwards and following a number of supportive discussions with my worker, my match was approved and we began to discuss introduction plans.

6. Placement and post adoption support

Pen picture:
Sarah and John moved in with me and the transition was smooth. My worker advised me that there may be some challenges later in life and worked with me to plan how to pre-empt them, they also gave me realistic timelines. I was also made aware of support that would be given to us as a family, if the birthparents challenged the adoption order I got a support plan and there were some things on there that the RAA arranged for me, like play therapy, early on. I was able to keep in touch with the people that the children have relationships with, including their foster carer and schools. At the outset I felt like I needed quite a lot of support to help with the attachment process (which I learnt about in my adopter training). I received a tailored package of post adoption support, I spoke regularly to my buddy and, when needed, I was able to quickly access specialist support from a therapist. I also took my family along to a family fun day – I think that meeting other families like us was a reassuring and positive experience for all of us! From then on we settled into normal family life, however we had some problems. For example, a couple of years later we had a few issues and I felt like I needed a bit more help on attachment. The children were having the identity issues that the service had prepared me for but I felt like I was failing. I spoke to my named post adoption support worker, they were supportive and worked with me to resolve my issue. My buddy was also there for me to speak to throughout, and I felt that I had a good support network around me to help whenever I needed it. Post-adoption support was advertised well with a variety of activities and support packages available to me. I knew that even if I moved within the RAA area, I would be given the same support as I had previously.

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10. APPENDIX B – DETAILED PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

10.1 How information will be collected

RAA and local authority responsibilities

Data which will be owned or contributed to by the RAA and which it will have a responsibility to report to the RAA governance Board is shown below. Relevant items will also form part of the RAAs national reporting requirements.

- **Children with a plan of adoption and birth families** – data will be provided by LAs but the RAA will be accountable for **a contribution element** to some data items and key performance indicators.
- **Adopters and adoption support** - data will be provided by the RAA
- **Cost and efficiencies** – data will be provided by the RAA.
- **Staff** – data will be provided by the RAA.

Data which will be owned by the local authorities is shown below. Relevant items will also form part of each LAs national reporting requirements.

- **Looked after children** - data will be provided by LAs.
- **Children with a plan of adoption and birth families** - data will be provided by LAs.

Data collection

The data collection will be at an aggregate level for population and looked after children. For children with a plan of adoption and adopters, information will be collected at person level as this will enable the data to be cut and analysed in different ways.

For the child and adopter level data, much of this is already produced on a quarterly basis for the ALB return, however, there may be some additional data items that are not currently part of the ALB collection but are needed in order to fully analyse the demand within the RAA and calculate the information required to fully develop evidence of the benefits of the RAA.

It is also expected that this data will be requested on a more frequent basis than the current ALB return with information being required MONTHLY rather than quarterly. It is anticipated that much of this data can be drawn from systems.

In addition to data, commentary will be requested from managers relating to the data provided that may provide additional context to data eg. Explanations for fall or increases in numbers, changes in processes or decision making that may have had an impact on the numbers of LAC or children with an adoption decision.

This will be supported by an analysis of the data incorporating trends and issues and supported by the commentary provided by the heads of service. The analysis will also highlight areas of strengths or concern.

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In addition to the standard suite of indicators, more in-depth analysis may be undertaken based on trends or issues that the regular data analysis highlights, changes to processes that need to be monitored or areas of interest. On occasion, additional data may need to be requested to support more in depth analysis.

Baseline data collection

- A data collection, using the new collection tools will be undertaken for 2017/18 data in June 2018. This will be used to test the collection method and set up the baseline.
- A data collection will then be undertaken quarterly until the RAA has been fully established.
- Following establishment of the RAA the data collection will move to monthly.

10.2 Performance indicators and measures

Outcome 1: Better life long outcomes for children and adopters

- The experiences and life long outcomes of children and adopters will improve
- More families will be able and willing to adopt

This outcome will be jointly owned between the LAs and the Central East Regional Adoption Agency, with both parties contributing.

Key outcome indicators

- Timely decision making in LAs around child's permanency plan
- Adoptive placement disruption rate
- Number of children who were placed in an early permanency placement
- No. of children identified for adoption as a % of LAC and by characteristics.
- Average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive parents for children who have been adopted
- Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (in days)
- Children who with less than 18 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (%)

How many? Numbers, percentages, rates	How well?	Outcomes for children and adopters
• No. of children identified for adoption as a % of LAC and by characteristics. • Number and percentage of children who are	• Percentage of LAX with plans of adoption (overall and by demographic breakdown) – compared with overall LAC numbers	• Percentage of LAC leaving care by reason for leaving care (overall and by demographic breakdown) • Percentage of children with a plan of adoption

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placed for adoption by placing agency • Number of adopters at each stage of the process (enquiry through to approval) • Number of children who were placed in an early permanency placement • Number of adopters at each stage of the process (enquiry through to approval) • Number of children placed from RAA LAs and neighbouring LAs • Number and percentage of adopters placed with children from RAA LAs and neighbouring LAs • Number and percentage of adopters leaving at each stage and reason for unsuitability • Number and percentage of applications that are refused	• Timely decision making in LAs around child's permanency plan • Average time between enquiry and approval • Average time between approval and adoption • Average time between approval and match • Average time between match and adoption • Number and percentage of adopters who were previously unknown to the child • Number and percentage of the adopters who were the child's foster carer • Number and percentage of adopters that were family adopters	for whom the plan is changed away from adoption • Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (days) • Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (in days) • Children who with less than 18 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (%)

Quality assurance questions

Are LAs being ambitious enough for LAC? Do enough LAC have a plan of adoption? To what extent are decisions to adopt children subject to change?

How many children and adopters are in the pipeline? What is the shortfall between the number of potential adopters and the number of children awaiting adoption?

Are adopters being assessed in a timely manner? Where are the delays in the system? Are adopters from specific groups more likely to face delays in the process or drop out?

What proportion of potential adopters are exiting the process? Does support need to be increased or processes changed?

Are children being adopted in a timely manner? Is timeliness improving? Where are the delays in the system? Are these the same for all children or different for those children who are harder to place?

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Outcome 2: The RAA will recruit adopters in line with children's needs

- Adoption will be an option for a wider range of children

Key outcome indicators

- The percentage of BME children leaving care who are adopted
- The percentage of children aged 5 or over leaving care who are adopted
- The percentage of children with a known disability/complex needs who are adopted
- Number of families on the adopter list

How many? Numbers, percentages, rates	How well?	Outcomes for children and adopters
• No. of children identified for adoption as a % of LAC and by characteristics. • Number of children with a plan of adoption that are 'harder to place' • Number of children with 'harder to place' characteristics by characteristics • Population, LAC, children with a plan of adoption, adopters and staff by: - age - disability - race - religion or belief - sex - gender reassignment - sexual orientation - marriage or civil partnership - pregnancy and maternity • Number and percentage of children placed for adoption by demographics • Number of adopters who will adopt 'harder to place' children	• Proportion of children placed for adoption who are mainstream • Proportion of children placed for adoption with children with 'harder to place' characteristics (age over 5, disability, sibling group, BME) • Percentage of LAC by demographics compared with overall population • Percentage of children with a plan of adoption by demographics compared with LAC population • Percentage of adopters by demographics compared with population • Percentage of adopters by demographics compared with the demographics of children with a plan of adoption	• Percentage of 'harder to place' children whose adoption breaks down • The percentage of children aged 5 or over leaving care who are adopted • The percentage of black and minority ethnic children leaving care who are adopted • Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, comparison between those with 'harder to place' characteristics and those without • Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family in days, for those with harder to place characteristics comparatively to those without. • Percentage of harder to place children who wait less than 18 months between entering care

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		and moving in with their adoptive family

Quality assurance questions
Are LAs being ambitious enough for LAC with 'harder to place' characteristics? Are LAC with 'harder to place' characteristics achieving the right outcomes? Is the RAA improving timeliness and outcomes for harder to place children? Is there a difference between the demographic characteristics of adopters and children with a plan of adoption? Does more work need to be done to target specific groups or communities to encourage more people to apply to become adopters? Are children and adopters being supported in line with equality legislation? Are children with a particular demographic characteristic more or less likely to be LAC?

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Outcome 3: Better value for money

- Resources will be efficiently and effectively managed
- Opportunities to reduce cost will be identified and acted on
- Outcomes will be clearly defined and measured

Key outcome indicators

- Reduction in LA expenditure on care placements for children with an adoption plan
- Use of inter-agency placements as a proportion of all placements

How many? Numbers, percentages, rates	How well?	Outcomes for children and adopters
• Number of children with adoption placements • Number of foster to adopt placements • Reduction in inter-agency placements as a proportion of all placements	• Unit cost per adopted child • Unit cost per adopter • Unit cost per adopter household recruited	• Number of children with adoption placements • Number of Adopter Households recruited and with child placed

Quality assurance framework

How affordable and sustainable is the RAA in the short, medium and long term?

Is the RAA operating within budget? What is the medium term financial trajectory?

What savings has the RAA achieved through reducing spend on care placements as a result of supporting more adoptions?

What savings has the RAA achieved through identification of efficiencies?

Are unit cost per adopted child/ adopter reducing?

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Outcome 4: A better environment and opportunities for the adoption workforce

- The RAA will retain and develop the right skills, experience and talent in support of high quality services
- The RAA will support and encourage professional and career development

Key outcome indicators

- Staff vacancy level
- Ratio of agency staff to permanent staff
- Staff turnover rate
- Staff sickness and absence level
- Staff satisfaction levels
- Percentage of staff that feel supported in their role
- Percentage of staff who feel they receive the right training and development

How many? Numbers, percentages, rates	How well?	Outcomes for children and adopters
As above	As above	N/A

Quality assurance questions

Is the workforce happy and healthy?

Is the RAA offering training and development opportunities?

Do staff feel supported in their work?

Is the RAA retaining staff? If not, what are reasons given for leaving the RAA?

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Outcome 5: Adoption services will be transparent and collaborative

- What the RAA is and what it does will be clear and understandable
- Local authorities will have influence over service delivery
- There will be local presence of skilled adoption expertise
- The RAA will work collaboratively with local authorities and maintain regular and open communication

Key outcome indicators

- Number and percentage of birth families accessing pre-adoption support
- Percentage of birth parents who feel they have been supported to understand why their child has been adopted
- Percentage of adopters accessing post adoption support
- Satisfaction of adopters with pre-adoption support
- Satisfaction of adopters with post-adoption support

How many? Numbers, percentages, rates	How well?	Outcomes for children and adopters
• Number of letterbox contacts managed in a year • Number of referrals for an assessment of post order adoption support needs • Number of adoption support needs assessments undertaken in year • Number of relatives of an adopted person signposted to intermediary services in a year • Number of other LA requests for records in a year • Number of referrals for access to adoption records in a year	• Numbers of adopters accessing post adoption support • Number of adopters accessing universal adoption support (per year) • Adoption support fund applications • Number of adoption support 'in house' interventions in a year • Number of adoption support referrals to commissioned services per year • Number of families receiving birth parent support to prevent recurring proceedings • Number of adopters meeting the birthparents during the adoption process • Number of children who are in care where birth parents have previously had children adopted	• Satisfaction of adopters with pre-adoption support • Satisfaction of adopters with post-adoption support • Number of successful adoption support fund applications in a year • Number of packages of support funded by the ASF for services provided 'in house' in the year • Number and percentage of birth families accessing adoption support in the year • Percentage of birth parents who feel they have been supported to understand why their child has a plan for adoption/has been adopted

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	• Number of children who are adopted where parents have previously had children adopted	

Quality assurance questions

Do adopters find the process easy to navigate? Do they feel properly supported?

Are the right support services being offered to the right people? How easy are these support services to access?

Do pre-adoption support services ensure that after a child is placed, adoption orders are applied in a timely manner? Can better support be offered?

Do adoption support services do enough to prevent adoption breakdown?

Do birth families understand why adoption is best for their child?

Do birth families feel supported through the process and understand what is going on?

Are subsequent children of birth parents being removed and given a plan of adoption?

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11. APPENDIX C - DETAILED STAFF BUDGET

General Management

Post		Base Salary	Gross Salary	FTE	Gross (at 18/19 prices)
		£	£		£
Head of Service	Q	60,000	77,400	1.00	77,400

Recruitment of Adopters

Post		Base Salary	Gross Salary	FTE	Gross
		£	£		£
Team Leader	Q	51,836	66,870	1.00	66,870
Adoption Social Worker	Q	38,781	49,695	6.00	298,169
Assistant Social Worker	U	24,153	30,381	1.00	30,381
Marketing & Communications	U	31,592	40,167	1.00	40,167
Learning & Development Officer	U	24,739	31,210	1.00	31,210
Business Support	S	18,216	22,462	1.50	33,692
				11.50	500,489

Family Finding

Post		Base Salary	Gross Salary	FTE	Gross
		£	£		£
Team Leader	Q	51,836	66,870	1.00	66,870
Family Finder (SW)	Q	38,781	49,695	4.00	198,779
Assistant Social Worker	U	24,153	30,381	1.00	30,381
				6.00	296,030

Adoption Support

Post		Base Salary	FTE		Gross
					£
Team Leader	Q	51,836	66,870	1.00	66,870
Adoption Social Worker	Q	38,781	49,695	5.00	248,474
Assistant Social Worker	U	24,153	30,381	1.00	30,381
Business Support	S	18,216	22,462	1.00	22,462
				8.00	368,186

Panel/Other Support Staff

Post		Base Salary	FTE		Gross
					£
Panel Advisor (QSW)	Q	38,781	49,695	1.00	49,695
Panel Support/Secretary	S	23,111	29,079	1.00	29,079
				2.00	78,774
Total Staff				28.50	1,320,879

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12. APPENDIX D - 2018/19 LA ADOPTION BUDGETS

Overall Summary

Adoption Summary - Income and Expenditure

		2017/18 Projected		2018/19 Budget														
				Total		General Management		Recruitment Marketing		Assessment & Training		Familly Finding		Adoption Support		Adoption Panels		Net Inter Agency
Direct		FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	£
a1	Adoption Social Workers			20.40	1,065,124	2.80	186,446	0.79	39,012	5.51	271,686	5.31	267,412	5.48	272,474	0.50	28,095	
a2	Non SW Qualified Staff			3.00	91,143	0.00	0	0.10	2,913	0.45	13,619	0.40	11,652	2.05	62,959	0.00	0	
a3	Direct support staff			3.50	85,233	0.20	4,855	0.00	0	1.08	24,794	0.46	9,706	0.77	16,799	1.00	29,079	
	Total Direct Staff	26.48	1,189,199	26.90	1,241,501	3.00	191,301	0.89	41,925	7.04	310,099	6.16	288,770	8.30	352,233	1.50	57,175	
b1	Direct Non-staff		726,847		639,476		44,970		21,490		47,452		9,348		415,081		101,134	
	Net Inter Agency Fees		-134,726		0													0
d5	Income		-411,822		-408,592		0		0		0		0		-358,592		-50,000	
	Total Direct	26.48	1,369,498	26.90	1,472,385	3.00	236,270	0.89	63,415	7.04	357,551	6.16	298,117	8.30	408,722	1.50	108,309	0
Indirect																		
c1	Indirect Adoption Social Workers			0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	
c2	Indirect Non SW Qualified Staff			1.38	56,227	0.00	0	0.70	30,503	0.59	23,409	0.00	0	0.09	2,315	0.00	0	
c3	Indirect support staff			0.36	3,966	0.00	0	0.03	357	0.01	119	0.08	873	0.09	1,031	0.14	1,586	
d1	Indirect non-staff				9,000		0		9,000		0		0		0		0	
	Total Indirect			1.74	69,193	0.00	0	0.73	39,860	0.60	23,528	0.08	873	0.18	3,346	0.14	1,586	0
Total Net Cost				28.64	1,541,578	3.00	236,270	1.63	103,275	7.64	381,079	6.24	298,990	8.48	412,068	1.64	109,895	0

Central Bedfordshire

Adoption Summary - Income and Expenditure

		2017/18 Projected		2018/19 Budget														
				Total		General Management		Recruitment Marketing		Assessment & Training		Familly Finding		Adoption Support		Adoption Panels		Net Inter Agency
Direct		FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	£
a1	Adoption Social Workers	6.42	309122	7.34	368,927	1.00	68,578	0.53	24,503	1.82	84,847	1.67	77,713	1.82	85,190	0.50	28,095	
a2	Non SW Qualified Staff	1	28927	1.00	29,131	0.00	0	0.10	2,913	0.25	7,283	0.40	11,652	0.25	7,283	0.00	0	
a3	Direct support staff	1.5	32192	2.00	49,380	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.33	6,699	0.33	6,699	0.34	6,902	1.00	29,079	
	Total Direct Staff	8.92	370,241	10.34	447,438	1.00	68,578	0.63	27,416	2.40	98,829	2.40	96,065	2.41	99,375	1.50	57,175	
b1	Direct Non-staff		292,189		230,490		8,074		1,078		26,551		4,137		154,496		36,154	
	Net Inter Agency Fees		-151,527		0													0
d5	Income		-151,040		-150,000		0		0		0		0		-100,000		-50,000	
	Total Direct	8.92	370,241	10.34	527,928	1.00	76,652	0.63	28,494	2.40	125,380	2.40	100,202	2.41	153,871	1.50	43,329	0
Indirect																		
c1	Indirect Adoption Social Workers			0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0
c2	Indirect Non SW Qualified Staff			0.38	12,067	0.00	0	0.20	7,437	0.09	2,315	0.00	0	0.09	2,315	0.00	0	0
c3	Indirect support staff			0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0
d1	Indirect non-staff				9,000		0		9,000		0		0		0		0	0
	Total Indirect			0.38	21,067	0.00	0	0.20	16,437	0.09	2,315	0.00	0	0.09	2,315	0.00	0	0
Total Net Cost				10.72	548,995	1.00	76,652	0.83	44,931	2.49	127,694	2.40	100,202	2.50	156,186	1.50	43,329	0

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Bedford Borough Council

Adoption Summary - Income and Expenditure

		2017/18 Projected		2018/19 Budget														
				Total		General Management		Recruitment Marketing		Assessment & Training		Familiy Finding		Adoption Support		Adoption Panels		Net Inter Agency
Direct		FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	£
a1	Adoption Social Workers	5.41	289,045	5.41	291,299	1.00	68,430	0.00	0	1.81	90,634	1.40	72,721	1.20	59,515	0.00	0	
a2	Non SW Qualified Staff	1.00	18,907	1.00	31,679	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.20	6,336	0.00	0	0.80	25,343	0.00	0	
a3	Direct support staff	2.50	48,154	1.50	35,854	0.20	4,855	0.00	0	0.75	18,095	0.13	3,006	0.43	9,897	0.00	0	
	Total Direct Staff	8.91	356,105	7.91	358,832	1.20	73,285	0.00	0	2.76	115,064	1.53	75,727	2.42	94,756	0.00	0	
b1	Direct Non-staff		191,219		188,160		26,760		12,900		16,500		0		86,000		46,000	
	Net Inter Agency Fees		29,700		0													0
d5	Income		- 74,190		-72,000		0		0		0		0		-72,000		0	
	Total Direct	8.91	502,834	7.91	474,992	1.20	100,045	0.00	12,900	2.76	131,564	1.53	75,727	2.42	108,756	0.00	46,000	0
Indirect																		
c1	Indirect Adoption Social Workers			0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0
c2	Indirect Non SW Qualified Staff			1.00	44,161	0.00	0	0.50	23,066	0.50	21,094	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0
c3	Indirect support staff			0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0
d1	Indirect non-staff				0		0		0		0		0		0		0	0
	Total Indirect			1.00	44,161	0.00	0	0.50	23,066	0.50	21,094	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0
Total Net Cost				8.91	519,153	1.20	100,045	0.50	35,966	3.26	152,659	1.53	75,727	2.42	108,756	0.00	46,000	0

Milton Keynes

Adoption Summary - Income and Expenditure

		2017/18 Projected		2018/19 Budget														
				Total		General Management		Recruitment Marketing		Assessment & Training		Familiy Finding		Adoption Support		Adoption Panels		Net Inter Agency
Direct		FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	FTE	£	£
a1	Adoption Social Workers			7.65	404,898	0.80	49,437	0.27	14,509	1.89	96,205	2.24	116,978	2.46	127,769	0.00	0	
a2	Non SW Qualified Staff			1.00	30,333	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	1.00	30,333	0.00	0	
a3	Direct support staff			0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	
	Total Direct Staff	8.65	418,905	8.65	435,231	0.80	49,437	0.27	14,509	1.89	96,205	2.24	116,978	3.46	158,102	0.00	0	
b1	Direct Non-staff		243,439		220,826		10,136		7,512		4,402		5,210		174,586		18,980	
	Net Inter Agency Fees		-12,899		0													0
d5	Less : Income		-186,592		-186,592		0		0		0		0		-186,592		0	
	Total Direct	8.65	462,853	8.65	469,465	0.80	59,573	0.27	22,021	1.89	100,607	2.24	122,188	3.46	146,095	0.00	18,980	0
Indirect																		
c1	Indirect Adoption Social Workers			0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0
c2	Indirect Non SW Qualified Staff			0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0
c3	Indirect support staff			0.36	3,966	0.00	0	0.03	357	0.01	119	0.08	873	0.09	1,031	0.14	1,586	0
d1	Indirect non-staff			0	0		0		0		0		0		0		0	0
	Total Indirect			0.36	3,966	0.00	0	0.03	357	0.01	119	0.08	873	0.09	1,031	0.14	1,586	0
Total Net Cost				9.01	473,431	0.80	59,573	0.30	22,378	1.90	100,726	2.31	123,061	3.55	147,126	0.14	20,566	0

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13. APPENDIX E – DETAILED RAA AGREED 2018/19 BASELINE

		CBC	BB	MK	Total
		£	£	£	£
Direct Adoption net Budgets 2018/19		955,166	810,952	974,275	2,740,393
Less: Adoption Allowances		-387,762	-330,000	-499,490	-1,217,252
		567,404	480,952	474,785	1,523,141
Less: Items removed from baselines					
	CBC - Past service costs (Pension)	-39,476			-39,476
	BB - Apprentiship Levy		-1,570		-1,570
	BB - Premised/IT related		-4,390		-4,390
	MK - Premises/IT related			-5,320	-5,320
Direct Budgets in Revised Returns		527,928	474,992	469,465	1,472,385
Add: Relevant/Material Indirect costs					
	CBC - Marketing Officer	7,437			7,437
	CBC - Training Officer	4,501			4,501
	CBC - Advertising	9,000			9,000
	BB - Recruitment/Marketing Officer		23,066		23,066
	BB -Training Manager		21,094		21,094
	MK - Business Support			3,966	3,966
Total Net Costs included in returns		548,866	519,153	473,431	1,541,450
	Baseline budget share	36%	34%	31%	100%

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14. APPENDIX F – RAA AGREEMENT CONTENTS

1 Main Body

Parties

- CBC, BB and MK

Aims & principles of collaboration

Governing law

Governance

- RAA Board
- Head of Service

Services

- Host exercises skill, care and complies with stat provisions etc
- Service description and matrix showing respective roles of RAA, Host LAs, Other LAs

Payment Mechanism/Budget

- Schedule – LA Contribution %
- Services exclude – Adoption Allowances
- Overspend - How it will be met (In proportion to LA contributions)
- Surplus - Earmarked reserves from underspends

Procurement

- Host procures on behalf of all LAs
- Compliance with procurement regulations

Properties/IT

- Rights to enter
- Ownership of IT equipment

Staff

- Duties & obligations of host LA and other LAs

Confidentiality

- Data

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- Inspection rights

FOI/Data Protection

- LA's are joint controllers

Press releases/communications

Complaints

- Adopters – Host procedures
- Child – Relevant LA

Escalation/Dispute resolution

Intellectual property

Indemnity

Liabilities & Insurance

Force majeure

Termination

2 Schedules

- **Service specification**
- **Information sharing agreement**
  - Who owns data
  - Compliance with DPA
  - Return of data after termination
- **Governance**
  - Terms of Reference
  - Head of Service job description
- **Funding Arrangements**

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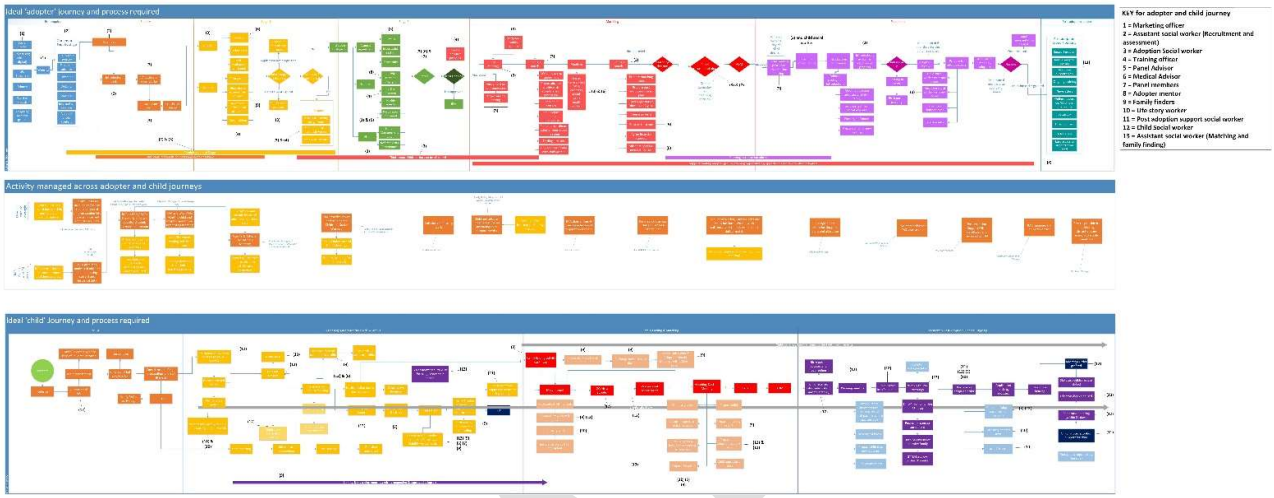
15. APPENDIX G - CHILD AND ADOPTER PROCESS MAPS

[Document to be embedded, electronically]

Ideal adopter and child journeys and process required, March 2018



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16. APPENDIX F - NOTICE

Central East RAA Project Board is responsible for determining whether the scope of the work iMPOWER Consulting Limited ('iMPOWER') have been asked to carry out is sufficient for the purposes of this report. The agreed scope of this work is detailed in the form of contract signed by Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services, Central Bedfordshire Council in February 2018.

The designs, assertions and opinions included in this report are intended to be a reflection of those put forward by stakeholders from across the councils and other agencies involved in setting up the Central East RAA. iMPOWER facilitated these discussions and, as accurately as possible, reflected consolidated them in this report.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis in this report is based on information, explanations and assumptions provided by the Central East LAs and other stakeholders, as set out in this document or the associated working papers, for quality assurance by Central East RAA Project Board. It should be noted and it is expressly stated that no independent verification of any of the documents or information supplied to us iMPOWER has been made. We iMPOWER make no representation or warranty and give no undertaking as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the information contained received and used to develop in this report or any document or information supplied to us.

In this report iMPOWER have assumed, having raised queries as iMPOWER saw appropriate: that all of the information supplied to us was, when given, and remains, true, complete and accurate and not misleading; that the documents iMPOWER have examined are true, complete and accurate copies of the originals and that the signatures on those documents are genuine; that appropriate personnel at the Central East RAA Project Board will have read the documents in case any such document reveals matters of significance which could only be identified by people with knowledge of the Central East RAA Project Board's specific circumstances; and that no term of any agreement comprised in the documents received by us iMPOWER has been amended orally by the parties or by conduct or by course of dealing without our being aware of such amendment. In addition, there may be agreements which are wholly oral of which iMPOWER are unaware.

This report reflects the state of the Central East RAA as at the date provided at the front of it. However, further information may be received, disclosures may be made or information identified which may change the position of this report after the date of it. IMPOWER do not accept any responsibility or obligation to update this report, correct any inaccuracies or provide any further information which may become known to it after the date of this report.

This report is addressed to the Central East RAA Project Board and is for their sole information and use in connection with the matter. iMPOWER accept no responsibility for any reliance placed on this report for any purpose other than the matter or by any person other than the Central East RAA Project Board.

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iMPOWER shall not in any circumstances be liable to the Central East RAA Project Board for any loss of profit or any other consequential or indirect loss (howsoever arising).

The contents of this report are strictly private and confidential and this report is being made available to the Central East RAA Project Board solely on that basis. This report must not be made available; or copied, quoted or referred to (in whole or in part) without the prior written consent of iMPOWER, provided that the Central East RAA Project Board may disclose this report to those of its respective employees, directors and advisers who are directly involved in the matter. Neither this report, nor and right under it, as assignable.

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive **4 December 2018**

Consultation on the Council's Admission Arrangements for the Academic Year 2020

Report of: Cllr Steven Dixon, Executive Member for Families, Education and Children (steven.dixon@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director: Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services (sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a decision that is Key

Purpose of this report

1. To approve the commencement of the Council's consultation on admission arrangements to ensure the statutory requirement for admissions consultation is met. The Council is the admissions authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

2. Outline the proposed changes to the admission arrangements for all Central Bedfordshire Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. approve the commencement of consultation for the proposed changes to the Council's admission arrangements for the academic year 2020/21:

- **include priority to children of staff to the following schools' oversubscription criteria; Dunstable Icknield Lower, Fairfield Park Lower, Greenleas School, Heathwood Lower, Shefford Lower, Southcott Lower and Thomas Johnson Lower; and**

- **include priority for children previously in state care outside of England for all community and voluntary controlled schools**

2. **delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services with the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children to determine the Council's admission policy for 2020, which they would do so by 28 February 2019, as required by legislation.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

3. The Council's proposed Admission Arrangements for the academic year 2020-21 will be considered by the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 January 2019 as a consultee to the process if the Executive approve the recommendations of this report.

Issues

4. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that admissions are co-ordinated for all admission authorities in the local authority's area for all children being admitted into the normal year of entry, and only 1 offer of a school place is made.

5. The Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme for the academic year 2020/21 fulfils this requirement, setting out the timeframes for processing admission applications.

6. In addition, as the Council is the admission authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools, it must also undertake consultation on its own admission arrangements where changes are proposed. The admission policy for these schools sets out the criteria in which applications will be considered if the school is oversubscribed. This report explains the rationale for the proposed changes for seventeen Community and Voluntary Controlled schools' admission criteria.

Central Bedfordshire Council's Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme Academic Year 2020-21

7. Legislation contained within the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements (England) Regulations 2012 ("the School Admissions Regulations") requires Local Authorities to have a co-ordinated admissions scheme for their area where parents can apply on a common application form for a place in the normal year of entry at a mainstream maintained school or academy.

8. The Council is required to co-ordinate the admissions for children in their area so that only 1 offer of a school place is made per prospective pupil. The co-ordinated admissions scheme must be formulated by 1 January in the relevant determination year and must be consulted on with the admission authorities in the area if it is substantially different from the previous year.

9. Central Bedfordshire's Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme sets out the arrangements and timetable by which applications will be processed. The scheme details the processes and procedures that the Council and other admissions authorities need to work to in order to process the applications by the offer date for the normal year of entry at a school or academy.

10. The Council acting as the local authority must have a co-ordinated admissions scheme in place for all mainstream maintained schools and academies in the area.

11. Admissions for the normal year of entry for Secondary schools (which in Central Bedfordshire includes Upper and Secondary schools) are subject to a national closing date of 31 October for receipt of applications and a national offer date of 1 March.

12. Admissions for the normal year of entry for Primary schools (which in Central Bedfordshire include Lower, Primary and Middle schools) are subject to a national closing date of 15 January and a national offer date of 16 April.

13. The proposed co-ordinated scheme for 2020/21 is attached for Lower, Primary and Middle at Appendix 1 and the proposed co-ordinated scheme is attached for Secondary and Upper at Appendix 2.

14. The proposed co-ordinated scheme is not substantially different from the previous year's, and has been updated with the relevant dates for the academic year 2020/21. This scheme therefore is not subject to formal consultation as per the requirements of the School Admissions Regulations but will be circulated for information to all relevant parties.

Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools

15. Admission arrangements are the procedures and processes that determine how children will be admitted to a school and include the oversubscription criteria which will be applied if more applications are received than there are places available.

16. The School Admissions Regulations require Admission Authorities (i.e. the Council in relation to Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area, the governing bodies of Foundation and Voluntary Aided schools and the relevant Academy Trust in relation to academies) to consult where changes are proposed on their admission arrangements, including any supplementary information form that will apply for admission applications for the following academic year. The confirmation of Religious Affiliation form is a supplementary form to the Council's common application form for point of entry admissions and is attached at Appendix 4 for information. The Religious Affiliation form is for all Central Bedfordshire schools who prioritise applicants on faith grounds for both Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided schools.

17. For admission arrangements determined in 2019 for entry in September 2020, consultation must be for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October 2018 and the 31 January 2019. The Admission Arrangements must then be determined by 28 February 2019. The Council will conduct its consultation between the 5 December 2018 and 29 January 2019 to gather the views of all consultees.

18. Admissions Authorities are required to consult with the following parties:

    i. Parents of children between the ages of 2 and 18 who are resident in the relevant area;
    ii. Other persons in the relevant area who in the opinion of the admissions authority have an interest in the proposed admission arrangements;
    iii. All other admission authorities within the relevant area;
    iv. The Governing Bodies of Community and Voluntary Controlled schools;
    v. Adjoining neighbouring local authorities;
    vi. The body or person representing religious denomination schools.

19. From 2020/21 changes are proposed to the admissions criteria of all Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Central Bedfordshire.

20. As part of the Schools for the Future programme, the Council is currently working with each cluster to co construct a cluster plan for each area which will outline the shape of education provision for the next 15-20 years in line with housing and population growth. Until each plan is finalized and agreed, the Council is not seeking to make any significant changes to admission arrangements for Community or Voluntary Controlled schools.

Including priority for children previously in state care outside of England

21. School admission authorities have been required to give looked after children highest priority in their oversubscription criteria since 2007, and this was extended to previously looked after children in 2012.

22. The Minister of State for School Standards wrote to all Local Authorities and admissions authorities in December 2017 encouraging them to give children who have been adopted having been in state care from outside of England to have the second highest priority for admission to school as soon as possible.

23. The Minister has stated that it is his intention to propose further changes to the School Admissions Code to amend the current mandatory highest priority criterion so that this also includes children who have been in state care outside of England and have since been adopted. Any changes to admissions legislation are subject to national consultation and the will of Parliament, which would result in a new School Admissions Code being issued. Prior to that taking place he is keen for all admission authorities to include this as the second highest priority in the interim as soon as possible.

24. The majority of local authorities in the area will be consulting on implementing this change to the admission arrangements for community and Voluntary Controlled schools in their authority and are encouraging own admission authority schools within their area to do the same.

25. Applicants applying under this criterion will be required to provide documentation to evidence that their child meets this criterion. The School Admissions Team would liaise with the Virtual School to determine if applicants meet the criterion based on the evidence provided by parent. The Department for Education has stated that the number of pupils who will meet this criterion is small so it is not anticipated that many applications will be considered under this priority.

26. The proposed oversubscription criteria for all community and Voluntary Controlled schools in Central Bedfordshire would have the following first two criteria, the first being mandatory and the second in response to the Minister's request;

    1) All 'looked after' children and children who were previously 'looked after'
    2) Children who appear to the Local Authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

27. It is therefore proposed that the Local Authority consults on including priority to these pupils, as requested by the Minister of State for School Standards, ahead of the planned change to the admissions legislation so that the Local Authority is ahead of national policy change.

Including priority for children of staff

28. The Governing Bodies of the following schools have requested that children of staff be given priority within their oversubscription criteria; Greenleas School, Southcott Lower, Heathwood Lower, Dunstable Icknield Lower, Fairfield Park Lower, Thomas Johnson Lower and Shefford Lower.

29. Many schools have had difficulty recruiting and retaining staff, and therefore wish to include the priority as an incentive to attract high quality staff.

30. The School Admissions Code, the statutory code which underpins the admission process, permits admission authorities to give priority to children of staff within a school's oversubscription criteria in either or both of the following circumstances; where the member of staff has been employed at the school for at least two years when the application is made and/or where they have been recruited to fill a vacant post for which there is a demonstrable skill shortage.

31. The proposed oversubscription criteria for the schools that wish to include this priority is:

    1) All 'looked after' children and children who were previously 'looked after'
    2) Children who appear to the Local Authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
    3) Children living in the catchment with siblings at the school

4) Children living in the catchment area
5) Other children with siblings at the school
6) Children of staff*
7) Any other children

For Leighton Buzzard lower schools who have requested this priority be added to their oversubscription criteria, this would be as follows;

1) All 'looked after' children and children who were previously 'looked after'
2) Children who appear to the Local Authority to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3) Other children with siblings at the school
4) Children of staff*
5) Children for whom the school is the nearest lower/primary school to their home address
6) Any other children

*A clear definition would be required to set out how a parent/carer would be eligible for this criterion. The proposed definition would be;

Permanent full or part-time staff who have either been employed at the school for two or more years at the time of application or recruited to fill a vacant post where there was a demonstrable skill shortage. The relationship to the child is defined as by blood or adoption or with legal parental responsibility and living with the child in the same house Monday – Friday.

32. A third of Central Bedfordshire schools and academies who are responsible for their admission arrangements include children of staff priority within their oversubscription criteria. Therefore, supporting these schools' requests would enable the schools to operate as many of the other schools already are. The number of children of staff applications for schools with this criterion has been very low, on average there is one application per year that meets this criterion and therefore the impact on other applicants is minimal.

33. Last year following the required consultation, the Council included the priority for children of staff to the oversubscription criteria for Leighton Middle School, following a request from the school. In that consultation the majority of respondents were supportive of the proposal and the general consensus was that it was a pragmatic way of supporting schools attract and retain quality staff.

34. The possible disadvantages to the proposed criterion is that as admission authorities cannot give priority to children based on their parents' occupations, except for children of staff it could be viewed as unfair to other parents as their occupation cannot be considered. However it is permissible by the School Admissions Code and therefore an acceptable criterion. As a result of the children of staff criterion it may result in children from outside the local area gaining a place at the school ahead of local children if staff living in a distance to the school opt to apply for a place for their child at the school at which they work. However the number of applicants expected to meet this criterion is so low and not all school staff want their child attending the school at which they work.

35. It is therefore proposed to include the children of staff priority criterion within the oversubscription criteria for the schools listed to support these Governing Bodies in attracting high quality staff to join their school and bring the school in line with a number of academies and own admission authority schools who already include this criterion within their admission policies.

Published Admission Number for Linslade Lower

36. Following a request from the Governing Body of Linslade Lower School the Council has requested a variation to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator to reduce the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) from 45 per year group to 30 with effect from September 2019. Should the request not be granted, the Council would be required to consult on reducing the school's admission number in the normal way.

37. At the time of writing this report the Council is awaiting a decision from the Office of the Schools Adjudicator and therefore will consult on the change for 2020 as required.

Reason for decision

38. As outlined above, the Council is required to consult on changes to its admission arrangements where these are proposed and is required to consult within the statutory timescales set out in the School Admissions Regulations. A decision is therefore required from the Executive to approve the commencement of the Council's consultation on the proposed changes to the admission arrangements for all Central Bedfordshire Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

Council Priorities

39. The Council's co-ordinated admissions scheme and admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools supports the Council's priority to improve educational attainment.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

40. As the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area, the Council is required by Section 88C(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 ("the 1998 Act") to determine, on an annual basis, the admission arrangements which are to apply to such schools for the next-but-one school year. Accordingly, for September 2020 admissions, the Council is required to determine the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools.

41. Before determining admission arrangements, the Council is required by Section 88C(2) of the 1998 Act to carry out such consultation about the proposed arrangements as may be prescribed in regulations (in this case, the School Admissions Regulations, Chapter 3 of which prescribes, amongst other matters, the persons who must be consulted, the manner of consultation and the time for consultation and determination of admission arrangements).

42. As Section 88C of the 1998 Act and Chapter 3 of the School Admissions Regulations impose statutory duties on the Council, a failure to consult on and determine the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area would amount to a breach by the Council of these duties, the possible implications of which include legal challenges by interested parties and intervention by the Secretary of State for Education, who has the power under Section 497 of the Education Act 1996 to give such directions as appear to him to be expedient to a local authority which has failed to discharge a statutory duty imposed on it under the Education Acts.

43. Accordingly, it is imperative that the Council consults on and determines the admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools in its area in accordance with Section 88C of the 1998 Act and Chapter 3 of the School Admissions Regulations.

Financial and Risk Implications

44. There are no financial implications for this report.

Equalities Implications

45. The School Admissions Code sets out the duty on Local Authorities and Admission Authorities to produce admission arrangements which are fair, clear and objective, which can be easily understood by parents. Admission arrangements must comply with regulations and legislation including the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

46. 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. As part of the consultation on the Admissions Arrangements the Council will check that the proposed changes do not have a disproportionate or negative impact on vulnerable groups.

Conclusion and next Steps

47. It is a necessary requirement for the Council to consult on its admission arrangements where changes are proposed and to formulate a co-ordinated scheme for admission by 1 January in the determination year.

48. The proposed co-ordinated admissions scheme has been drawn up with regard to the national closing and offer dates for the academic year of 2020/21, taking into account the necessary timescales to process and allocate places working with the schools and academies in Central Bedfordshire to meet the deadlines

49. The next steps are for the Council to undertake the consultation within the statutory timeframes engaging with all the relevant parties to ascertain views on the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools of which the Council is the admissions authority for.

50. The consultation will run from 5 December and conclude on 30 January 2019, for a total of eight weeks, six of which are during term time, to ensure that it meets the statutory consultation duration. The legislation states that the Council must determine its admission arrangements for admissions in 2020/21 by 28 February 2019, which would not allow sufficient time for the responses to be analysed and reported back to Executive during February 2019. Therefore, responses to the consultation will be reported in February 2019 to the Executive Member for Families, Education and Children to determine the Council's admission arrangements for the academic year 2020/21 alongside the Director of Children's Services before 28 February 2019 as required by the regulations.

Appendices

The following appendices are attached through an electronic link:

Appendix 1 – Lower, Primary and Middle 2020/21 co-ordinated admissions scheme.

Appendix 2 – Secondary and Upper 2020/21 co-ordinated admissions scheme.

Appendix 3 – Proposed Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools Admissions Policy and PANs 2020/21.

Appendix 4 – Confirmation of Religious Affiliation form.

Background Papers

N/A

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Appendix 1

PROPOSED
Community and Voluntary Controlled schools
Admission Arrangements for Academic Year 2020/21

If there are fewer applications than places available at a school all applicants will be admitted. If there are more applications than places available, the criteria outlined in this document will be used to prioritise applications. The admissions criteria will be applied separately and sequentially until all places are filled. Priority is not given within each criterion to children who meet other criteria.

Tiebreaker

Straight line distance will be used as a tiebreaker in each criterion where required to determine the allocation of places. The distance the pupil lives from the school which is measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. The Local Authority will measure the distance from the address point of the pupil's home to a point on the school site agreed with the governing body of the school, which is known as the designated measuring point. In the event of (a) two or more children living at the same address point (e.g. children resident in a block of flats) or (b) two addresses measuring the same distance from the school, the ultimate tie-breaker will be random selection, using the Synergy Admissions database to allocate the place.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, children with an Education, Health and Care Plan are required to be admitted to the academy/school named in the Plan and will be allocated a place ahead of those without an Education, Health and Care Plan in the allocation process. Thereafter the admissions criteria for each academy/school will apply to those children without an Education, Health and Care Plan. After allocations have been made, if an application is made late or is received as part of the in-year process, pupils who have an Education, Health and Care Plan are required to be admitted to the school which is named on the Plan, even if the school is full.

Fair Access Protocol

All Local Authorities must have a Fair Access Protocol which operates outside of the arrangements of co-ordinated admissions (i.e. those children being admitted to the point of entry at an academy/school) to ensure unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable are offered a suitable school place. Pupils identified for admission through the Fair Access Protocol will be admitted even if the school is full.

Unsuccessful applications

Waiting List

All unsuccessful applicants will be added to the waiting list which will run until the end of the academic year (July 2021). Waiting lists are ranked solely by the published oversubscription criteria for the school. The list will be ranked each time a child is added to the waiting list.

Appeals

If a place cannot be offered at a Central Bedfordshire Community or VC school the applicant(s) have the right of appeal. All appeals are heard by an independent panel. Information regarding the appeal process will be sent to all unsuccessful applicants when notified of the outcome of their application.

Definitions of Admissions Criteria:

'Looked after' children

A 'looked after' child is a child in the care of a local authority as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989. In relation to school admissions legislation a 'looked after child' is a child in public care at the time of application to a school.

Previously 'looked after' children

A previously 'looked after' child is a child who was 'looked after', but ceased to be so because they were adopted or became subject to a residence order or a special guardianship order.

Children who appear to the Local Authority to have been in state care outside of England and have ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted

A child is regarded as having been in state care in a place outside of England if they were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other provider of care whose sole purpose if to benefit society.

Catchment area

A catchment area is a geographical area from which children are given priority for admission to the particular school. Please see www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions for more information on school catchment areas.

Sibling

A sibling refers to a brother or sister, half brother or sister, step brother or sister, adopted brother or sister or fostered brother or sister where foster care has been arranged by a Local Authority or the child of the parent / carer's partner, and in every case, the child should be living at the same address. The sibling must be in the school at the time of application and be likely to remain in the school at the proposed date of admission. In the scenario where one twin or a child from multiple birth has an EHCP, the other twin or children from multiple birth will be considered as a sibling once the school named on the EHCP has been finalised.

Any other children

Pupils who do not meet any of the higher criteria will be prioritised by the distance with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority. Using their computerised measuring system, the Local Authority will measure the straight-line distance from the address point of the pupil's home to the designated measuring point for the school, as agreed with the school's governing body.

Children of staff

Permanent full or part-time staff who have either been employed at the school for two or more years at the time of application or recruited to fill a vacant post where there was a demonstrable skill shortage. The relationship to the child is defined as by blood or adoption or with legal parental responsibility and living with the child in the same house Monday – Friday.

Nearest school

The nearest school will be identified by measuring the distance the pupil lives from the school which is measured in a straight line, using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system, from the address point of the pupil's home to a point on the school site agreed with the governing body of the school, which is known as the designated measuring point. In the unlikely event that a pupil lives equidistant to the nearest two schools then the parent's preferred school will be classed as the nearest school.

Pulford VA Lower School will not be considered as a pupil's nearest school for the purposes of this policy as admission to Pulford is predominantly based on faith grounds rather than a pupil's address.

The oversubscription criteria for the majority of Community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) schools in Central Bedfordshire is as follows:

1) All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2) Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3) Children in living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4) Children living in the catchment area
5) Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6) Any other children

School	Published Admission Number	Designated measuring point
Aspley Guise Lower	27	Main gate
Caddington Village (Primary)	60	School medical room
Campton Lower	22	Main gate
Chalton Lower	15	School gate
Flitwick Lower	60	Main office
Hawthorn Park Primary	60	Front door of school
Haynes Lower	24	School front door
Houghton Conquest Lower	20	Headteacher's office
Houghton Regis Primary	45	Centre of school field
Husborne Crawley Lower	12	Main entrance
Kingsmoor Lower	45	School gate
Lawnside Lower	60	Main entrance to school
Linslade Lower	30	Pupils entrance gate
Maulden Lower	30	Main pedestrian gate
Ramsey Manor Lower	58	Front door
Ridgmont Lower	15	Headteacher's office
Roecroft Lower	90	Main entrance door
Russell Lower	90	School gate
Shillington Lower	30	Headteacher's office
Silsoe VC Lower	60	Front door
Slip End Village (Primary)	24	Main gate
Southill Lower	15	Main entrance
Stanbridge Lower	24	Front gate
Stondon Lower	30	Main gate
St. Swithun's VC Primary	30	Main door
Studham VC Lower	15	Main door
Swallowfield Lower	60	Front door
Templefield Lower	60	Main door
Thornhill Primary	30	School main gate
Tithe Farm Primary	60	Main gate
Watling Lower	30	Main school gate entrance
Woburn Lower	12	Main entrance
Potton Middle	90	School office

Variations to the standard admissions policy:

Biggleswade cluster schools:

Dunton VC Lower School	**Published admission number:** 15
Designated measuring point: Headteacher's office	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children, one or more of whose parents/carers have, at the time of application, shown commitment to the Church of England or another Christian church by attending a service at least once a month for the year prior to an application being made*.
7.	Any other children

Edward Peake VC Middle School	**Published Admission Number:** 150
Designated measuring point: Headteacher's office	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children, one or more of whose parents/carers have, at the time of application, shown commitment to the Church of England or another Christian church by attending a service at least once a month for the year prior to an application being made*.
7.	Children attending Dunton VC Lower, Northill VA Lower, Sutton VA Lower and Wrestlingworth VC Lower
8.	Any other children

St. Andrew's VC Lower School	**Published Admission Number:** 180 (West site 90, East site 90)
Designated measuring point: West site: Front entrance door East site: Front entrance door	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children, one or more of whose parents/carers have, at the time of application, shown commitment to the Church of England or another Christian church by attending a service at least once a month for the year prior to an application being made*.
7.	Any other children

Wrestlingworth VC Lower School	**Published Admission Number:** 13
Designated measuring point: Front door	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously ‘looked after’
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children, one or more of whose parents/carers have, at the time of application, shown commitment to the Church of England or another Christian church by attending a service at least once a month for the year prior to an application being made*.
7.	Any other children

*A Christian Church is defined as one which is a member, or is eligible for membership, of Churches Together in England or the Evangelical Alliance. Applications in this category will need to ask their priest or minister to complete the relevant section of the local authority common application form.

Cranfield cluster schools:

Thomas Johnson Lower School	**Published Admission Number:** 18
Designated measuring point: School gate	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously ‘looked after’
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children of staff
7.	Any other children

Dunstable and Houghton Regis cluster schools:

Dunstable Icknield Lower School	**Published Admission Number:** 60
Designated measuring point: School tower	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously ‘looked after’
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children of staff
7.	Any other children

Leighton Buzzard cluster community schools:

Leighton Middle School	**Published Admission Number:** 150
Designated measuring point: Centre of memorial garden	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously ‘looked after’
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children of staff
7.	Any other children

School	**Published Admission Number**	**Designated measuring point**
Greenleas School, Derwent Road	60	Front door
Greenleas School, Kestrel Way	60	Front door
Heathwood Lower School	30	Front door
Southcott Lower School	60	Main door
	If the schools listed above are oversubscribed priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in order:	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously ‘looked after’	
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted	
3.	Children with siblings at the school	
4.	Children of staff	
5.	Children for whom the school is their nearest lower/primary school*	
6.	Any other children	

School	**Published Admission Number**	**Designated measuring point**
Beaudesert Lower School	55	Main pedestrian entrance
Clipstone Brook Lower School	75	School notice board at top of school drive
Dovery Down Lower School	30	Front door
Hockliffe Lower School	15	Front door
Leedon Lower School	90	Middle of school quadrant
Linslade Lower School	30	Pupils main gate
Stanbridge Lower School	24	Front gate
St. George’s Lower School	30	Main front door
The Mary Bassett Lower School	60	Front door
	If the following schools listed above are oversubscribed priority for admission will be given to those children who meet the criteria set out below, in order:	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously ‘looked after’	
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted	
3.	Children with siblings at the school	
4.	Children for whom the school is their nearest lower/primary school*	
5.	Any other children	

Shefford and Stotfold cluster schools:

Shefford Lower School	**Published Admission Number:** 90
Designated measuring point: War memorial in town centre	
1.	All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'
2.	Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
3.	Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school
4.	Children living in the catchment area
5.	Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school
6.	Children of staff
7.	Any other children

Fairfield Park Lower School	**Published Admission Number:** 90
Designated measuring point: Equidistant point between Dickens Boulevard and Ruskin Drive sites	
Applications for Fairfield Park Lower will be ranked according to the standard admissions criteria as mentioned above. Where a place can be offered, the following process will determine at which school site, either Dickens Boulevard or the Ruskin Drive site, the child will attend. Successful applicants will be notified at the time of offer which school site their child will attend.	
1.	**All 'looked after' children or children who were previously 'looked after'** *Looked after children in catchment will be prioritised by which priority area they are in, with those out of catchment being prioritised by straight line distance from their home address to the nearest school site to them.*
2.	**Children who appear to the Council to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted** *Allocated children will be prioritised by which priority area they are in, with those out of catchment being prioritised by straight line distance from their home address to the nearest school site to them.*
3.	**Children living in the catchment area with siblings at the school** *Before applications in this criterion are allocated children will be prioritised for either the Dickens Boulevard or the Ruskin Drive site according to which site their sibling attends and will be ranked by their straight-line distance from the designated measuring point.* *If children are unable to obtain a place at the site at which their sibling attends they will be then ranked by their straight-line distance to the other Fairfield Park site. Places will be allocated in accordance with this distance after allocations have been made to those with siblings at that site taking precedence before those with siblings at the other school site.*
4.	**Children living in the catchment area** *Before applications in this criterion are allocated children will be prioritised for either the Dickens Boulevard or the Ruskin Drive site according to which priority area they reside in first and be ranked by their straight-line distance from the designated measuring point.* *If children are unable to obtain a place at the site within their priority area they will be then ranked by their straight-line distance to the other Fairfield Park site which is not in their priority area. Places will be allocated in accordance with this distance after allocations have been made to those in their priority area taking precedence before those from the other priority area.*
5.	**Children living outside the catchment area with siblings at the school** *Siblings will be prioritised for either the Dickens Boulevard or the Ruskin Drive site depending on which site their sibling attends and will be ranked by their straight-line distance from the designated measuring point. There will be no guarantee that a sibling can attend the same school site.*
6.	**Children of staff** *Where possible pupils will be allocated a place at the site at which their parent is based.*
7.	**Any other children**

	Where possible pupils will be allocated a place at the site nearest to them, measured from their home address in a straight line, although if this is not possible a place will be allocated at the other site.

Priority areas for Fairfield Park Lower School catchment area

Address	Priority for Fairfield Park Lower site
Alfred Row	Ruskin Drive
Anderson Walk - properties 2,4,6	Ruskin Drive
Anderson Walk - properties 1,3,5,7	Dickens Boulevard
Beatrice Place	Ruskin Drive
Bronte Avenue - properties 1-21, 23,25,27	Ruskin Drive
Bronte Avenue - properties 22,24,26,28-155	Dickens Boulevard
Brunel Walk	Dickens Boulevard
Burton Close	Dickens Boulevard
Cavell Walk - properties 1,3,5,7,9	Ruskin Drive
Cavell Walk - properties 2,4,6,8,10	Dickens Boulevard
Charlotte Avenue	Dickens Boulevard
Connely Lane	Ruskin Drive
Copperfield Close	Dickens Boulevard
Dickens Boulevard - properties 1-23	Ruskin Drive
Dickens Boulevard - properties 24-74 inc Beeton Court	Dickens Boulevard
Disraeli Place	Ruskin Drive
Doyle Place	Dickens Boulevard
Earnshaw Drive	Dickens Boulevard
Edison Way	Dickens Boulevard
Emily Place	Dickens Boulevard
Fairfield Mews	Ruskin Drive
Faraday Gardens	Dickens Boulevard
Fleming Drive - properties 1-15, 17, 19,21	Ruskin Drive
Fleming Drive - properties 16,18,20,22-47	Dickens Boulevard
Franklin Place	Dickens Boulevard
Gaskell Place	Dickens Boulevard
Gladstone Drive	Ruskin Drive
Hardy Way	Dickens Boulevard
Heathcliff Avenue	Dickens Boulevard
Helena Crescent	Ruskin Drive
Hitchin Road - properties 153-167, inc East Lodge	Ruskin Drive
Hitchin Road - Icknield House	Dickens Boulevard
Kingsley Avenue	Ruskin Drive
Kipling Crescent	Dickens Boulevard
Leopold Corner	Ruskin Drive
Livingstone Way	Dickens Boulevard
Louise Rise	Ruskin Drive
Middlemarch	Ruskin Drive
Nickleby Way	Dickens Boulevard
Nightingale Way - properties 1-6,8,10,12,14	Ruskin Drive
Nightingale Way - properties 7,9,11,15,17,19	Dickens Boulevard
Palmerston Way	Ruskin Drive
Paxton Drive	Dickens Boulevard
Russell Walk	Ruskin Drive
Salisbury Close	Ruskin Drive
Shaftesbury Drive	Ruskin Drive
Stephenson Walk	Dickens Boulevard
Lower Wilbury Farm	Dickens Boulevard

Appendix 2

PROPOSED

CO-ORDINATED SCHEME FOR ADMISSIONS TO:
LOWER, PRIMARY AND MIDDLE ACADEMIES AND SCHOOLS

ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/2021

1. Introduction

1.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and supported by The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2014 requires Local Authorities to formulate a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all academies and maintained schools in their area.

1.2 A school is here defined as any academy or maintained community, foundation, trust, voluntary aided or voluntary controlled school in the Central Bedfordshire Council area.

1.3 Central Bedfordshire Council, acting as the Local Authority is the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools. The admission authority for academies is the academy trust. For foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools, the admission authority is the governing body.

1.4 This scheme will apply to all lower, primary and middle academies and schools for admissions in the Central Bedfordshire Council area from September 2020.

1.5. Any reference to Central Bedfordshire is a reference to the administrative area of the unitary authority.

1.6 Central Bedfordshire Council uses the equal preference system to process admission applications, as outlined below:

1.6.1 Stage 1

All first, second and third preference applications are considered equally against the admissions criteria. At this stage the Council does not distinguish between first, second and third preference applications. For example, if the school has 120 places and there are 150 first, second and third preference applications all are considered equally against the admissions criteria.

1.6.2 Stage 2

If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school the parent's highest ranked preference (i.e. first or second preference on the parent's application form) will be offered, and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded. For example a parent's first and third preferences might both qualify for a place, in which case the parent would be offered their first preference, leaving the place at the third preference school available for another pupil.

2. The Scheme

2.1. This scheme is for admissions in the normal year of entry for:
a) Lower Academies and Schools
b) Primary Academies and Schools
c) Middle Academies and Schools

2.2. There will be a standard form known as the Common Application Form (CAF) available for parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire to apply online or by completing a hard copy application form.

2.3. The CAF will be used for the purposes of admitting children into the first year of a:
- Lower or Primary academy/school (Year R), or
- Middle academy/school (Year 5).

2.4. The CAF will enable parents/carers to:
- express a preference for up to 3 academies/schools
- rank their preferences
- give reasons for their preferences

2.5. Information will be provided on the admissions process in the form of the admissions booklet and will contain information on:
a) the academies and schools in Central Bedfordshire
b) dates of open evenings (where applicable)
c) published admission numbers and admissions criteria
d) how to complete an application
e) how places are allocated
f) timetable for the application and allocation process
g) school transport
h) who to contact for advice

2.6. Admissions for the normal year of entry into a Lower or Primary Academy/School (Year R):

2.6.1 Parents of all children born between **01/09/15 and 31/08/16** and living in Central Bedfordshire will be able to apply for an academy or school place online or by completing a hard copy of the Common Application Form (CAF). The CAF will be available from any local lower or primary

academy/school, from the School Admissions Team or it can be downloaded from the Council website.

2.6.2 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire who wish to apply for a primary or lower academy/school in another Local Authority must apply online or complete the hard copy of the CAF.

2.6.3 Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire but who wish to apply for a place at a Central Bedfordshire school or academy must make their application to their home Local Authority.

2.6.4 Deferred Entry: Parents of children offered a place for admission in the reception year are offered a full time place to commence in the September following their child's fourth birthday. However parents may defer the admission of their child until later in the academic year or until their child becomes of statutory school age or request that their child takes up their place part time until they reach statutory school age. A place cannot be deferred beyond statutory school age nor beyond the academic year for which the place was offered. Therefore the following will apply, according to the child's date of birth for deferring entry to the Reception year:

Child born:	**Term which place can be deferred until:**
1st September – 31st December	Spring term (January)
1st January – 31st March	Summer term (April)
1st April – 31st August	Summer term (April)

2.7. Delayed admission for summer born children (those born between 1 April and 31 August).

2.7.1 Parents/carers can also request that their Summer born child is admitted to Reception in that year rather than to Year 1 However, parents/carers do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group, a decision will be made by the admission authority for the school in consultation with the Headteacher.

2.7.2 Parents/carers of Summer born children should make their application for a school place on the Common Application Form (CAF) by 15 January if their child will be 4 years old by 31st August of that year. They should make clear on the form that they wish to defer entrance to school for a year. They should apply for both entrance to their child's normal age group (Year R) and for entrance out of the year group.

2.7.3 In line with the School Admissions Code December 2014 ("the Code"), the Council, as the admission authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, will consider a request on the basis of the individual circumstances of the case and the best interests of the child. To this end, the Council will liaise with the Headteacher and must take account of their professional opinion on the case. The Council will also take account of the parents'/carers' view. A written request, sent together with the CAF should be made by the parents/carers for the attention of the Admissions Manager

and should include the parents'/carer's reasons for the request, information regarding the child's academic, social and emotional development including any supporting evidence the parent deems relevant; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional and if applicable, details if the child was born prematurely including whether they would have been in a lower age group had they been born on their due date. Once determined, the decision will be communicated to the parent(s)/carer(s) in writing and will include the reasons for the decision.

2.7.4 For schools which control their own admissions (Foundation, Trust or Voluntary Aided), parents/carers need to make their request in writing, separately from the CAF, directly to the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school. The request should include such details as are outlined above. The Governing Body, along with the Headteacher, will then consider the request, making their decision on the basis of the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child in accordance with the Code. For Academies, parents/carers need to make their request in writing directly to the Academy Trust via the Principal. Academies must also follow the Code in making a decision.

2.7.5 Where the parents'/carers' request for a school place outside the normal age group is successful, the parents/carers can withdraw their application for a place within the normal age group. They will have to make a fresh application during the admissions round the following year. Where the request for a place outside the normal age group is unsuccessful, they may decide to continue with their application for a place within the normal age group or may withdraw it and make an in year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday.

2.7.6 Where a parent has more than one preferred school in their application, the relevant admission authorities will each consider the request and make their decision individually. There is no guarantee that all will come to the same decision.

2.7.7 Again at a future application or transfer point the decision to admit a child out of their normal age group rests with the admission authority and there is no guarantee they will come to the same decision as an earlier authority may have.

2.7.8 As set out above, if a request is granted, the parent will need to make an application as part of next year's normal admission round and this will be processed within the normal allocation process. A place is never guaranteed at a particular school and in the case of oversubscription, places are offered in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria. In short it would be delaying the application rather than an offer of a place.

2.8 Admission into the normal year of entry into a Middle/Extended secondary Academy/ School (Year 5)

2.8.1 Parents of all children living in Central Bedfordshire and attending a lower academy/school in the Local Authority area will receive the details about the transfer process and how to apply.

2.8.2 Parents of children attending a lower academy/school, in Central Bedfordshire who do not live in the Local Authority area must make their application to their home Local Authority.

2.8.3 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire but not attending a lower academy/school, in the Local Authority area and who wish to apply for a middle academy/school place may make their application online or obtain a hard copy of the CAF and the Admissions booklet from the School Admissions Team. The CAF and booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.

2.9. Admission of children outside their normal age group

2.9.1 Parents who want their child to transfer to the next phase of school out outside of their normal age group must make the request in sufficient time for it to be considered before the application deadline.

2.9.2 Where the preference is for a Community or Voluntary Controlled school the request should be made in writing for the attention of the Admissions Manager. The Council will liaise with the Headteacher accordingly and will support their professional opinion on the case. The request should include the parent's reasons for the request, information regarding the child's academic, social and emotional development, including any supporting evidence the parent deems relevant and whether the child has previously been educated outside their normal age group. Once determined the decision will be communicated to the parent(s)/carer(s) in writing and will include the reasons for the decision.

2.9.3 For own admission schools (Foundation, Trust or Voluntary Aided) parents/carers need to make their request in writing to the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school who will then consider the request, making their decision on what they determine as in the best interests of the child. For Academies parents/carers need to make their request in writing to the academy trust via the Principal.

2.9.4 Requests which have been granted must be followed up by a formal application using the appropriate paper CAF within the admission timetable. The application will be considered within the normal allocation process under the relevant admission criterion.

3. Timetable for admissions into Lower, Primary and Middle academies and schools

Lower/Primary:

3.1. In **September 2019**, the Local Authority admissions booklet and the CAF will be available to parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must apply to their home Local Authority.

3.2. Completed online applications and CAFs are to be submitted to the School Admissions Team by **15 January 2020**. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

Middle transfer:

3.3. In **September 2019** information is sent to parents of all children in Year 4 attending a lower academy/school in the Local Authority area. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be advised to contact their home Local Authority in order to make their application.

3.4. Completed online applications are to be submitted and hard copies of the CAF are to be returned to the School Admissions Team by **15 January 2020**. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

Lower, Primary and Middle admissions

3.5. By **7 February 2020** all preferences will be logged on the database and the School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust school or voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools are sent to those authorities.

3.6. By **6 March 2020** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust or voluntary aided school will consider all applications, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.

3.7. The School Admissions Team will process the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other academies and schools nominated and:

- where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child.

- where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference

3.8. Between **9 March 2020 and 20 March 2020** information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.

3.9. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the academies or schools that still have vacancies, after the allocation process. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.

3.10 On **9 April 2020** all middle academies and schools will have access to details of the pupils to be offered places via the web based School Admissions Module.

3.11. On **16 April 2020** the School Admissions Team will notify parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire of the outcome of their application, including those who have applied for a place in another Local Authority academy or school. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be notified by their home Local Authority.

3.12 By **30 April 2020** parents are to notify School Admissions Team of their rejection of the place offered if this is no longer required. If parents do not respond by this date it will be assumed that they have accepted the place.

3.13 By **30 April 2020** parents who have applied on time and want to change their preference from their original offer need to have submitted a change of preference by this date.

4. Late Applications

4.1 The national closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **15 January 2020**. Applications received after this date will be considered late and will be processed after the initial allocation of places.

4.2. Late applications received from 16 January until 30 April will be processed as part of the initial late allocation round and will be logged onto the database by **1 May 2020.**

4.3. The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school by **1 May 2020**.

4.4. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies or schools will be sent to those authorities by **1 May 2020**.

4.5. By **8 May 2020** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school will consider all their initial late applications for their academy or school, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.

4.6. The School Admissions Team will process the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other academies or schools nominated and:

- where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child.

- where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference.

4.7. Information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.

4.8. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the academies or schools that still have vacancies, after the allocation process. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.

4.9. On **21 May 2020** the School Admissions Team will post letters to parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire notifying them of the outcome of their Middle School applications, if part of the initial late allocation round, including those who have applied for a place in another Local Authority academy or school where the result of this decision has been received by the timescales outlined above.

4.10. On **1 June 2020** the School Admissions Team will post letters to parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire notifying them of the outcome of their Lower and Primary School applications, if part of the initial late allocation round, including those who have applied for a place in another Local Authority academy or school where the result of this decision has been received by the timescales outlined above.

4.11. Late applications received on or after the 1 May will be processed from **22 May 2020 for Middle school applications** and **1 June 2020 for Lower and Primary school applications.**

5. Waiting Lists

5.1. Pupils not offered a place at their highest preference academy or school or at any of their preferred academies or schools are kept on a waiting list maintained by the admission authority to be re-allocated if places become available. Waiting lists will be maintained until **the end of the academic year for 2020/21** for Community and Voluntary controlled schools. Waiting lists for academies and schools who are their own admission authority (Foundation, Trust and VA) may operate different waiting list arrangements. Allocation will be on the basis of the published oversubscription criteria. Priority will not be given to children based on the date their application was received or when their name was added to the list. Looked after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol, will take precedence over those on a waiting list.

6. In-year Admissions (applications received on or after 1 September)

6.1. An in-year admission is an application made for a child to be admitted outside of the co-ordinated admissions scheme for the normal year of entry or for another year group within an academy/school.

6.2. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications for community and voluntary controlled schools as the admission authority for those schools.

6.3. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications made for academies and own admission authority schools (Foundation, Trust and Voluntary-Aided schools) who opt-in to the local authority's scheme for in-year admissions.

6.4. The Local Authority will make an application form available to enable parents to apply for an in-year place at any academy or school within the Local Authority area, which will enable parents to express a preference for up to 3 academies or schools and to rank their preferences. The form will be available on the Local Authority website as an e-form or can be downloaded or a hard copy can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.

6.5. The application will be dealt with by the local authority for those schools which are community or voluntary controlled schools or those academies and own admission authority who have opted in to the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme.

6.6. Any application received by the School Admissions Team for an academy or own admission authority school who has opted out of the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be forwarded to that academy or school to process.

6.7. All Academies and own admission authority schools who deal with their own in-year admissions (i.e. opted out of the in-year co-ordination scheme) will be required to determine the child's application and notify the parent and local authority of the outcome.

6.8. Pupils not offered a place at a community or voluntary controlled school or at an academy or own admission authority school which has opted in to the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be kept on a waiting list which will be maintained for the academic year of admission. Academies and own admission authority schools who have opted out will have their own waiting list arrangements. In all cases where a place cannot be offered parents will have the right of appeal.

6.9. If all of the preferred academies and schools are full and the pupil lives in Central Bedfordshire, a place will generally be offered at the nearest academy or school with places available, unless the child is already attending a local school or academy.

6.10. Any place offered is usually expected to be taken up by the child within 4-6 weeks or by the start of the next school term.

6.11. Details of the community and voluntary controlled schools and those academies and own admission authority schools who have opted-in to the in-year co-ordination scheme and those who have opted out can be obtained from the School Admissions Team at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions.

Timetable for Co-ordinated Admissions to:
Lower, Primary and Middle Schools and Academies for academic year 2020/21

September 2019	Information about the Starting School and Middle Transfer process issued.
15 January 2020	National closing date for receipt of applications.
7 February 2020	By this date details of applications to be sent to academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies and schools sent to those authorities.
6 March 2020	By this date, academies and foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools provide the School Admissions Team with ranked lists of applicants.
11 March – 20 March 2020	Between these dates information to be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers.
9 April 2020	Information on pupils to be offered places will be available to schools and academies via the School Admissions Module.
16 April 2020	Notification to be sent to parents living in Central Bedfordshire on the offer made to their child.
30 April 2020	Date by which parents reject the offer of a place if not required.
1 May 2020	Late applications received between 16 January and 30 April 2020 will be logged onto the database by this date.
1 May 2020	The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that school or academy and applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools will be sent to those authorities.
21 May 2020	Notification to be posted to parents living in Central Bedfordshire who have submitted a late Middle School application that qualifies for consideration in the initial late allocation round.
22 May 2020	Late Middle School applications received on or after 1 May will be processed from this date.
1 June 2020	Notification to be posted to parents living in Central Bedfordshire who have submitted a late Lower and Primary School application that qualifies for consideration in the initial late allocation round.
2 June 2020	Late Lower and Primary School applications received on or after 1 May will be processed from this date.

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Appendix 3

PROPOSED

CO-ORDINATED SCHEME FOR ADMISSIONS TO: SECONDARY AND UPPER ACADEMIES AND SCHOOLS

ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/2021

Section 1

Introduction

1.1 The School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002 and supported by The School Admission (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, requires Local Authorities to formulate a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all academies and maintained schools in their area. Academies are required to participate in the co-ordinated scheme.

1.2 A school is here defined as any academy or maintained community, foundation, trust, voluntary-aided or voluntary controlled school in the Central Bedfordshire Council area.

1.3 Central Bedfordshire Council, acting as the Local Authority is the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools. The admission authority for academies is the academy trust. For foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools, the admission authority is the governing body.

1.4 This scheme will apply to all secondary and upper academies and schools in the Central Bedfordshire Council area from September 2020.

1.5 Any reference to Central Bedfordshire is a reference to the administrative area of the unitary authority.

1.6 Central Bedfordshire Council uses the equal preference system to process admission applications, as outlined below:

1.6.1 Stage 1

All first, second and third preference applications are considered equally against the admissions criteria. At this stage the Council does not distinguish between first, second and third preference applications. For example, if the school has 120 places and there are 150 first, second and third preference applications all are considered equally against the admissions criteria.

1.6.2 Stage 2

If a pupil qualifies for a place at more than one school or academy the parent's highest ranked preference (i.e. first or second preference on the parent's application form) will be offered, and any lower ranking offers will be disregarded. For example a parent's first and third preferences might both qualify for a place, in which case the parent would be offered their first preference, leaving the place at the third preference academy or school available for another pupil.

Section 2

The Scheme

2.1. This scheme is for admissions in the normal year of entry for:
a) Secondary Academies and Schools
b) Upper Academies and Schools

2.2. There will be a standard form known as the Common Application Form (CAF) available for parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire to apply online or by completing a hard copy application form.

2.3. The CAF will be used for the purposes of admitting children into the first year of a:
- Secondary academy/school (Year 7), or
- Upper academy/school (Year 9), or

2.4. The CAF will enable parents/carers to:
- express a preference for up to 3 academies/schools
- rank their preferences
- give reasons for their preferences

2.5. Information will be provided on the admissions process in the form of the admissions booklet and will contain information on:

a) the academies and schools in Central Bedfordshire
b) dates of open evenings (where applicable)
c) published admission numbers and admissions criteria
d) how to complete an application
e) how places are allocated
f) timetable for the application and allocation process
g) school transport
h) who to contact for advice

2.6. Admission into the normal year of entry into a Secondary academy/school (Year 7)

2.6.1 Parents of all children living in Central Bedfordshire and attending a primary academy/school, in the Local Authority area will receive the details about the transfer process and how to apply.

2.6.2 Parents of children attending a primary academy/school, in Central Bedfordshire who do not live in the Local Authority area must make their application to their home Local Authority.

2.6.3 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire but not attending a primary academy/school, in the Local Authority area and who wish to apply for a secondary academy or school place may make their application online or obtain a hard copy of the CAF and School Admissions booklet from the School Admissions Team. The CAF and booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.

2.7. **Admission into the normal year of entry into an Upper academy/ school (Year 9)**

2.7.1 Parents of all children living in Central Bedfordshire and attending a middle academy/school, in the Local Authority area will receive the details about the transfer process and how to apply.

2.7.2 Parents of children attending a middle academy/school, in Central Bedfordshire who do not live in the Local Authority area must make their application to their home Local Authority.

2.7.3 Parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire but not attending a middle academy/school, in the Local Authority area and who wish to apply for an upper academy or school place may make their application online or obtain a hard copy of the CAF and School Admissions booklet from the School Admissions Team. The CAF and booklet are also available to download from the Local Authority website.

2.8. Admission of children outside their normal age group

2.9.1 Parents who want their child to transfer to the next phase of school out outside of their normal age group must make the request in sufficient time for it to be considered before the application deadline.

2.9.2 Where the preference is for a Community or Voluntary Controlled school the request should be made in writing for the attention of the Admissions Manager. The Council will liaise with the Headteacher accordingly and will support their professional opinion on the case. The request should include the parent's reasons for the request, information regarding the child's academic, social and emotional development, including any supporting evidence the parent deems relevant and whether the child has previously been educated outside their normal age group. Once determined the

decision will be communicated to the parent(s)/carer(s) in writing and will include the reasons for the decision.

2.9.3 For own admission schools (Foundation, Trust or Voluntary Aided) parents/carers need to make their request in writing to the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school who will then consider the request, making their decision on what they determine as in the best interests of the child. For Academies parents/carers need to make their request in writing to the academy trust via the Principal.

2.9.4 Requests which have been granted must be followed up by a formal application using the appropriate paper CAF within the admission timetable. The application will be considered within the normal allocation process under the relevant admission criterion.

3. Timetable for admissions into Secondary and Upper academies and schools

Secondary:

3.1. In **September 2019**, information is sent to parents of all children in Year 6 attending a primary academy/school in the Local Authority area. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be advised to contact their home Local Authority in order to make their application.

3.2. Completed online applications and hard copies of the CAF are to be submitted to the School Admissions Team by **31 October 2019**. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

Upper:

3.3. In **September 2019** information is sent to parents of all children in Year 8 attending a middle academy/school in the Local Authority area. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be advised to contact their home Local Authority in order to make their application.

3.4. Completed online applications are to be submitted and hard copies of the CAF are to be returned to the School Admissions Team by **31 October 2019**. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire must have applied to their home Local Authority by this date.

Secondary and Upper transfer admissions

3.5.1 By **29 November 2019** all preferences will be logged on the database and the School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust school or voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools are sent to those

authorities.

3.5.2 By **6 January 2020** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust or voluntary aided school will consider all applications, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.

3.6 The School Admissions Team will match the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other academies or schools nominated.

- where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child.

- where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference.

3.7 Between **22 January 2020 and 31 January 2020** information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.

3.8 Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the academies or schools that still have vacancies. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.

3.9 On **26 February 2020** all Secondary and Upper academies and schools will have access to details of the pupils to be offered places via the web based School Admissions Module.

3.10 On **2 March 2020** the School Admissions Team will notify parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire of the outcome of their application, including those who have applied for a secondary or upper academy/ school place. Parents of children who do not live in Central Bedfordshire will be notified by their home Local Authority.

3.11 By **16 March 2020** parents are to notify the School Admissions Team of their rejection of the place offered if this is no longer required. If parents do not respond by this date it will be assumed that they have accepted the place.

3.12 By **16 March 2020** parents who have applied on time and want to change their preference from their original offer need to have submitted a change of preference by this date.

4. Late Applications

4.1 The national closing date for applications in the normal admissions round is **31 October 2019**. Applications received after this date will be considered late and will be processed after the initial allocation of places.

4.2. Late applications received from 31 October until 16 March will be processed as part of the initial late allocation round and will be logged onto the database by **19 March 2020.**

4.3. The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that academy or school by **19 March 2020**.

4.4. Applications for places in other Local Authority academies/schools will also be sent to those authorities by **20 March 2020**.

4.5. By **27 March 2020** the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school will consider all their initial late applications for their academy or school, apply their oversubscription criteria and provide the School Admissions Team with a list of those applicants ranked according to their oversubscription criteria. All preferences will be ranked equally against the admissions criteria.

4.6. The School Admissions Team will process the ranked lists against the ranked lists of other schools or academies nominated and:

- where the child is eligible for a place at only one of the nominated academies or schools, that academy or school will be allocated to the child.

- where the child is eligible for a place at two or more of the nominated academies or schools, they will be allocated a place at whichever of these is the highest ranked preference

4.7. Information will be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers (i.e. a Central Bedfordshire child applying for a place in another Local Authority area or a child from another Local Authority applying for a place at a Central Bedfordshire academy or school) to determine the allocation of a place at the highest ranked preference.

4.8. Where the child is not eligible for a place at any of the nominated academies or schools, the child will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate academy or school with a vacancy, but only if the child is resident in Central Bedfordshire. If the child does not reside in Central Bedfordshire, parents will be invited to request a place at any of the

academies or schools that still have vacancies, after the allocation process. Priority will always be given to those parents who have expressed a preference for a particular academy or school over those who have not.

4.9. On **20 April 2020** the School Admissions Team will post letters to parents of children living in Central Bedfordshire notifying them of the outcome of their applications, if part of the initial late allocation round, including those who have applied for a place in another Local Authority academy or school where the result of this decision has been received by the timescales outlined above.

4.10. Late applications received on or after the 17 March will be processed from **21 April 2020.**

5. Waiting Lists

5.1. Pupils not offered a place at their highest preference academy or school or at any of their preferred academies or schools are kept on a waiting list maintained by the admission authority to be re-allocated if places become available. Waiting lists will be maintained until **the end of the academic year for 2020/21** for Community and Voluntary controlled schools. Waiting lists for academies, foundation, trust and Voluntary aided schools may operate different waiting list arrangements. Allocation will be on the basis of the published oversubscription criteria. Priority will not be given to children based on the date their application was received or their name was added to the list. Looked after children, previously looked after children, and those allocated a place at the school in accordance with the Fair Access Protocol, must take precedence over those on a waiting list.

6. In-year Admissions (applications received on or after 1 September)

6.1. An in-year admission is an application made for a child to be admitted outside of the co-ordinated admissions scheme for the normal year of entry or for another year group within an academy/school.

6.2. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications for community and voluntary controlled schools as the admission authority for those schools.

6.3. The local authority will co-ordinate in-year applications made for academies and own admission authority schools (foundation, trust and voluntary aided) who opt-in to the local authority's scheme for in-year admissions.

6.4. The Local Authority will make an application form available to enable parents to apply for an in-year place at any academy or school within the Local Authority area, which will enable parents to express a preference for up to 3 academies or schools and to rank their preferences. The form will

be available on the Local Authority website as an e-form or can be downloaded or a hard copy can be obtained from the School Admissions Team.

6.5. The application will be dealt with by the local authority for those schools which are community or voluntary controlled schools or those academies and own admission authority schools who have opted in to the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme.

6.6. Any application received by the School Admissions Team for an academy or own admission authority school who has opted out of the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be forwarded to them to process.

6.7. All academies and own admission authority schools who deal with their own in-year admissions (i.e. opted out of the in-year co-ordination scheme) will be required to determine the child's application and notify the parent and local authority of the outcome.

6.8. Pupils not offered a place at a community or voluntary controlled school or at an academy or own admission authority school who has opted in to the local authority's in-year co-ordination scheme will be kept on a waiting list which will be maintained for the academic year of admission. Academies and own admission authority schools who have opted out will have their own waiting list arrangements. In all cases where a place cannot be offered parents will have the right of appeal.

6.9. If all of the preferred academies and schools are full and the pupil lives in Central Bedfordshire, a place will generally be offered at the nearest academy or school with places available, unless the child is already attending a local school or academy.

6.10. Any place offered is usually expected to be taken up by the child within 4-6 weeks or by the start of the next school term.

6.11. Details of the community and voluntary controlled schools and those academies and own admission authority schools who have opted-in to the in-year co-ordination scheme and those who have opted out can be obtained from the School Admissions Team at: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions.

Timetable for Co-ordinated Admissions to:
Secondary and Upper Academies and Schools for academic year 2020/21

September 2019	Information about the admission process issued.
31 October 2019	National closing date for receipt of applications.
29 November 2019	By this date details of applications to be sent to academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools. Applications for places in other Local Authority schools and academies sent to those authorities.
6 January 2020	By this date academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools provide the School Admissions Team with ranked lists of applicants.
22 January – 31 January 2020	Between these dates information to be exchanged with other Local Authorities on potential offers.
26 February 2020	Information on pupils to be offered places will be available to academies and schools via the School Admissions Module.
2 March 2020	Notification to be sent to parents living in Central Bedfordshire on the offer made to their child.
16 March 2020	Date by which parents reject the offer of a place if not required.
19 March 2020	Late applications received between 1 November 2019 and 16 March 2020 will be logged onto the database by this date.
20 March 2020	The School Admissions Team will notify the admission authority for each academy, foundation, trust and voluntary aided school of every nomination that has been made for that school or academy. Applications for places in other Local Authority schools / academies will be sent to those authorities.
27 March 2020	By this date academies, foundation, trust and voluntary aided schools provide the School Admissions Team with ranked lists of applicants in the initial late allocation round.
20 April 2020	Notification to be sent to parents living in Central Bedfordshire who have submitted a late application that qualifies for consideration in the initial late allocation round.
21 April 2020	Late applications received on or after 17 March will be processed from this date.

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Appendix 4

Confirmation of religious affiliation – Church of England Schools

Please complete this form if you are applying for the any of the following schools **on religious/faith grounds:**

Manshead CE Academy, Edward Peake CofE Middle, Henlow CofE Academy, Holywell School, Ashton St. Peter's VA Primary, Clifton All Saints Academy, Dunton VC Lower, John Donne Primary, Meppershall CofE Academy, Northill VA Lower, Pulford VA Lower, St. Andrew's VC Lower (both East and West), St. Leonard's VA Lower, St. Mary's CofE Academy, St. Mary's VA Lower (Clophill), Sutton VA Lower, Thomas Whitehead CE Academy, Wrestlingworth VC Lower

To be completed by the parent/carer:

Child's surname _____ Child's name _____

Date of birth____/____/____

Address _____

School preferences (1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

To be completed by Priest, Minister or Faith Leader:

I can confirm that (name(s) of parent/carer) _____

Is/are a member/practising member of the following congregation/place of worship and meets the criteria for admission to _____ (name of school/s)

Name of priest/minister/faith leader_____

Name of congregation/place of worship_____

Christian denomination or religious faith _____

Signature of priest/minister/faith leader_____

Date_____

Return this completed form to the School Admissions Team, Central Bedfordshire Council, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable LU6 1LF or email it to: admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Appendix 4

Confirmation of religious affiliation – Catholic Schools

Please complete this form if you are applying for the any of the following schools **on religious/faith grounds:**

St. Mary's Catholic Primary (Caddington), St. Vincent's Catholic Primary

If your application for a place at the above Catholic primary schools is on religious grounds because your child has been baptised or enrolled in a catechumenate programme you must provide a copy of their baptismal certificate or your priest must confirm enrolment in the programme.

To be completed by the parent/carer:

Child's surname _____ Child's name _____

Date of birth____/____/____

Address _____

School preferences (1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

I have attached a copy of my child's baptismal certification: Yes ☐ No ☐

To be completed by Priest, Minister or Faith Leader:

I can confirm that (name(s) of parent/carer) _____

The family of this child is a practising Catholic family ☐

The child is not baptised but is enrolled in a catechumenate programme ☐

I support this application ☐

Name of priest/minister/faith leader_____

Name of congregation/place of worship_____

Christian denomination or religious faith _____

Signature of priest/minister/faith leader_____

Date_____

Return this completed form to the School Admissions Team, Central Bedfordshire Council, Watling House, High Street North, Dunstable LU6 1LF or email it to: admissions@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive **4 December 2018**

Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2018 - 2021

Report of: Cllr Richard Wenham, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources (richard.wenham@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director(s): Richard Carr, Chief Executive (Richard.Carr@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a decision that is Key

Purpose of this report

1. The report summarises progress in reviewing the Council's Equality Strategy and developing a refreshed Equality Action Plan 2018 – 2021.

RECOMMENDATIONS **The Executive is asked to:**	
1.	**support the adoption of the Equality Action Plan 2018 – 21; and**
2.	**recommend to Council adoption of the Equality Action Plan 2018 – 21.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

2. This report was considered by the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 November 2018, whose views will be reported at the meeting.

Background

3. The General Equality Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

4. The duty must be well integrated in the exercise of all public functions and decision - making processes. Decision-makers must understand the potential impact of their decisions and to identify potential mitigating steps to reduce or remove adverse impacts prior to a decision being made.

5. Public bodies are also required to regularly prepare and publish objectives to further the aims of the equality duty. The objectives must be specific and measurable.

6. The objectives focus attention on priority equality issues, to deliver improvements in policy-making, service delivery and employment, including resource allocation. The development of equality objectives should be carried out as part of the normal business planning processes.

7. Public bodies are required to regularly publish information to demonstrate compliance with the equality duty. This information must include, details relating to people who are its employees, and people affected by its policies and practices. This enables service users, staff, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), regulators etc., to assess the equality performance of the council.

8. Guidance also emphasises the importance of:

   - **embedding the equality duty into organisations -** taking steps to integrate equality into business planning processes, budget allocation, and planning development and approval.

   - **clear leadership -** senior staff and elected officials taking responsibility by building compliance into planning and partnership working and informing staff about their obligations. It can include designating clear staff roles, allocating resources, including equality targets in staff appraisals, and promoting equality in public communication. It is recognised as good practice to give operational responsibility for coordinating this work to staff at a senior level.

Update – Equality Strategy and Objectives

9. Progress in implementing the Council's previous equality strategy and accompanying action plan has been published on the website. http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council/equality/diversity.aspx

10. Equality objectives are now routinely identified as part of the Council's ongoing strategy and policy development and are also published on the website. The corporate equality objectives support the six Council priorities as identified in its Five Year Plan. The objectives include key, service specific goals identified through equality impact assessment processes. In this way equality objectives are mainstreamed across the organisation and refreshed on a regular basis.

11. A summary of the equality objectives is provided at Appendix A.

Update - Equality Action Plan 2018 - 21

12. In order to meet requirements relating to ongoing monitoring, workshops have been held across the Council to refresh the Equality Action Plan 2018 - 21. This helps the Council to review its commitment to and compliance with its statutory responsibilities. The action plan is divided into four sections based on the Local Government Association's Equality Standard for Local Government and is summarised below:

1) Strong Leadership (Championing Diversity, Identifying Objectives and Monitoring Outcomes)

- Identify equality objectives and embed these within strategy & organisational plans (including partnerships)
- Deploy democratic scrutiny process to actively challenge our approach to equality and diversity
- Support members in ensuring equality and diversity is embedded in policy development and decision making

2) Improved Outcomes for Vulnerable Groups

- Promote the development of inclusive and accessible design in planning, building control and asset development processes.
- Further integrate E&D considerations within business processes including programme & project management, service planning, audit, system development and procurement.
- Ensure consideration of equality is integral to core services including customer care, care management and housing application processes.
- Enhance quality and transparency in equality impact assessments
- Enhance quality and accessibility of insight to inform service development and performance monitoring

3) Good Recruitment and Management of a High Performing Workforce

- Shape learning and development opportunities to further enhance practice and outcomes on E&D issues
- Enhance our workforce intelligence
- Develop employment policies and procedures in the context of Equality Commission and ACAS guidance
- Effectively monitor and review HR policies to ensure compliance with equality duties

4) Improved Engagement, Civic Participation and Cohesion

- Develop and deploy channels for inclusive participation across council services and partnerships
- Promote positive relations and deal effectively with harassment and hate crimes
- Strengthen community and personal resilience for all residents
- Create environments which improve the participation of under-represented groups in civic and public life.

13. A full version of the action plan is provided as Appendix B to this report.

Reason/s for decision

14. To ensure that the Council complies with its statutory obligations.

Council Priorities

15. Section 2 of the report sets out the ways in which the achievement of equality objectives supports the delivery of Council priorities.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

16. The public sector equality duty is contained at Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act'). It provides that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to —
(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Financial and Risk Implications

17. The proposals contained within this report will be met within existing budgets.

18. The aim of equality legislation is to ensure that resources invested in public services actually benefit all those they are aimed at or who need them. When developing proposals and making policy decisions, including those about finance and service provision, public authorities must comply with their statutory equality duties by ensuring that decisions are made in such a way as to minimise unfairness, and that they do not have a disproportionately negative effect on different groups of people

19. Failure to comply with equality legislation can expose the Council to the risk of litigation and scrutiny by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission. Individual employees or voluntary organisations have also brought legal action against councils which have resulted in costly court judgements or out of court settlements

20. The development of a comprehensive, legally compliant Equality Strategy and Action Plan helps to ensure that the Council is meeting these requirements, addressing any risks and taking the appropriate mitigating actions.

Equalities Implications

21. 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.

22. The Equality Objectives and Action Plan 2018 -21 demonstrate the Council's awareness of all strands of equality legislation, the nature of inequality and the continued action that will be taken across the Council to address these issues.

Staffing (including Trades Unions)

23. The Council has specific employment duties which are set out in equality legislation. A variety of learning opportunities must also be provided so that councillors and employees are knowledgeable about equality from both a service delivery and employment perspective.

24. Work is ongoing with Human Resources to ensure proper consideration is given to equality and diversity in the development of the Council's employment and training practices and procedures.

Public Health

12. Good health is not only an asset in itself; it also enables people to further their careers, look after families, and pursue their other interests to the full. Evidence suggests, however, that there are some groups of people who are more likely than average to experience 'poor' health, and some who find it difficult to access care and support that meets their particular needs. The Council is therefore keen to ensure that the health needs of disadvantaged areas and vulnerable groups are addressed.

Community Safety

13. There are a range of issues and barriers that different groups experience in relation to community safety and equality. This can include violence against women and hate crime. The statutory agencies that make up the Community Safety Partnership which includes the Council have a legal duty to investigate and address such crimes.

Sustainability:

14. Compliance with equality legislation has a direct impact on a Council's ability to deliver against the sustainability agenda. Issues such as economic development, sustainable communities, quality of life and community cohesion are all factors which can be influenced by an individual's experience of inequality and discrimination.

Procurement:

15. When conducting procurement activities, public bodies must ensure they continue to meet their legal obligations under equality legislation. The degree of relevance to equality varies depending on the individual procurement activity. The Council's procurement processes have therefore been designed to ensure that appropriate consideration is given to these requirements.

Conclusion and next Steps

16. Central Bedfordshire Council is making good progress in ensuring that a robust approach is adopted to tackling inequality. The Council's Equality Strategy and action plan clearly articulate to partners, stakeholders, local communities and employees our commitments and direction of travel on this agenda.

17. The actions identified in Appendix B will help ensure the Council can continue to make progress in advancing equality of opportunity.

Appendices

Appendix A: Equality Objectives
Appendix B Equality Action Plan 2018 – 21
Appendix C: Overview and Scrutiny comments

Background Papers

None

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Appendix A – Summary of Equality Objectives

The Council's equality objectives have been developed with reference to equality challenges which have been identified by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in the document "Is Britain Fairer 2015": The Commission considered data and evidence based around *10 equality domains:*

Life - refrain from taking life, safeguard life, and investigate death.
Health – mortality, lifestyles and healthy living and patient experience
Physical security – freedom from torture, inhuman degrading treatment, promote dignity
Legal security - right to liberty and security of person
Education – access, attainment, exclusion, safety and emotional health, lifelong learning
Standard of living – housing, poverty & income, access to care, quality of local area
Productive, valued activities - trafficking & exploitation, employment, occupation, earnings
Individual, family and social life – support, domestic abuse, relationships, privacy
Identity, expression and self-respect - religion, belief, communication, stigma stereotyping
Participation, influence and voice – political and civil participation

The Council's equality objectives have been approved in the following strategies:

Priority 1 Enhancing Central Bedfordshire:

- **Central Bedfordshire Local Plan 2018 – 2035** - ensuring the growth is delivered in the right place, is of the right character and quality. It also ensures that growth is delivered with the supporting roads, schools and services such as health, as well as retail, leisure and community facilities. *(Standard of Living)*

- **Housing Strategy 2016 – 21** - focusses on key issues such as housing supply, affordability, an ageing population and the housing needs of vulnerable people *(Standard of Living)*

- **Superfast Broadband Extension Project 2017** - achieve a reasonable geographic spread across Central Bedfordshire. *(Standard of Living, Participation Influence and Voice)*

- **Local Transport Plan 4** - Improve connectivity to jobs and services – Create safe and attractive communities. *(Standard of Living)*

- **Passenger Transport Strategy 2016** – focus on Subsidised Public Transport, Concessionary Fares, Community Transport and Home to School Transport *(Education, Standard of Living, Productive Valued Activities)*

Priority 2: Delivering Great Resident's Services:

- **Leisure Facilities Strategy 2014** - provide a balanced and consistent approach to the provision of indoor sports for all ages and abilities, which takes into account all needs and demands. *(Health, Standard of Living)*

- **Physical Activity Strategy 2013-2017** - enable a coordinated network of high quality, accessible and affordable physical activity opportunities to meet the needs of residents now and into the future *(Health, Standard of Living)*

- **Outdoor Access Improvement Plan 2013 -2031** - Increasing use and enjoyment of the countryside for fresh air, relaxation, recreation, health and exercise. Includes a focus on improving and broadening access to the countryside. *(Health, Standard of Living, Participation)*

Priority 3: Improving Education and Skills:

- **Partnership Vision for Education 2016** - Improving the attainment and progression of all children. Facilitating the social mobility of vulnerable children. *(Education)*

- **All Age Skills Strategy 2016 – 2020** - ensuring that residents have opportunities to develop the skills needed for work. Reduced % of working age residents with no qualifications, reduced % of out of work benefit claimants and increased participation of 16 - 18 year olds and 19+ year olds in Apprenticeships. *(Education, Standard of Living, Productive Valued Activities)*

Priority 4: Protecting the Vulnerable, Promoting Well Being:

- **Children and Young People's Plan 2017 – 2020** - Reducing the number of children exposed to domestic abuse incidents, improving emotional health, wellbeing and resilience and improving educational outcomes. *(Life, Health, Physical Security, Education, Productive Valued Activities, Individual, Family & Social Life, Identity Expression & Self Respect, Participation Influence & Voice)*

- **Shared Vision (Education, Health and Social Care) for Children and Young People (0-25) from Central Bedfordshire with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2016** – Three overarching principles: 1. Co-production, working with parents/carers and young people to be a responsive service 2. Early intervention and high aspirations for all children and young people 3. Preparing for adulthood. *(as above)*

- **Central Bedfordshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Preparing for Adulthood Strategy (14-25) 2015** - Encourage young people to have aspirations and believe in what they can do and how much they can achieve. Enable young people to live healthy and fulfilling lives, supported by a range of local care and support services and accessible healthcare. *(as above)*

- **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment** - The need to increase healthy life expectancy and promote independence by increasingly 'mainstreaming prevention'. The need to reduce inequalities and disadvantage which can start from birth and the need to give mental and physical health parity
(Life, Health, Education, Standard of Living)

- **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy** - Ensuring good mental health and wellbeing at every age, giving every child the best start in life, enabling people to stay healthy for longer and improving outcomes for frail older people.
(Life, Health, Education, Standard of Living)

- **Sustainability and Transformation Plan 2016-2020** - develop a whole system approach to addressing the wider determinants of health, such as housing, economic development and education. Fostering greater collaboration between the NHS and local government, with patients and the public kept at the centre.
(Life, Health, Physical Security, Standard of Living)

- **Better Care Fund Plan 2017/19 0 2018/19** - Principles include prevention, early intervention, care closer to home, improving out of hospital services, securing integrated outcomes for people across physical, social and mental health.
(Life, Health, Physical Security, Standard of Living)

- **Market Position Statements** - relating to learning disabilities, mental health, physical disabilities, assistive technology and older people. The statements describe gaps in the current market and what service users / carers are saying they need from services. *(Life, Health, Physical Security, Standard of Living)*

- **Homelessness Strategy 2015 – 2020** - Improve provision of housing options & services to prevent and reduce homelessness. Increase Housing Supply to meet accommodation and support needs. Reduce use of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast. Minimise the impact of welfare reform, while assisting homeless people to access opportunities for employment, education and training.
(Standard of Living, Productive Valued Activities)

- **Housing Assistance Policy 2016** support residents to improve their health and wellbeing by addressing problems with substandard and/or unsuitable homes that do not meet individual needs. *(Life, Health, Physical Security, Standard of Living)*

- **Let's Rent Homelessness Prevention Offer 2017** - Prevent homelessness and increase the number of good quality affordable homes within the private sector.
(Health, Education, Standard of Living)

- **Empty Homes Strategy 2017 – 2022** - bring long-term empty homes back into use, increase the supply of decent housing options for homeless and vulnerable households. *(Health, Education, Standard of Living)*

Priority 5: Creating Stronger Communities:

- **Neighbourhood Planning** - establishing a vision for an area along with general planning policies relating to the development and use of land in a neighbourhood.
(Standard of Living, Participation, Influence and Voice)

- **Community Engagement Strategy 2013 – 16** - Supporting local people to engage, inform and influence decisions to help shape their communities.
(Standard of Living, Participation, Influence and Voice)

- **Advice Strategy 2016 – 2019** - services available to the whole community, and supporting vulnerable, marginalised or disadvantaged people and communities.
(Standard of Living, Individual Family and Social Life)

- **Helping Residents Deal with Welfare Reform** - Helping people back to work and those in low pay to progress, helping to stop homelessness, keeping homes safe and warm, help with paying council bills, providing information, advice and advocacy skills. *(Standard of Living, Individual Family and Social Life)*

- **Community Safety Partnership Priorities 2016 – 2019** - Protecting the Vulnerable – specially from modern day slavery, trafficking of human beings. Prevent Duty, tackle child sexual exploitation and dealing with Domestic Abuse.
(Life, Physical Security, Legal security, Standard of Living, Productive Valued Activities, Individual Family and Social Life)

- **Hate Crime Strategy 2016** - prevent hate crime from occurring via education, early help and intervention and raise awareness of hate crime, including how to report it and what support is available to victims.
(Life, Physical Security, Legal security, Standard of Living, Identity, Expression and Self-Respect)

- **CCTV Review 2017** - invest in a new multi-functional CCTV control room procure new HD cameras utilising wireless technology to improve image quality.
(Life, Physical Security)

Priority 6: An Efficient and Responsive Council

- **Customer Strategy 2014** - create an excellent experience of the Council for all residents by putting the customer at the heart of everything the Council does and ensuring nobody will be disadvantaged if they cannot or choose not to use digital services.
(Standard of Living, Productive Valued Activities, Individual Family and Social Life)

Further information available: equality objectives

Appendix B Equality Action Plan 2018 - 21			
1) Strong Leadership (Championing Equality in our Area, Identifying Objectives and Monitoring Outcomes)			
Action	**Detailed Actions**	**Action Owner**	**Timescale**
1.1 Promote equality and diversity at leadership level of the Council	**ONGOING –** Quality assure committee reports for due regard	Community Intelligence Manager	Ongoing
	ACTION – Review and amend the guidance for Committee Reports to enable more meaningful statements to be produced.	Head of Governance	2019
	ACTION – Improve the documents and processes that support good Policy making.	Head of Governance	2019
	ACTION – Design and deliver Leadership / Member equality training (see 3.3)	Head of Governance	2019
1.2 Identify appropriate Equality Objectives and monitor progress	**ACTION –** Embed equality impact assessment in all strategy and policy development	Head of Governance	2019
	ACTION – Promote the decision-making processes to Residents in order that they are better informed and able to take part.	Head of Governance	2019
1.3 Actively challenge the approach to equalities and diversity through overview and scrutiny	**ACTION –** Ensure Equality and Diversity issues included as part of the considerations for scrutiny challenge.	Head of Governance	2019
1.4 Embed equality and diversity objectives within organisational and partnership plans	**ACTION –** Improve the documents and processes that support strategy development	Head of Governance	2020

2) Improved Outcomes for Vulnerable Groups			
Action	**Detailed Actions**	**Action Owner**	**Timescale**
2.1 Impact assess all relevant service and employment planning, design and delivery processes.	**ACTION –** Discuss incorporating assessment of Equality & Diversity in Audit process.	Head of Audit	2019
	ACTION – Carry out Audit of Equality and Diversity across the council.	Head of Audit	2019 & 2021
	ACTION – Adopt corporate approach to Project Management that embeds E&D considerations in Project Initiation Documentation.	Head of Business Improvement and Performance	2018 - 2019
	ACTION – Investigate Service Planning process as an avenue for ensuring delivery of Equalities and Diversity considerations in Business As Usual.	Head of Knowledge and Insight	2020
	ACTION – Incorporate Equalities and Diversity considerations into Workforce Planning process.	AD - People	2019 -2020
	ACTION – Identify procurements with a significant Equalities and Diversity consideration and alert Community Intelligence Manager.	Head of Procurement	Ongoing
	ACTION – Produce an Equalities and Diversity Checklist for activities that do not warrant a full Equalities Impact Assessment.	Community Engagement Manager	2019
	ACTION – Promote the development of inclusive / accessible design in planning.	AD – Development & Infrastructure	2019 - 20
	ACTION – Promote the development of inclusive / accessible design in building control.	Head of Client Development Services	2019 - 20
	ACTION – Promote the development of inclusive / accessible design in asset development processes.	AD - Assets	2019 -20

	ACTION – Share SCHH Policy Toolkit with the rest of the organisation.	Policy and Performance Officer (SCHH)	2019
	ACTION - Assess extent to which housing application processes and procedures incorporate equality requirements	Assistant Director Housing Services	2019 -2020
	ACTION - Assess extent to which care management processes and procedures incorporate equality requirements	Associate Director of Integrated Operations	2019 -2020
	ACTION – Raise awareness and understanding of equality requirements across local schools.	Community Intelligence Manager	2019 -2021
2.2 Promote and quality assure Equality Impact Assessments in line with the Council's agreed protocol.	**ACTION –** Quality assure all EIAs	Community Intelligence Manager	Ongoing
	ACTION – Publish EIAs on our website.	Community Intelligence Manager	Ongoing
2.3 Gather evidence on the profile of communities and the extent of inequality and disadvantage	**ACTION –** Share evidence from the project to profile Houghton Regis to support the development of mapping and understanding differing needs across localities and communities	Assistant Director of Public Health and Head of Transformation & Resources	2019
	ACTION – Explore the further sharing of data between Directorates.	Head of Knowledge and Insight	2019 -20
	ACTION – Deliver information on the make-up of their communities to Quadrant Boards.	Community Intelligence Manager	2018 -20
	ACTION – Promote the Knowledge and Insight Service as the source of profile information.	Head of Knowledge and Insight	2019
2.4 Collect, share and use equality information with	**ACTION –** Explore further sharing of equality information with health partners.	Community Intelligence Manager	2019

partners			
2.5 Embed equality analysis as a requirement in all data system development in order to identify the extent to which all sections of the community are able to access services and achieve positive outcomes	**ACTION –** Use Data Miners Group to deliver a pilot project that includes E&D considerations, scope to be determined. **ACTION –** Ensure IT change projects that deliver new customer experience consider accessibility. **ACTION –** Explore methods to confirm that those with protected characteristics are equally satisfied with access to services. **ACTION –** Develop template to capture information at events to establish profile of attendees.	Head of Knowledge and Insight Chief Information Officer Community Intelligence Manager Community Engagement Manager	2019 Ongoing 2019 - 20 2020
2.6 Ensure consideration of equality is integral to customer care and complaints procedures	**ACTION –** Consider the delivery of a further Mystery Shopping exercise focusing on E&D groups. **ACTION –** Explore building in options to identify protected characteristics as part of complaints reporting. **ACTION –** Improve the understanding of the care home environment and the impact of that on individuals with protected characteristics. **ACTION –** Complete and enact the SCHH Prevention Strategy. **ACTION –** Work towards compliance with the Accessible Information Standard. **ACTION –** Identify and agree a preferred supplier for translation services.	Head of Knowledge and Insight Head of Customer Relations and Services Head of Contracts Head of Strategic Commissioning Head of Contracts Head of Procurement	2021 2020 2019 2019 2021 2020

3) Good Recruitment and Management of a High Performing Workforce			
Action	**Detailed Actions**	**Action Owner**	**Timescale**
3.1 Ensure human resource strategies and policies are in place to meet equality employment duties and secure a diverse and appropriately managed workforce.	**ACTION –** Ensure that the monitoring and reviewing is in place to continue to meet equality employment duties.	Head of HR Development	Ongoing
3.2 Assess employment policies and procedures to identify equality implications	**ACTION –** Continue to develop policies and procedures with reference to Equality Commission and ACAS guidelines.	Head of HR Development	Ongoing
3.3 Deliver a range of learning and development opportunities	**ACTION –** Design a new CBC E&D training unit for Foundation Learning. **ACTION –** Include the promotion of EIAs in the revised learning unit. **ACTION –** Include E&D as part of Foundation Learning. **ACTION –** Consider further units for Managers, Members and other groups, including harassment (see 1.1). **ACTION –** Create a single E&D Library of information including SCHH materials. **ACTION –** Use LMS to host E&D Library.	All actions owned by Head of HR Development	2019 2019 2019 2020 2020 2020
3.4 Monitor and analyse harassment & bullying incidents	**ACTION –** Develop analysis of data on harassment and bullying.	Head of HR Services	2020
3.5 Establish and maintain a range of inclusive structures and	**ACTION –** Seek feedback from Trade Unions to inform the approach.	Head of HR Development	Ongoing

mechanisms to engage and involve staff	**ACTION –** Promote Employee Assistance Programme focus subjects using monthly webinars. **ACTION –** Explore the development of an Equality Champions Network. **ACTION –** Investigate either a parallel internal Equalities Forum or the inclusion of staff on the current Equalities Forum.	Head of HR Development Community Intelligence Manager Community Intelligence Manager	2019 2019 -20 2020
3.6 Monitor and analyse all employment practices on a regular basis	**ACTION –** Review the available data that could be reported on protected characteristics. **ACTION –** Improve collection of data from staff relating to protected characteristics **ACTION –** Publish E&D monitoring reports annually. **ACTION –** Monitor completion of E&D learning unit.	Head of HR Services Head of HR Services Head of HR Services Head of HR Development	2019 2020 Ongoing Ongoing

4) Improved Engagement, Civic Participation and Cohesion			
Action	**Detailed Actions**	**Action Owner**	**Timescale**
4.1 Develop inclusive community engagement structures throughout the authority and its partnerships	**ACTION –** maintain the good number of community engagement groups. **ACTION –** Ensure that the developing Community Engagement Strategy reflects the Equalities and Diversity Strategy. **ACTION –** Ensure 'Suggest a topic' enables residents to ask Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider E&D issues.	Community Engagement Manager Community Engagement Manager Head of Governance	Ongoing 2019 2020

4.2 Ensure all service areas are consistent and inclusive in their approach to engagement and participation	**ACTION –** Share and join up existing engagement opportunities between Directorates.	Community Engagement Manager	Ongoing
4.3 Design internal, external and partnership communication strategies which promote good relations across all local communities.	**ACTION –** Continue to ensure the Council's approach to communications takes account of equalities issues and that branding guidelines and advice reflect diversity in terms of images and content. **ACTION –** Communicate changes to Social Care following central government activity.	Head of Communications Head of Quality Improvement and SOVA	Ongoing 2019 (dependent on Govt activity)
4.4 Deliver greater added value to our citizens by enabling individuals and groups to make decisions and deliver some services themselves.	**ACTION –** Continue the delivery of initiatives such as the Village Care Schemes and Social prescribing. **ACTION –** Ensure that the 4 Joint Committees account for Equalities and Diversity in their Terms of Reference. **ACTION –** Ensure that the Community Asset Transfer and Right to Bid Policies include Equalities and Diversity considerations.	Head of Strategic Commissioning Community Engagement Manager Community Engagement Manager	Ongoing 2020 2020
4.5 Establish and maintain structures within the authority and across partnerships to promote positive relations and deal effectively with harassment and hate crimes.	**ACTION –** Ensure staff and residents are aware of hate crime including how to recognise it and where to report it and how to signpost people to support. **ACTION –** Review the Hate Crime Partnership to improve effectiveness. **ACTION –** Build understanding and promote integration across diverse communities.	Head of Community Safety Head of Community Safety Head of Community Safety	2019 2019 2019 - 21

4.6 Maintain an effective forum of local experts focussing on equality and diversity issues	**ACTION –** Maintain the Equality and Diversity Forum. **ACTION –** Consider the best way to promote the work of the Equalities Forum across the Council	Community Intelligence Manager Head of Communications	Ongoing 2019 -20
4.7 Improve the participation of under-represented groups in civic and public life in particular with regard to disabled people	**ACTION –** Explore opportunities to support disadvantaged people through skills and employment, including through the council's contracted services and through planning obligations	Head of Investment, Employment and Skills	2019 -20
	ACTION – Explore opportunities for work experience and apprenticeships in the council for Looked After Children.	Head of HR Development	2020
	ACTION – Continue to promote inclusion and develop support for children and young people from marginalised groups such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual &Transgender, children with disabilities, Gypsies and Traveller communities and young carers	AD Business and Supporting Services	2019 -21
	ACTION – Continue with the development of the Physical Disability Forum.	Head of MANOP	Ongoing
	ACTION – Champion the Children's Voice	AD Business and Supporting Services	Ongoing
	ACTION – Influence the development of more disability suitable housing	Head of MANOP	Ongoing

Appendix C

Executive – 4 December 2018

Comments from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29 November 2018

Equality Strategy

Recommended

that the Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2021 be fully endorsed.

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Central Bedfordshire Council

EXECUTIVE **4 December 2018**

Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2019/20

Report of Cllr Richard Wenham, Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Corporate Resources (richard.wenham@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Charles Warboys, Director of Resources (charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) and Gary Muskett, Head of Revenues and Benefits (gary.muskett@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a Key Decision

Purpose of this report

1. The purpose of the report is for the Executive to review the Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme and address the requirement to recommend to Council the approach to Local Council Tax Support for 2019/20.

2. Review and approve the proposal, that the current 50% Empty Homes Premium as applied across Central Bedfordshire will be increased to 100% premium from 1 April 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. **review the Local Council Tax Support Scheme and recommend to Council that the current scheme be extended for a further year (2019/20), as set out in paragraph 21 below.**

2. **approve the proposal that the current 50% Empty Homes Premium as applied across Central Bedfordshire will be increased to 100% premium from 1 April 2019.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

3. The draft Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20 will be considered by the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 November 2018. Comments from this meeting will be attached at Appendix A.

Background

4. The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefit. Under the Local Government Finance Act 2012 local authorities had to design their own Local Council Tax Support scheme (LCTS) for working age customers and administer the national Council Tax Support scheme for pensioners. There were certain limitations on what local authorities could include in their schemes, for example, pensioners were protected.

5. Using the reduced money available, local authorities were required to design, consult upon and implement their own local scheme to replace the previous national scheme. However, despite the then 10% cut in the total funding, the Government required local authorities to protect claimants of pension age (approximately 44% of CBC claimants).

6. In January 2018 Council approved a Local Council Tax Support scheme for Central Bedfordshire for the financial year 2018/19. The scheme remained the same as that for 2017/18 and mirrored the previous entitlement under the old Council Tax Benefit system for all claimants except for:

- All working age claimants who do not fall into one of our vulnerable protected groups are required to make a 25% payment of their Council Tax liability.

  Vulnerable groups:

  a) Claimants receiving any of the disability premiums or a Disabled Earnings Disregard
  b) Claimants receiving Disabled Person's Reduction for Council Tax purposes
  c) Claimants receiving War Disablement Pension or War Widows Pension
  d) Single claimants receiving Carer's Allowance or receiving Carer's Allowance and have a partner who is also receiving Carer's Allowance
  e) Lone parent claimants with a child under the age of 5

  The qualifying benefits for Local Council Tax Support protection are:

  f) Attendance Allowance
  g) Constant Attendance Allowance
  h) Disability Living Allowance
  i) Personal Independence Payment
  j) Long Term Incapacity Benefit
  k) Severe Disablement Allowance
  l) The Support component of Employment and Support Allowance
  m) A Disabled Worker Element of within Working Tax Credit
  n) A Disabled Child Element with Child Tax Credit

o) The Mobility Supplement of a War Pension

- The removal of the Second Adult Rebate.
- The rate of Non-dependant deductions increased.

Pensioners have not seen any change to the support they receive.

7. The intention of the Central Bedfordshire Council scheme was to reduce the amount of Local Council Tax Support discount awarded from that paid under the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme to take into account the reduction in funding from Central Government. The current scheme ensures that every Council Tax payer pays at least 25% of their Council Tax bill unless they are a pensioner or they fall within one of our protected groups of claimants.

8. The current legislation states that Local Council Tax Support schemes must be reviewed by Members each financial year and approved by full Council no later than the 11 March preceding the start of the new financial year.

9. If there are changes to the current scheme, legislation states that these changes must be consulted upon. Minor changes such as uprating of premiums and applicable amounts are exempt from this consultation process.

Impact of Council Tax Support Scheme on Collection Rates

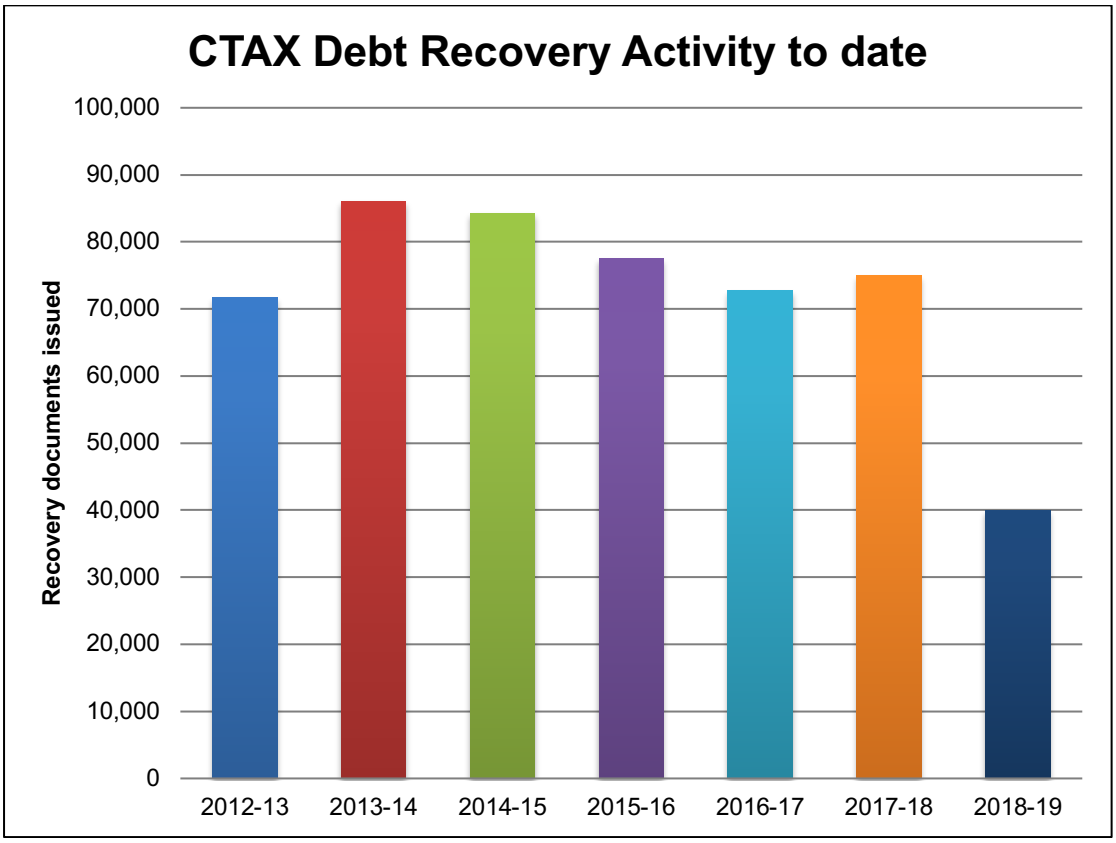
10. Central Bedfordshire Council collection performance for 2017/18 reduced slightly compared to the previous financial year. An in-year Council Tax collection rate of 97.95% was achieved which was a 0.05% reduction on 2016/17 levels. Collection rates for the first 6 months of the 2018/19 financial year are slightly down on the same period in 2017/18 which is mainly due to more and more residents choosing to pay their liability over 12 monthly payments which is continuing to affect our profiled income targets. This should not affect the full year collection rate, as it is a matter of timing.

11. The average collection rates for unitary authorities in 2017/18 were 96.9%, a reduction of 0.1% compared to 2016/17, and for all councils 97.1% in 2017/18. Central Bedfordshire therefore performed better than average on both measures.

12. In 2017/18 local authorities collected a total of £28.0 billion in Council Tax, irrespective of the year to which it related. This was an increase of £1.4 billion, or 5.2%, over 2016/17. During 2017/18, local authorities collected £602 million in Council Tax arrears and wrote off £170 million of uncollectable Council Tax.

13. In 2017/18 a total of 74,886 debt recovery documents were issued which was a 3% increase on 2016/17 levels. This increase can be attributed to our growing tax base (number of households). 10,082 Magistrates Court summonses were issued in 2017/18, an increase of 1,864 or 23% on 2016/17 levels. In 2017/18 the Council's Revenues Team dealt with about 48,000 phone calls from residents regarding payment of their Council Tax liability, an increased volume of about 2% on 2016/17 levels.

14. The chart below illustrates the level of Council Tax debt recovery activity from 2012/13 to 2018/19. Most of the increased debt recovery activity in 2013/14 can be attributed to the introduction of our LCTS scheme. The activity levels for 2018/19 are as at 30th September 2018.



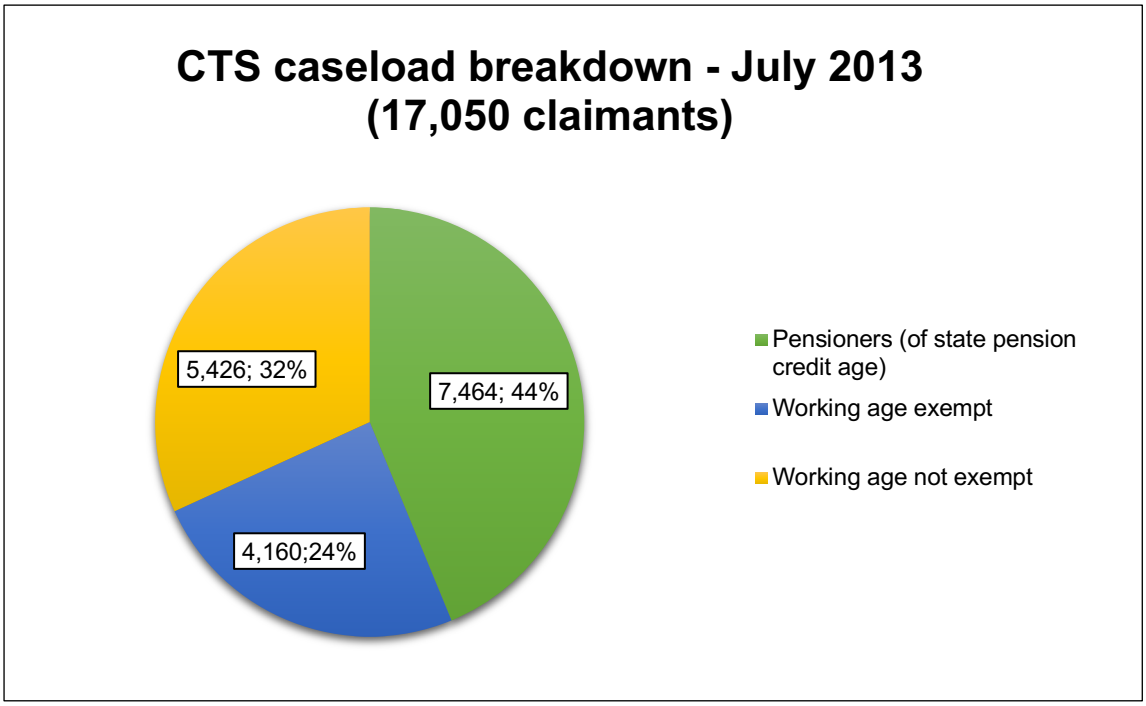
15. In 2017/18 Council Tax totalling £179.3m was collected compared to £168.9m in 2016/17, which was an increase of £10.4m. This reflects the growing tax base (number of households) and the increased levels of Council Tax charged. The average Council Tax charge in 2017/18 was £1,795. The average charge for 2018/19 is £1,876.

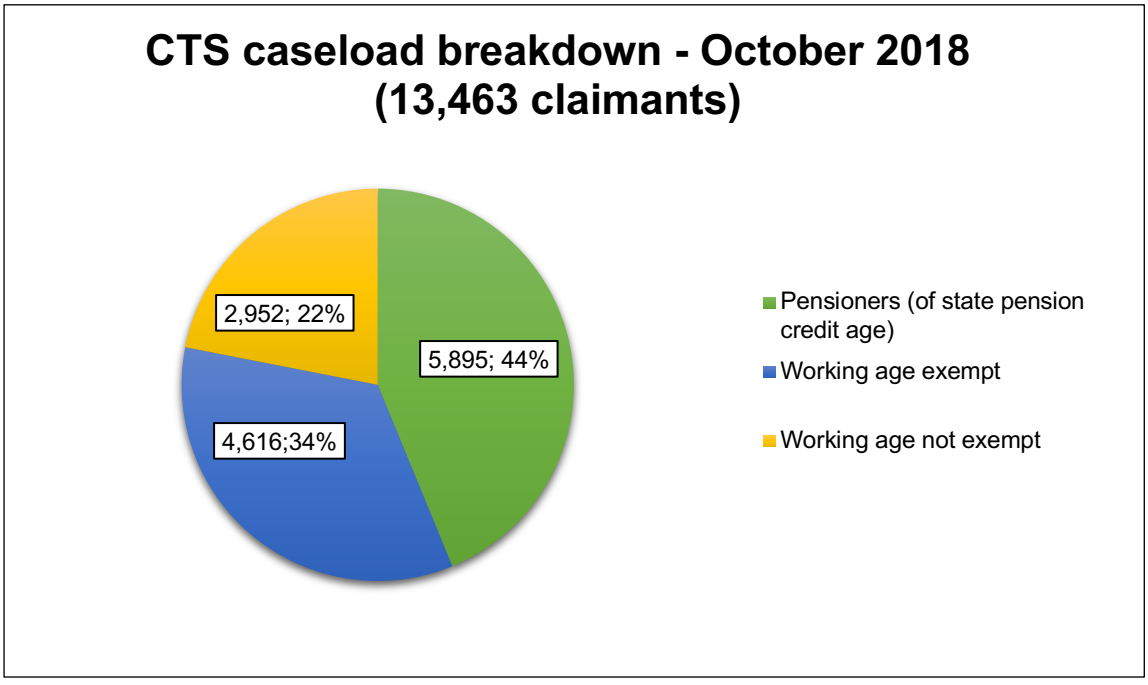
The Current Central Bedfordshire Council Scheme

16. Since the introduction of Local Council Tax Support the number of Central Bedfordshire Council claimants receiving LCTS has dropped by 24% or 4,204 claimants, from 17,667 in April 2013 to 13,463 in October 2018.

17. The case load can be separated into three distinct categories of claimants, Pensioners, Protected working age claimants and Non-Protected working age claimants who are required to pay a minimum of 25% of their Council Tax liability.

18. The charts below illustrate how the number of claimants in these three categories has changed since the scheme was introduced.





19. The number of pensioner claimants has reduced by 1,569 cases or 21%, working age exempt (protected) claims have increased by 456 or 11% and working age not exempt (required to pay 25%) have reduced by 2,474 or 46%.

20. The overall reduction in claimants can in the main be attributed to the improved economic climate although this does not explain the increase in working age exempt cases. Several other Councils in our benchmarking group have seen similar increases in their exempt cases, although there are no hard facts available to explain the increase.

The proposed scheme for 2019/20

21. It is proposed that the current scheme be readopted for 2019/20 with no changes being proposed. The personal allowances and premiums used in the calculations of Local Council Tax Support will continue to be aligned to the allowances and premiums used by the DWP in the award of state benefits.

Increase in Council Tax Empty Homes Premium – Reason for Recommendation

22. Under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 Councils were given flexibility around the Council Tax charged on second homes, empty dwellings and other technical changes. This included replacing certain previous exemption classes with discounts, the amount of which would be for the billing authority to determine.

23. To provide an incentive to landlords to ensure properties are occupied as soon as possible, Central Bedfordshire Council took a decision to remove all discounts on empty properties and to apply a 50% Council Tax premium to all properties that have been empty and unfurnished for 2 years or over. The premium is in addition to the usual Council Tax charge that applies to the property.

24. The premium cannot apply to homes that are empty due to the occupant living in armed forces accommodation for job-related purposes, or to annexes being used as part of a main property.

25. A total of 291 out of 326 Councils applied an Empty Homes Premium in 2017 to 2018. All but 3 are charging the premium at the maximum 50% rate.

26. In the November 2017 Budget the Chancellor announced the Government's intention to bring forward legislation to increase the maximum premium on the normal level of Council Tax to 100% on long term empty properties. Such properties are defined as those that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over 24 months.

27. Councils will be able to charge 100% premiums from April 2019, 200% premiums from April 2020 for homes that have been empty for between 5 and 10 years and 300% premiums from 2021 for homes empty for 10 years or more. The necessary legislation to enable the increased premiums received Royal Assent on 1 November 2018.

28. The number of properties that have been subject to the 50% Empty Homes Premium is shown below together with an estimate of the amount of additional Council Tax that might be raised as a result of imposing the 100% premium from April 2019.

Financial Year	No. of Properties Subject to the Premium	Additional Council Tax Raised
2013/14	380	£169,104
2014/15	316	£146,296
2015/16	287	£135,654
2016/17	273	£145,534
2017/18	226	£165,547
2018/19	186	£165,215
2019/20	150	£266,000

29. Consultation on changes to the level of the Empty Homes Premium is not technically required which has been confirmed by MHCLG and we did carry out a consultation in 2012 when the original Empty Homes Premium was being considered.

30. Council Tax policies need to be approved before the start of the financial year and incorporated within the Council's annual tax base calculation. The earliest any changes to the Empty Homes Premium could be implemented is from 1st April 2019 onwards.

Options for consideration

31. None.

Reasons for decision

32. So that Full Council can endorse the Central Bedfordshire Council Local Council Tax Support scheme. If the scheme is not approved by 11 March 2019, the Council will have to award Local Council Tax Support in accordance with the Government's default scheme which will result in the cost of the scheme significantly exceeding that of the Local Council Tax Support scheme.

33. So that the Council Tax Discretionary Discounts Policy can be updated to increase the level of premium applied to all property that has been empty and substantially unfurnished for over 2 years to 100%.

Reason for urgency

34. None

Council Priorities

35. By protecting vulnerable and elderly people as well as providing incentives to work, the proposed Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme is designed to support the Council's Medium-Term Plan priorities of:
    - Protecting the vulnerable and improving wellbeing.
    - Improving education and skills

Corporate Implications

Risk Management

36. The transfer from Council Tax Benefit to localised Council Tax Support means the impact of increased demand and cost will be a risk for all preceptors.

37. The Council and its precepting partners, the Police and Fire authorities, will need to monitor closely local social and economic changes and ensure there is a consideration of the impact of possible future shortfalls in funding.

Staffing

38. The introduction of a local CTS scheme has led to a significant increase in the number of residents who have contacted the Council. These contacts have mainly been to the Revenues and Benefits teams and Customer Services.

Legal Implications

39. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 and the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) states that for each financial year, Councils must consider whether to revise their Council Tax Support scheme or replace it with another scheme and that such decisions need to be made by 11 March in the financial year preceding that for which the revision or replacement scheme is to take effect. If the Council does not make a Council Tax Support scheme by 11 March 2019, a default scheme will be imposed on the Council which will be effective from April 2019.

40. The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Bill received Royal Assent on 1 November 2018.

Financial Implications

41. The gross Local Council Tax Support discount awarded within Central Bedfordshire in 2018/19 is presently £13,774,854 on an annualised basis, which is a 1.7% increase on the same period last year.

42. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan assumes that the current scheme will continue with no additional savings planned to be met by scheme changes in 2019/20.

Equalities Implications

43. 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.

44. A full equality assessment was conducted as part of the approval process for the 2013/14 Council Tax Support Scheme to ensure that due regard was given to the impact of the scheme on the Council's residents, particularly those who are vulnerable and hard to reach.

45. It is not considered that the proposed change to the level of the Empty Homes Premium will affect the protected groups any differently to those who are not in a protected group.

Conclusion and next Steps

46. Approval is being sought to keep the local Council Tax Support scheme unchanged for 2019/20 and;

47. To increase the Empty Homes Premium to 100% with effect from 1 April 2019.

Appendices

48. Appendix A – Overview and Scrutiny Comments.

Background Papers

49. None.

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Appendix A

Executive – 4 December 2018

Comments from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29 November 2018

Council Tax Support Scheme

Recommended

1. **That, as permitted by the new Government Legislation,**

    - **from 1 April 2019 100% premium be applied to homes that have been empty and substantially unfurnished for 2 years and**
    - **from April 2020 a 200% premium be applied for homes that have been empty for between 5 and 10 years, and**
    - **from April 2021 300% premium be applied for homes empty for 10 years or more.**

2. **That the Head of Revenues and Benefits reports on the outcome of this new legislation annually in the Local Council Tax Support Scheme report.**

3. **That subject to the above, the Local Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20 be endorsed.**

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive **4 December 2018**

Voluntary and Community Sector Funding Review – Phase 1

Report of: Cllr John Chatterley, Task Force Chairman (john.chatterley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Sarah Hughes, Community Partnership Manager (sarah.hughes@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Paula Everitt, Scrutiny Policy Adviser (paula.everitt@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Purpose of this report

To provide Members with the outcomes of the scrutiny task force review into voluntary and community infrastructure funding in Central Bedfordshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1.	**consider the report and recommendations of the enquiry attached at Appendix A; and**
2.	**respond to the report within two months indicating what actions, if any, it proposes to take and if it decides to take no action, the reasons for that decision.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments

1. The Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the Task Force recommendations at their meeting on 29 November 2018. The comments from the meeting are attached at Appendix B.

Background

2. At their meeting on 20 September 2018 Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to form a task force with the purpose to review the relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector organisations and determine the best solution to support them.

The scope of the review would also look at the nature and characteristics of the relationship between CBC and the voluntary and the community sector, how it is supported, its relevance and importance in the context of our corporate priorities, government policy and community outcomes.

3. In particular to focus on funding the role of the VCS Infrastructure organisations (Phase 1).

4. Members of the task force gathered evidence from a variety of sources including representatives of the three VCS Infrastructure Organisations, officers from each of the Council's directorates, national guidance and best practice in order to support the findings of the review.

Corporate Implications

5. The recommendations of the enquiry are aimed to support the Council's approach to Building Strong and Resilient Communities and Great Universal Services

Legal Implications

6. There are no direct or immediate legal implications arising from this report.

7. Infrastructure organisations support and encourage the wider voluntary and community sector on a range of capacity building needs. Their services comprise the provision of advice and information including funding searches, constitutions, policies, charity registration, community buildings, insurance and charity bank accounts, management and governance. Training on a range of issues including safeguarding; GDPR, volunteer recruitment, placement and support; sector representation and brokerage; and community development activity thereby helping the sector to develop and thrive and operate legally.

Financial and Risk Implications

8. The report is recommending that funding of £69,000 for the forthcoming financial year (2019/20) be allocated. This funding is not within the current MTFP so it will be an additional pressure.

Equalities Implications

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. The primary purpose of voluntary organisations is to create social impact rather than profit. As a whole, voluntary organisations engage with a huge range of issues – from youth clubs to specialist medical research. Most focus on a particular issue that needs solving such as community transport or unaffordable housing.

Others focus on a specific group in society who require support and representation, such as disabled people or women facing domestic abuse . Voluntary organisations achieve their aims through a wide range of activities, such as providing services or other forms of direct support and advice to the groups they help.

11. Volunteering also has positive individual impacts in terms of helping residents access future employment opportunities and engaging in meaningful activity, e.g. after retirement. Volunteering and active engagement can also prevent social isolation.

12. Infrastructure organisations support and encourage the wider voluntary and community sector (VCS) on a range of capacity building needs, helping the sector to develop and thrive. A reduction in the capacity of the local infrastructure organisations could have a negative impact in the following ways:

    - put at risk community cohesion as well as contracts and arrangements CBC and other organisations have with VCS organisations
    - impact on Good Neighbour Schemes and support to community building committees
    - VCSE organisations will find it harder to recruit, train, support and manage volunteers
    - Loss of oversight of capabilities and needs of local groups to promote high quality services
    - More challenging for residents to access the range of formal volunteering opportunities and get support to volunteer and choose the right opportunity.
    - Central Bedfordshire Council will find it harder to engage and consult with the local VCSE sector when they are required to do so.

13. 40% of local volunteering enquiries come from deprived households.

Conclusion and next Steps

14. The Committee is asked to consider and support the recommendations in the Phase 1 report so they may be referred to Executive. That Phase 2 of the review start in December 2018 and be reported to Corporate Resources OSC in March 2019.

15. If the recommendations are supported, it is suggested that the Committee requests an update from the Executive on the implementation of the recommendations within 6 months of their consideration in March next year.

Appendix A: VCS Funding Task Force Report

Appendix B: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Comments

Report authors:

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www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Appendix A

Voluntary and Community Infrastructure Organisations Funding Review Phase One

Chairman's Introduction

This Task Force review is being undertaken in two phases:-

- Phase 1 covers VCS infrastructure challenges - October/November 2018
- Phase 2 is a broader review of CBC's relationship with the VCS sector – and will follow in early 2019.

Therefore, this initial report covers the review and findings for Phase 1

At the Corporate Resources OSC held on 20th September the meeting received presentations and supporting reports from three VCS organisations:-

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC)
Community and Voluntary Services (CVS)
Community Action Bedfordshire (CAB)

Central Bedfordshire Council have always valued the services from the many Central Bedfordshire charities and their volunteers.
In 2016 it was agreed that the CBC continue supporting the VCS infrastructure organisations helping to achieve key outcomes in our towns and villages where:-

- People are supported to help themselves and others
- People of all ages be encouraged to volunteer
- Residents, community groups and town and parish councils have opportunities to do more in and for their communities.

This infrastructure grant funding was agreed for a period of three years, ending in March 2019

It was felt in 2016 that these organisations should become self-supporting at the end of the agreement.

These VCS organisations continue to provide individuals and other community groups with networking opportunities, training, specialist advice and information that becomes a vital bridge between residents, organisations and with Central Bedfordshire Council.

They reported that their work within communities had increased during the past three years and would face serious challenges if further funding was not sourced to cover infrastructure.

It was therefore agreed at Corporate Resources OSC to set up a task force to look at the relationship between CBC and the VCS organisations and ways of assisting and supporting these organisations in the future.

Cllr John Chatterley
Task Force Chairman

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	Attached Appendices pack.

Background to the Task Force Review

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (CR OSC) commissioned the review following presentations at their meetings held July and September 2018 from Citizens Advice organisations in Central Bedfordshire and the Voluntary and Community sector Infrastructure organisations (VCS). The presentations and supporting statements are attached (**appendices 1-3**) The current funding agreement with the VCS Infrastructure organisations ends in March 2019, see appendix 4 and a reduction in funding for Citizen Advice (CA) starts in 2020. In view of this the Committee felt urgent consideration of the situation was needed and agreed a task force review.

Purpose of the Task Force Review

The purpose of the VCS review is to look at Central Bedfordshire Council's relationship with the voluntary and community sector, the role and contribution of the infrastructure support organisations and whether funding can be found from within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), explore the nature and characteristics of the relationship with the wider voluntary and community sector, how it is supported, its relevance and importance in the context of our corporate priorities, government policy and community outcomes. The review is to be completed in two phases.

Phase 1 of the review looks specifically at the future funding of the three Infrastructure Organisations and deliver a report to Corporate Resources OSC at its meeting on 29 November 2018 and subsequently to Executive on 04 December 2018.

Phase 2 will be a bigger review that will look at CBC's relationship with the wider voluntary and community sector including the role of Citizen's Advice in that relationship and how the relationship helps the Council to deliver against its corporate priorities and the biggest risks to community cohesion.

The Task Force, comprising two Corporate Resources Members, were appointed to undertake the first phase of the review.

What is the role of Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Organisations?

Infrastructure organisations support and encourage the wider voluntary and community sector (vcs) on a range of capacity building needs helping the sector to develop and thrive. Their services comprise the provision of advice and information including funding searches, constitutions, policies, charity registration, community buildings, insurance and charity bank accounts, management and governance. Training on a range of issues including

safeguarding; GDPR, volunteer recruitment, placement and support; sector representation and brokerage; and community development activity.

There are 3 infrastructure organisations operating in Central Bedfordshire

- Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity
- Community Action Bedfordshire
- Community and Voluntary Services.

What are the issues?

The challenge for Phase 1 of the review was to explore the impact and implications of ending the funding agreement with the Infrastructure organisations and whether this could be mitigated within the current MTFP. Members of the OSC felt that an 'invest to save' approach should be explored following the presentations from the VCS Infrastructure organisations which explained their role and contribution to build strong and resilient communities through supporting community and voluntary sector organisations and volunteer effort. Citizens Advice informed Members of their contribution to supporting vulnerable adults and families with a range of advice and support and their contribution to the public purse. Phase 2 of the review will explore the nature of the relationship between CBC and the voluntary and community sector for example where it assists the Council to meet its statutory obligations, corporate objectives and tackle the risks to community cohesion and consider what needs to be in place to sustain the relationship.

Funding arrangements - how CBC is supporting this role.

The core funding to the 3 infrastructure organisations is administered through a single grant agreement which was set up in 2016 and is worth £213,400 over 3 years (it averages at £23,000 to each organisation per annum). The grant funding contributes to their core and overall running costs and enables them to secure other funding from the delivery of contracts.
The VCS Infrastructure organisations knew the funding agreement would end in March 2019 and were allowed flexibility to flatline the funding over the 3 years to maintain a consistent service over the 3 years.

The funding agreement (below) ends in March 2019.

Year	£Value
Year One 2016 / 17	£98,133.79
Year Two 2017 / 18	£71,133.79
Year Three 2018 / 19	£44,133.79

Outcomes – the role in supporting 'Building Strong and Resilient Communities.

The three infrastructure organisations attend quarterly review meetings and supply a written report every 6 months against outcomes described in their Funding Agreement **(appendix 4).**

The grant funding supports the three organisations to deliver services to other organisations and/or the public. The Grant helps the Council to achieve the key outcomes in the Council's Five Year Plan ensuring Towns and Villages are sustainable places where:-

- Residents are supported to help themselves and others
- Residents of all ages will be encouraged to volunteer and
- Residents, community organisations and town and parish councils have the opportunity to do more in and for their communities.

The table below demonstrates the 'immediate' outcomes achieved by the infrastructure organisations over 2 years of their grant, whilst the 'ultimate' impact and true value of the outcomes is felt by the vcs and volunteer organisations they have supported.

Outcome	Performance 2016/17 17/18
O 1 - Increase the number of people volunteering **O 2 - Increase the amount of volunteering individuals do**	1497 enquiries brokered and 241 volunteers placed
O 3 - Communities doing more for themselves **O 4 - Communities delivering local services**	12 new groups set up, 229 groups supported with advice and technical assistance 600 households supported through online social platform Community led planning, local greenspace enhancement,
O 5 - Community enablers and active citizens **O 6 - Maximise the use of physical assets to support local communities**	56 community building committees given advice

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charities (BRCC) delivers community development across Bedfordshire. They support town and villages in Central Bedfordshire and help to run schemes to build local communities and create resilient and self-sustaining areas. They are affiliated to the national Action with Communities in Rural England network and provide a range of advice

and support to villages to manage their community buildings on a sustainable footing.
The additional schemes currently run by BRCC on behalf of the Council include:-

- 38 Good Neighbour/village care schemes. £46,880 grant payment has been allocated to Good Neighbour Schemes, volunteers and staff community connectors by Adult Social Care.
- Green infrastructure projects such as Biggleswade Greenwheel funded by S106 (circa £176,000 In 207/18)
- Support to parishes preparing Neighbourhood Plans and Housing Needs Assessments (£4,000 and which levers additional support from parish councils)
- A new social prescribing project- supported by Adult Social Care and NHS

Community Action Bedfordshire provides a volunteer engagement, placement and support service, community development, advice and information to the voluntary / community sector.

Community Action has developed new areas of expertise that include the management of a community facility on Sandhills new estate in Leighton Buzzard and associated community mobilisation as well as supporting long term unemployed and those struggling to access the labour market.
More recently Community Action have secured a contract with Leighton-Linslade Town Council to manage a community café and are seeking investment (S106) or loan finance to equip and refurbish the community facility.
Other contracted work on behalf of CBC includes:

- support to unemployed to access training and employment funded by CBC's Bedfordshire Employment and Skills Service).
- Timebanking project supported by £15,000 grant from CBC SCHH

Community and Voluntary Service (CVS) supports the sector in Central Bedfordshire and Bedford. This support includes a bi – monthly newsletter to over 1,000 local organisations and contacts with funding updates, forthcoming training, events and meetings, partnership information and news relevant to local vcs organisations such as employment opportunities or local campaigns. They deliver outreach sessions to promote volunteering and volunteer campaigns e.g. the recent Volunteer into Care campaign. They provide Impartial advice and information on tendering, legal agreements, commissioning and procurement support and represent the sector in partnership arenas.

CVS and CA working collaboratively, recently supported vcs organisations to access the Councils community grant scheme funded by the Better Care Fund. It was effective by enabling smaller groups to come forward with innovative ideas to support vulnerable people.

What is the national context for supporting VCS Infrastructure?

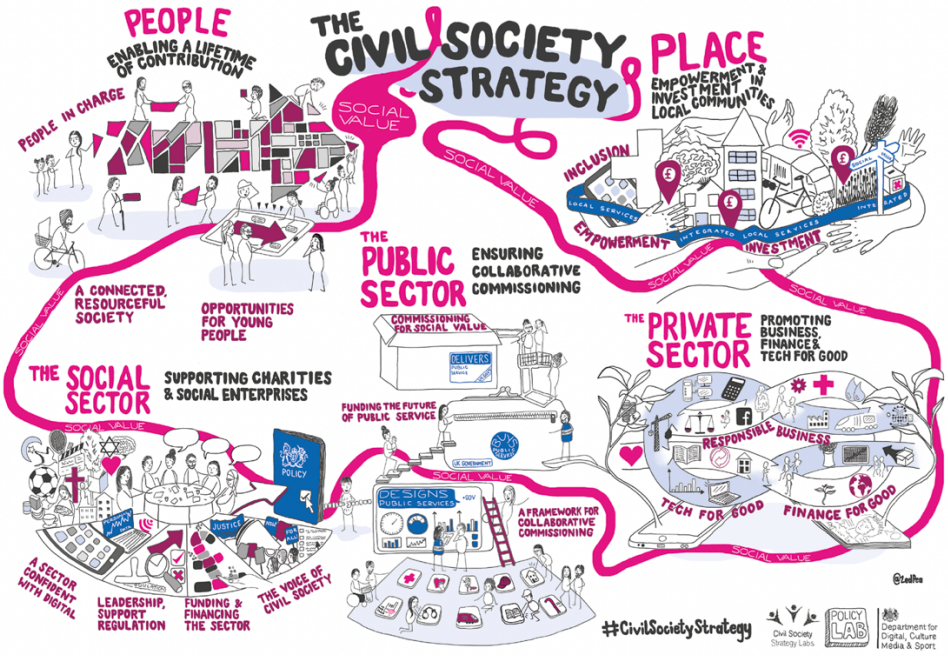
The Government published its Civil Society Strategy [1]– Building a Future that works for everyone, in the summer of 2018.

The Government defines Civil Society as *referring to individuals and organisations when they act with the primary purpose of creating social value, independent of state control. Enriched lives and a fairer society for all.*

The government are beginning an ambitious, evolving work programme to help build a strong society based on Five Foundations

- People
- Places
- Social sector
- Private sector
- Public sector

More time is needed to review the 123 page strategy and the task force recommend that it should be referred to phase 2 of this review and explore the impact of the Strategy and the role for infrastructure organisations to assist in developing or delivering the work programme at the local level.



[1] Civil Society Strategy
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732765/Civil_Society_Strategy_-_building_a_future_that_works_for_everyone.pdf

What are other Local Authorities doing to support VCS Infrastructure

Task Force undertook a web based review of those Authorities that lead the way in their support of the voluntary sector and reviews undertaken to support Infrastructure organisations.

Cornwall's voluntary sector forum embraces all aspects of voluntary and community work.

Warwickshire are set up in a similarly way to Cornwall and details are available on their website.

North Yorkshire have completed a Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure support review .

The King's Fund's advice on the role of the voluntary and community sector in health and care.

An approach adopted by Manchester and the consultation work undertaken on funding for the voluntary and community sector.

Evidence gathering

Voluntary and Community Infrastructure organisations were visited by the Task Force on the following occasions: -

Date	Occasion	
04 October 2017	Task Force Meeting	
15 October 2018	• Tracy Cowan and Cliff Andrew Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity	Visit
16 October 2018	• Martin Trinder and Jane Owens Community and Voluntary Service	Visit
16 October 2018	• John Gelder Community Action Bedfordshire	Visit
30 October 2018	• Task Force Meeting with Officers	
06 November 2018	• Task Force Meeting	

At each visit the task force posed a series of questions (**appendix 5**) to better understand their role and contribution to CBC priorities in particular building stronger and resilient communities and the implications of the ending of the funding agreement and the implications of ending the funding agreement. The summary findings of each interview are set out below:

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity

- Collaborates with other infrastructure organisations and prevents duplication and enables clear roles and expertise
- Receives core grant funding and enables it to access to other funding sources (Parish Councils, charges, S106 funded projects, CBC contracts e.g. Good Neighbour Scheme and Social Prescribing)
- Nurtures and supports significant volunteer effort circa 1000+ across Central Beds.
- Community / Village Hall advice service at risk

Community and Voluntary Service

- There is no national funding for infrastructure organisations.
- Is the result of 4 mergers between 2006-2009.
- Receives core grant funding from BBC, Harper Trust, LBC and rent income from building
- Does not compete for vcs contracts to maintain their support role.
- Provides Volunteer brokerage service (recruitment and placement)
- Provides key service area - Funding and Governance advice and information to VCS.
- Provides leverage helping the VCS to attract some £200,000 of external funding per annum.

Community Action Bedfordshire

- Other funding sources under contract include BESS/LBC but end in March 2018/2019
- CA will face significant financial challenges and possible closure
- Provides a Volunteer brokerage role
- Delivers specific projects – Timebanking , Café Connect
- Won tender to deliver Kiosk in the park £110,000 capital investment needed
- CBC will lose volunteer brokerage, advice and information to safeguard the community / voluntary sector and risk reputational damage
- Need £23,000 core funding to maintain a service

Grants / Contracts to VCS Infrastructure

As part of the review the Task force undertook an analysis of grants and contracts held by CBC with the VCS Infrastructure organisations in 2017/18 and 2018/19

Directorate	Infrastructure organisation	Contract / Grant	Amount 2017/18
Business and Regeneration	Community Action	Work Club	£41,025 (completed)
Business and Regeneration (S106)	BRCC	Cycleways and Green Infrastructure	£175,816.92 (Ongoing)
Business and Regeneration	CVS	Youth Volunteering contract	£55,800 (completed)

Business and Regeneration	BRCC	Neighbourhood Planning support	£5,000
SCHH	Community Action	Time-banking	£15,000
SCHH	BRCC	Good Neighbour scheme	£46,880
SCHH	Community Action	VCS support	£7,500 (completed)
SCHH	CVS	VCS Support	£3,000 (completed)

Directorate	Infrastructure organisation	Contract / Grant	Amount 2018/19
Business and Regeneration	Community Action	Café Connect	£62,000
Business and Regeneration (S106)	BRCC	Cycleways and Green Infrastructure	On going
Business and Regeneration	BRCC	Neighbourhood Planning support	£5,000
SCHH	BRCC	Good Neighbour scheme & pilot Social Prescribing	£106,880
SCHH	Community Action	Timebanking	£15,000

What are the key elements of the Infrastructure role we value most?

The core funding which contributes to core running costs, enables each organisation to bid for other pieces of work

- **Market place**
  CBC relies significantly on the infrastructure organisations as demonstrated by the table above. Furthermore, the Directorates commission a range of services from the wider voluntary and community sector and this market place of voluntary and community organisations and micro enterprises is supported by the Infrastructure organisations that is well connected to and can respond to requests, tenders, grants for work. Importantly Council officers and Councillors make referrals to these organisations when contacted for advice and guidance by vcs organisations.

- **Volunteering**
  The Infrastructure organisations maintain banks of volunteers and ongoing contact connecting them to volunteering activities in local communities and within local groups as well as within Central Bedfordshire Council. Volunteers are engaged in our Libraries and Country Parks, Community Transport providers.
  This is very much consistent with the Councils desire to support and celebrate more volunteering e.g. through the annual Cheering Volunteering Awards and celebration event.

- **Brokerage and representation**
  VCS Infrastructure acts as a broker with the rest of the sector helping to create and sustain collaborative working, networks, relationships, connections between organisations, groups and communities.

- **Setting up /Training / Management and Governance**
  VCS Infrastructure help organisations respond to local needs and issues by supporting how to set up a group, legal status, if required - DBS checks, governance and accountability and funding advice.
  Training is provided for example on compliance with GDPR and safeguarding , therefore helping the sector to stay safe in how it operates.
  Central point for wider sector, trusted by sector.

- **Added Value and skills**
  VCS infrastructure is supporting the wider sector of community groups, voluntary organisations and micro- enterprises which are essential to the wellbeing of our communities helping to ensure ongoing cohesion, resilience and self reliance within our communities.

Impact of not supporting the Infrastructure role

The impact of CBC not supporting the infrastructure role through core grant funding was described by the organisations in their presentations to the OSC. The lack of a strategic infrastructure role would have implications for delivery of the Councils priorities, in particular reduced capacity of communities in Central Bedfordshire to be resilient and to do things for themselves, stability for the contracted services supporting vulnerable groups in our communities, the leverage of external funding and volunteer effort. Specifically, the impact of no VCS Infrastructure in Central Bedfordshire may result in the following scenarios;

- Negative impact on Good Neighbour Schemes and support to community building committees
- CVS will stop coverage in Central Bedfordshire
- CA will face significant financial challenges and possible closure.
- Overall a loss of skills, expertise, community insight and local knowledge

- Up to £145,000 of local funding over three years not secured by Central Bedfordshire based VCS organisations.
- A weakened voluntary and community sector forced to access support outside of Central Bedfordshire, incurring greater costs.
- No local support to advise on correct legal structures for the services that groups wish to provide.
- Groups and volunteers would perhaps default to CBC and other statutory services for support and volunteer brokerage
- VCSE organisations will find it harder to recruit, train, support and manage volunteers if they do not have good practice systems and processes in place.
- Loss of interface with the voluntary and community sector.
- Loss of voice for the voluntary sector and representation.
- Reputational damage
- CBC will see a rise in enquiries for funding which CBC staff will have to resource and manage, more than 50 organisations are supported each year.
- Barriers to smaller organisations and groups from engaging with the public service commissioning process
- Fewer VCSE organisations will be aware of local adult and children safeguarding arrangements. Greater risk of appropriate safeguarding alerts not being made.
- CBC staff will need to increase the level of outreach they provide in order to fulfil their duty (Children's Act 2004) to 'promote cooperation' with relevant organisations 'that are engaged in activities in relation to children in the authority's area.'
- Loss of oversight of capabilities and needs of local groups to promote high quality services driven by good governance and strategic change management e.g. when funding models change from grant to personalisation
- More challenging for Central Bedfordshire residents to be aware of and access the range of formal volunteering opportunities and get support to volunteer and choose the right opportunity.
- Central Bedfordshire Council will likely find it harder to engage and consult with the local VCSE sector when they are required to do so. Additional staff time will be required in order to undertake any engagement or consultation.

Options considered for supporting VCS Infrastructure within the MTFP

As a result of the review a number of options emerged that could help to maintain the relationship with VCS Infrastructure in the short and longer term and these are listed below.
If agreed these should be carried forward and researched in Phase 2 of the VCS Review.

- Merger of the three organisations to save on overheads and running costs is unrealistic given their individual uniqueness and specialisations. However further specialisation in and commissioning of service delivery should be explored to avoid duplication and to ensure the biggest risks to community cohesion are addressed.
- An Asset led approach such as rent holidays or asset transfer should be explored to maximise social value.
- An efficient means of securing contributions from other organisations e.g. Parishes/ NHS should be explored
- Other 'in kind' assistance from CBC such as collecting funds from parishes enabling them and groups in their areas to access Infrastructure and Citizens Advice support at any time.
- In recognition of government aspirations in the Civil Society strategy explore Spacehive / Crowd funding as a means to engage the private sector in VCS activity.

Conclusion

Phase 1

- The VCS Infrastructure organisations help to ensure a local thriving and robust voluntary sector without which could have a significant impact on the viability and performance of the wider community and voluntary sector, potentially putting at risk community cohesion as well as contracts and arrangements CBC and other organisations have with VCS organisations.
- As a result of their investigations the Task Force were able to identify that £69,000 per annum (based on current financial arrangement of £23,000 per organisation per annum) would provide sufficient funds to maintain the current level of infrastructure support to VCS groups in Central Bedfordshire, for 12 months only for the period April 2019 – March 2020 whilst Phase 2 is undertaken.
- S106- Welcome Packs / Community Facility funding could support community development activity in new communities.
- Therefore, the Phase 2 review is required to look at the relationship between CBC and the voluntary and community sector, how it is supported, its relevance and importance in the context of our corporate priorities, government policy, community cohesion and community outcomes to create a Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy.

Phase 2

- Identify the services delivered by the VCS that ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations and costs attached.
- Consider opportunities to move towards a commissioning arrangement
- Explore the role of Town and Parish Councils in community cohesion
- Investigate the support the voluntary sector receives from the NHS, Police Fire and Ambulance services.

- Continue its work to benchmark and learn about 'good practice' nationally.

Enquiry Recommendations

	Recommendations
1.	The Task Force fully support financial payment to the Infrastructure Organisations for 2019/20 at a total of £69,000.
2.	Subject to the support of Executive, Phase 2 be undertaken by the Task Force.

	Appendices
1.	Combined VCS Presentations
2.	2(a) BRCC supporting papers 2(b) CVS supporting papers 2(c) CA supporting papers
3.	VCS Terms and Conditions of Grant
4.	Questions put to VCS organisations.

Enquiry Team membership: -

Members
Cllr John Chatterley
Cllr Brian Saunders
Cllr Doreen Gurney
Cllr Caroline Maudlin

The review was supported by Paula Everitt (Scrutiny Policy Adviser) and Sarah Hughes (Community Engagement Manager), Jane Moakes, Commissioning Manager ASC.

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Appendix A1

Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Infrastructure organisations

Background

CBC support

Continued core funding established by the legacy authorities.

3 organisations , one grant agreement set up in 2016 worth £231,400 over 3 years.

Infrastructure Role

Infrastructure organisations support and encourage the sector to develop and thrive through advice and information provision; training; volunteer recruitment, placement and support; representation; community development activity, village hall advice.

Five Year Plan

A key outcome in the Council's emerging Five Year Plan is for our towns and villages to be sustainable and resilient places where:

- People are supported to help themselves and others;
- People of all ages will be encouraged to volunteer; and
- Residents, community organisations and town and parish councils will have opportunities to do more in and for their communities

Outcomes and Performance 2016/17-2017/18

O 1 - Increase the number of people volunteering

O 2 - Increase the amount of volunteering individuals do

- 1497 enquiries brokered and 241 volunteers placed

O 3 - Communities doing more for themselves

O 4 - Communities delivering local services

- 12 new groups set up, 229 groups supported with advice and technical assistance
- 600 households supported through online social platform
- Community led planning, local greenspace enhancement,

O 5 - Community enablers and active citizens

O 6 - Maximise the use of physical assets to support local communities 56 community building committees given advice

-

Presentations

Community and Voluntary Services

Martin Trinder

CVS Bedfordshire

- **We ‘supercharge’ the work of the local voluntary sector -** Critical role in supporting the sector with funding applications, tenders and staying legal.
- **A trusted, independent and impartial view on behalf of the local voluntary sector -** Connecting the sector with each other and the public/private sectors.
- **Encouraging volunteering and civic participation -** Promoting volunteering, supporting local people to get involved in their communities and do more for themselves.

We work across Bedfordshire – funded by Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire, Luton Borough and a local grant making trust.

Impact of funding reduction in Central Bedfordshire:

Over the next three years:

- Local authority incur over £180,000 of additional costs
- Demand for council services will also increase
- Volunteer contribution worth over £450,000 will be lost
- Local VCSE sector income reduce by over £700,000

Presentations

Community Action Bedfordshire

John Gelder

Volunteer Centre Central Bedfordshire

Community Action Bedfordshire

Some key outcomes of our work with community groups and local communities

- People are inspired to volunteer, have the opportunity to do so and have excellent volunteering experiences.
- Local communities are able to do more for themselves by creating, running and sustaining the community groups, social networks and cultural activities needed to develop strong and vibrant communities.
- Residents feel less isolated or lonely and are better connected with other residents, community groups and local services.
- Community groups have the people, skills, knowledge, systems and resources to meet the needs of their residents/service users, achieve their aims and recruit, retain and manage volunteers.
- Social Return on Investment: £8.22 - £10.47 for every £1 invested.

Volunteer Centre Central Bedfordshire

Community Action Bedfordshire

Impact of reduced or zero funding of local VCSE Support Services

- No means for local residents to find a route into volunteering.
- Much more difficult for public sector to energise communities into doing more for themselves.
- Increased risk of local groups having poor governance, insufficient 'know how', volunteers and other resources needed to provide effective and trusted services.
- Reduced visibility for local charities and groups as national ones take centre stage, drawing resources away from CB.
- Reduction in residents' involvement in volunteering, local affairs, active lifestyles and community life, resulting in increased reliance on public services when help is needed.

Presentations

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity

Tracy Cowan / Cliff Andrew

BRCC

Helping people & communities do more for themselves

- 65 years service to Bedfordshire's communities
- Supporting Communities Team:
  - Acts as 'Community Mobilisers'
  - Hosts Network of Good Neighbour Schemes, some of which act as 'Community Connectors'
  - Provides Community Buildings advisory service
  - Facilitates Community-led Planning
  - Hosts Rural Housing Enabler
  - Hosts Community Agent service for some communities
  - Now also hosts Social Prescribing Team of Community Wellbeing Champions for Central Bedfordshire

Impacts & Outcomes

- Survey of 159 community buildings; bespoke information and advice given to 56 Community Building management groups.
- 38 GNS with over 900 volunteers; undertaking an average of over 15,000 tasks for 2,700 clients, pa.
- Over last 2 years have supported the production of 25 community-led plans.
- New community groups have started; new health initiatives have commenced; group:group and group:individual connections have been made; green spaces have been enhanced; access routes have been improved.

- *Our work has led to stronger, better informed communities; with more volunteers involved in helping more people in their communities.*

AUTHOR:	**BRCC**
TITLE:	**BRCC delivery of CBC Community and Voluntary Infrastructure Support Grant**
DATE:	**September 10th, 2018**
PURPOSE:	**To highlight what BRCC has achieved with the Infrastructure Grant and outline the anticipated impacts of a cessation in funding**

Background to BRCC

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) is the leading community development agency working across Bedfordshire, with a proven track record built up over 65 years. BRCC also serves as the Rural Community Council (RCC) for Bedfordshire, one of 38 RCCs in England working together under the national umbrella body, ACRE - Action for Communities in Rural England.

For more information about BRCC visit http://bedsrcc.org.uk/; for more information about ACRE visit: http://www.acre.org.uk/

BRCC has 3 main service areas: Rural Transport, Rural Development and Supporting Communities. CBC's Community and Voluntary Infrastructure Support Grant has principally been delivered by the Supporting Communities Team.

Supporting Communities Team

BRCC's Supporting Communities Team has a long and proven track record of making a difference across Central Bedfordshire in a number of work areas, including:

- Good Neighbour/ Village Care Schemes
- Green Infrastructure – planning, creation and management
- Community-led Planning - including Neighbourhood Planning
- Village Halls/ Community Buildings
- Rural Housing
- *Community Agents – in some communities*

The CBC Community and Voluntary Infrastructure Support Grant has enabled us to expand our work in a number of these areas. The funding has also enabled us to invest staff time in the development of new initiatives and funding bids. One such example is the Greensand Country Landscape Partnership, primarily within Central Bedfordshire and co-hosted by BRCC and the Greensand Trust. This ambitious project has brought over £3m of funding into the local area, delivering a wide range of benefits.

What we have achieved with the CBC Community and Voluntary Infrastructure Support Grant

The main Outcomes that BRCC was commissioned to achieve and have been working on since April 2016 are:

- Outcome 3 - Communities doing more for themselves
- Outcome 4 - Communities delivering local services
- Outcome 5 - Community enablers and active citizens help people to access support as and when they need it
- Outcome 6 - Maximise the use of physical assets to support local communities, to create multi-functional community spaces / hubs managed by, with and on behalf of local communities
- Outcome 7 - People feel they can influence decisions in their area

Additionally, BRCC has also achieved against:

- Outcome 1 - Increase in the number of people volunteering
- Outcome 2 - Increase in the amount of volunteering individuals do

Much of our work overlaps a number of these Outcomes. Progress against these Outcomes is summarised against the most relevant Outcome below:

Outcome 3 - Communities doing more for themselves

BRCC has

- Promoted national campaigns and initiatives to community groups and organisations, incl Town & Parish Councils
- Provided a DBS service enabling groups to recruit 950 approved volunteers
- Attended Town & Parish Council meetings to promote our services and provide information and advice
- Supported the creation of 11 new community groups (incl the recruitment of volunteers for 8 new Health Walk Groups and 3 new Good Neighbour Groups

Outcome 4 - Communities delivering local services

BRCC has

- Facilitated 275 journeys for community groups through the Community Transport brokerage, using volunteer drivers

Outcome 5 - Community enablers and active citizens help people to access support as and when they need it

BRCC has

- Equipped Community Mobilisers (BRCC staff) and Community Connectors (volunteers/ Good Neighbour groups) signposting local residents to the right sources of information and advice, including linking them to other community based activities

Additionally, BRCC has Community Agents working in Potton, Biggleswade, Eversholt & Shefford, providing more in-depth support for accessing services and activities to those in the community most at risk of isolation. This support is now further enhanced through a team of Community Wellbeing Champions undertaking Social Prescribing across Central Bedfordshire.

Outcome 6 - Maximise the use of physical assets to support local communities, to create multi-functional community spaces / hubs managed by, with and on behalf of local communities

BRCC has

- Responded to over 100 enquiries from 76 individual community building management groups. Produced detailed reports for community buildings in Wixams, Cranfield, Marston Moretaine; and ongoing information and advice to Potton Hall for All
- Involved individuals and community groups in the planning, creation and care of x4 Green Wheels and x10 green spaces (including Ivel Valley Conservation Volunteers, Friends of Biggleswade Green Wheel, ACORN, TEASEL and the Friends of Fairfield Orchards

Outcome 7 - People feel they can influence decisions in their area

BRCC has

- Supported the production of 25 community-led plans, including Neighbourhood Plans and Green Infrastructure Plans
- Undertaken x5 Housing Needs surveys
- Coordinated community group comments on planning applications

Although not directly allocated for delivery by BRCC, we have also contributed to Outcomes 1 and 2:

Outcome 1 - Increase in the number of people volunteering

Outcome 2 - Increase in the amount of volunteering individuals do

Across our Good Neighbour, Health Walk and Conservation Volunteering groups, BRCC equips and supports over 1,000 volunteers (with volunteer input ranging from occasional Good Neighbour tasks to a day a week in conservation groups).

In Central Bedfordshire we have 38 Good Neighbour / Village care Schemes with over 900 volunteers; undertaking an average of over 15,000 tasks for 2,700 clients, pa.

Anticipated impacts of a cessation in funding this work

In the current year, the CBC Infrastructure Grant funding that BRCC has received for its own work (ie, not passed on to partner CVS partners), equates to approx. 0.5 FTE. This is a reduced level from previous years, but as seen in the earlier sections of this paper, has enabled us to deliver significant outcomes. We believe that for a relatively modest financial investment, BRCC has achieved benefits and outcomes of far greater value than the simple cash value of the funding received.

We acknowledge that the CBC Community and Voluntary Infrastructure Support Grant is not the only source of funding that some of these areas of work receive. A loss of this funding source will not lead to us stopping work on all of these initiatives - however, the impacts of receiving no funding from CBC for these areas of work are anticipated to be:

- The loss of a specialist Community Building support service to the communities of Central Bedfordshire (including access to additional information and advice from ACRE). Central Bedfordshire would become one of the only LA areas in England to not have this service provided by an ACRE-affiliated organisation.
- The loss of staff capacity to work with new communities/ housing developments to ensure new community buildings/ assets, meet local needs and are managed appropriately.
- A reduction in the number of community groups being given support.
- A reduction in the number of new community groups being established.
- A reduction in the number of volunteers recruited and supported to deliver projects and services in their communities (Good Neighbours, Health Walk Leaders, Conservation Volunteers, Community Connectors, etc).
- A reduction in the number of local residents being supported by community groups and volunteers.
- A reduction in community / volunteer transport provision and/ or increased costs for passengers.
- A reduction in community-led planning activities (promotion and support of Neighbourhood Planning, Green Infrastructure Planning, etc).
- A reduction in community health (fewer health walks/ volunteer leaders/ walkers; less conservation volunteering opportunities).
- BRCC will also have reduced ability to develop projects and secure external funding into Central Bedfordshire.

Due to the nature and breadth of the grant-funded work undertaken by BRCC, assigning true financial values to benefits and impacts is not possible. However, we believe that our work brings significant financial savings and social benefits for Central Bedfordshire, increasing the quality of life of local residents.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss future funding options for the above areas of work with Central Bedfordshire Council.

Tracy Cowan — Chief Executive

Cliff Andrews — Supporting Communities Manager

Impact Assessment of the withdrawal of infrastructure support for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Central Bedfordshire.

This document sets out the impact of CVS not being funded to provide services in Central Bedfordshire from April 2019 onwards. It outlines the main services currently being provided, what level of service is likely to be in place from April 2019, and details the impact and financial implications on both the VCSE sector and the local authority.

Over the next three years, CVS estimates that the impact will result in the local VCSE sector will seeing their income reduce by well over £700,000, the local authority will incur over £180,000 of additional costs, and the reduced contribution of volunteers is costed at over £450,000. Demand for council services will also increase.

For Central Bedfordshire Council to deliver their current five year vision and meet their obligations, the authority needs to collaborate, encourage and support the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. The sector plays a critical role in providing services that support all of the priorities in the five year vision:

Enhancing Central Bedfordshire	The diverse range of community activities and opportunities on offer, organised by local VCSE organisations for local residents to enjoy and become part of their own community, is a key characteristic of making Central Bedfordshire a place people want to live.
Great Resident Services	Volunteers play a key role in delivering many services for local people, with numerous VCSE organisations involved in maintaining and improving the physical appearance of the local environment in the town and villages that make up Central Bedfordshire.
Improving Education and Skills	VCSE organisations deliver numerous key services for both children and older people, including employment support schemes, support for young people and a range of other services that improve education and skills. Volunteering with VCSE organisations offers a route to developing work-based skills and experience.
Protecting the Vulnerable; Improving Wellbeing	VCSE organisations are a major provider of services across Central Bedfordshire, offering a range of early intervention and preventative services for both children, families and older people. Volunteering for some people can reduce their own social isolation and offers a sense of fulfilment and giving back to the community.
Creating Stronger Communities	Local VCSE organisations are often the embodiment of local people getting involved, making a difference by tackling issues and providers services that the local community want. Communities are more able to do things for themselves.
A More Efficient and Responsive Council	The VCSE is a key local partner, speaking up for people in society that often struggle to have their voice heard, which can help the council co-ordinate great solutions for local residents. The VCSE is also a very cost-effective partner, making best use of funds and resources, often drawing other funds and sources of support into the local area.

The role of CVS

Community Voluntary Service (CVS) is a voluntary and community sector support organisation, offering a range of services, enabling local organisations and communities to make a difference.

- We provide advice, information, training and facilities, supporting organisations in the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.
- We promote volunteering and match volunteers with local opportunities.
- We encourage organisations in the local voluntary, community and social enterprise sector to work together, and in partnership with the public and private sector, connecting and sharing knowledge and expertise.

CVS currently receives approximately £23,000 per annum from Central Bedfordshire Council to deliver 'infrastructure services', to support the local VCSE sector. Funding is also received from Bedford Borough Council and Luton Borough Council to deliver similar services in those localities.

From April 2019, due to a cessation in funding from Central Bedfordshire Council, CVS will be unable to deliver services to local VCSE organisations in Central Bedfordshire, which will have a detrimental impact on both the local authority and local VCSE organisations. The following impact assessment sets this out in detail:

Service	**What will this look like**	**Impact on the VCSE and Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC)**
Funding advice	No capacity to support VCSE to identify funding sources AND develop high quality applications. ***Financial Impact:*** *A risk of £600,000 over three years of external funding (Lottery, trusts and foundations, etc) not being secured by Central Bedfordshire based organisations.*	• Fewer successful applications, resulting in a reduction of income for the local VCSE sector, fewer preventative and early intervention type services being delivered by the VCSE. • CBC will see a rise in enquiries for funding which CBC staff will have to resource and manage, as they cannot be passed to CVS. Up to 50 organisations are supported each year. • CBC has stated that they 'will work with CVS to explore new ways of working and support voluntary and community organisations to access alternative sources of funding. This has not yet occurred and does not indicate what the impact is if no alternative sources of funds are secured. • Councillors/elected members will be unable to refer organisations seeking support.
Commissioning and procurement support	No capacity to support smaller VCSE to prepare for tenders, develop bids, and develop partnership/ consortium bids. No independent organisation able to work with both commissioners and providers to ensure the process is fair, meets the expectation set out in the Social Value Act, and that smaller VCSE organisations are supported accordingly. No capacity to support CBC to engage with the sector to	• VCSE organisations will struggle to compete with larger/private sector organisations with full-time bid writers. Greater risk of closure. • Fewer VCSE organisations will create the conditions for 'Marketplace Failure' and CBC will have limited potential suppliers to keep costs competitive. • Greater risk that a tender process will descend into a costly legal challenges, negative press coverage and local disputes with the local community. • CBC will need to allocate additional resources to meet their statutory duties under the Social Value Act, which places a requirement on commissioners to consider the economic, environmental and social benefits of their approaches to procurement.

	enable effective consultation and coproduction ***Financial Impact:*** *Up to £145,000 of funding over three years not secured by Central Bedfordshire based VCSE organisations.* *Over £20,000 per year in additional CBC staff time and legal fees.*	• Barriers to smaller organisations and groups from engaging with the public service commissioning process.
Safeguarding support	No capacity to support VCSE to develop appropriate safeguarding policies and arrangements. No capacity to offer workshops for staff and volunteers. ***Financial Impact:*** *Up to £30,000 over three years in additional CBC staff time required to engage and support local VCSE organisations.*	• Fewer VCSE organisations will be aware of local adult and children safeguarding arrangements. Greater risk of appropriate safeguarding alerts not being made. • CBC staff will need to increase the level of outreach they provide in order to fulfil their duty (Children's Act 2004) to 'promote cooperation' relevant organisations 'that are engaged in activities in relation to children in the authority's area.'
Governance and Practical Issues	No capacity to support new organisations to become formally established. No capacity to offer support on a range of issues, including: Charity Law, Data Protection/ GDPR, Employing Staff, Policies and Procedures, Financial Management, etc. No capacity to support the safe closure of organisations. Smaller voluntary organisations may be unaware of their own support needs and therefore unable to seek support. ***Financial Impact:*** *Increased demand on council services, especially in adult and children's services, increasing year-on-year as VCSE organisations struggle.*	• More difficult for local communities to respond to new and changing needs. No local support to advise on correct legal structures for the services that they wish to provide. • VCSE organisations will have no one-to-one support on a range of organisational issues, all critical for the safe running of an organisation. • Loss of oversight of capabilities and needs of local groups to promote high quality services driven by good governance and strategic change management. • Greater risk of unplanned closures, resulting in unpaid debts, service users without support, sudden unemployment, and negative press coverage. • CBC officers will receive enquiries relating to setting up organisations to meet new local needs. • Inability to meet onerous organisational management requirements, may encourage some local groups to stay 'under the radar'. • Inability to meet the needs of smaller voluntary organisations and groups which is often for face-to-face support, often out of hours – in particular to suit volunteers. • Greater inequality experienced by groups formed from BME, LGBT, people with mental health problems, etc through absence of

		culturally appropriate support, and difficulty in communicating their needs. • Reduced ability to demonstrate impact and provide evidence of what the VCSE sector does and why that is needed and consequent difficulties with accessing funding and engaging in commissioning processes. • VCSE organisations will find it harder to recruit, train, support and manage volunteers if they do not have good practice systems and processes in place.
Volunteering	No capacity to promote volunteering in Central Bedfordshire through events, social media and other awareness campaigns. No capacity to support local organisations to promote their opportunities. ***Financial Impact:*** *ONS estimates an average of £1,500 for every volunteer. Just 100 fewer volunteers every year will reduce the sectors capacity by £450,000 over three years.*	• Fewer opportunities for Central Bedfordshire residents to volunteer in Central Bedfordshire. Most opportunities on the Volunteer Connect system will be in neighbouring local authority areas. • Reduced capacity of communities in Central Bedfordshire to do things for themselves.
Ongoing communication and networking and engagement	Email update may still be available to Central Bedfordshire VCSE organisations. (Subject to the organisation continuing to be funded in other localities.) ***Financial Impact:*** *Up to £45,000 over three years in additional CBC staff time required to engage and support local VCSE organisations.*	• VCSE organisations could still access the CVS website and Email update, but there would be no Central Bedfordshire specific information as staff will not be able to engage with local organisations and agencies. • Barriers to sharing resources, such as meeting rooms or intangible resources such as skills. • Reduced skills, knowledge and capacity to seize new opportunities, take on new challenges and adjust to changing circumstances. • Loss of a key tool for the VCSE to keep up-to-date with developments in relevant areas.
Collaborative/ partnership working, and consultation.	No capacity to provide the council with a trusted, independent and impartial view from the perspective of the VCSE sector. No capacity to engage in any meetings/partnerships or consultation activities in Central Bedfordshire on behalf of the local VCSE sector.	• Central Bedfordshire Council will find it harder to engage and consult with the local VCSE sector when they are required to do so. Additional staff time will be required in order to undertake any engagement or consultation. • There will be no local up-to-date directory of VCSE organisations for Central Bedfordshire Council to use to identify which agencies are delivering services. The cost of creating a similar directory would in excess of £30,000. • There will not be a locally trusted VCSE infrastructure organisation through which the local authority can 'link' to the sector, resulting

	No capacity to maintain an oversight of the VCSE sector, the changes, challenges and needs, which help inform the local authority. No capacity to support early intervention projects within the local VCSE, which will reduce demand on council services. ***Financial Impact:*** *Up to £45,000 over three years in additional CBC staff time required to engage and support local VCSE organisations.*	in Central Bedfordshire Council finding it harder to engage and work in partnership with the sector. • Missed opportunities to maximise value as no capacity to encourage and support organisations to work together. • Not funding infrastructure support will damage the relationship between CBC and local VCSE organisations, who will interpret it as a measure of how important the council views the work and role of VCSE organisations.
Digital	Limited access to skills development and resources to VCSE to adapt to changes. No support to make the most of opportunities from digital. Exclusion of some organisations, and individuals from participation and access to advice/support. ***Financial Impact:*** *Increased demand on council services, especially in adult and children's services, increasing year-on-year as VCSE organisations struggle.*	• Challenges to VCSE organisations which do not have the skills or resources to engage or adapt the way they work. • VCSE organisations hampered by barriers to accessing technology and connectivity and a serious risk that digitally excluded VCSE organisations (and individuals) will be further excluded. • Individuals supported by VCSE organisations disproportionately affected by the move by public services to provide services primarily online.

For further information, please contact:

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Community Voluntary Service
43 Bromham Road Bedford MK40 2AA
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June 2018

BUSINESS CASE FOR LONG-TERM FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY ACTION BEDFORDSHIRE

1. Introduction

This paper sets out some thinking from Community Action Bedfordshire (formerly Voluntary and Community Action) on the continued need for infrastructure funding and explores the outcomes from this work and the contribution made by Community Action to the development of Stronger Communities in Central Bedfordshire.

There is concern among many that the diminishing funding currently provided to Community Action by Central Bedfordshire Council (£55k pa down to £zero by 31 March 2019) will seriously put at risk the valuable work the organisation undertakes in supporting and coordinating the voluntary and community sector; promoting, developing and supporting local volunteering; enabling people to get involved in local communities; and its work with local communities on social isolation, the development of local Timebanks and on expanding social networks.

We have always taken an innovative approach to what we do and have moved away from the traditional support activities of local infrastructure organisations to one that is active in communities addressing social isolation and informal volunteering, for example. Although alternative funding has been sought and obtained (in some cases) these have proved to be uneconomical and unsustainable. In short, the organisation could close or, at best, significantly reduce activity and staff to provide only very limited support, with no capacity to take on additional activities or respond to requests for additional information, promotion or support activities from January 2019.

We acknowledge that re-instating funding to the 2015/16 level of £125,133 pa may not be possible, but including £98,133 pa (2016/17) into the Council's four-year rolling Budget would go a long way to ensuring that Community Action Bedfordshire (and its partner organisations) continue to deliver these important functions and activities in Central Bedfordshire.

2. About the Work we Do

We are a voluntary and community sector support organisation that develops, enables, promotes and supports local voluntary and community action (including volunteering) across Bedfordshire.

Local community action provides a powerful force for change, both for those involved and for the wider community. Everyday Community Action Bedfordshire, along with local voluntary organisations, charities and community groups, make a vibrant and effective contribution to the quality of life of all who live and work in Bedfordshire.

The voluntary and community sector has an important part to play in the development of healthy and sustainable communities across Central Bedfordshire. This involves advocating, creating, delivering and supporting new and existing *social infrastructure* to address the needs of residents in local communities; and empowering them to develop and sustain new and existing social networks, activities and community groups needed to shape and create a strong sense of community, place and belonging. Community Action Bedfordshire helps this to happen and delivers its own projects to achieve these outcomes.

Community Action is the licensed Volunteer Centre for Central Bedfordshire. It is also able to develop the capacity and skills of voluntary organisations, community groups, volunteers and community activists. It works in partnership with others to increase the quality, quantity, contribution and accessibility of local community action, so that:

- people are inspired to volunteer, have the opportunity to do so and have excellent volunteering experiences;

- local communities are able to do more for themselves by creating, running and sustaining the community groups, social networks and cultural activities needed to develop strong and vibrant communities;
- residents feel less isolated or lonely and are better connected with other residents, community groups and local services;
- community groups have the people, skills, knowledge, systems and resources to meet the needs of their residents/service users, achieve their aims and recruit, retain and manage volunteers;
- voluntary organisations, community groups and residents have a strong voice and an active involvement in influencing the decisions that shape their community;
- those who are socially disadvantaged are able to participate more fully in society.

3. Objectives

Our work is underpinned by the following objectives:

1. To empower residents to lead, create, develop and sustain new and existing social networks, cultural activities and community groups.
2. To enable local communities to design and deliver activities and services that reduce the social isolation of residents and enable them to become actively involved in their community.
3. To enable people to be better informed about local services, social networks, volunteering opportunities, community activities and community groups in their area; how to access them and improve their well-being.
4. To support communities in creating, developing and managing local forums and networks that are inclusive, open and participatory, which are owned by and accountable to the community.
5. To enable residents to take an interest in, and engage with, local issues affecting them or their community through local forums, consultations and other media.
6. To support communities in creating, developing and managing meeting places that are sustainable, welcoming and accessible to all.
7. To enable the provision of information on, and access to, start-up funding/small grants to stimulate grass-roots activity and capacity building.
8. To enable the provision of, and access to, appropriate learning and skills development opportunities to equip people for active involvement and to support their own groups.
9. To promote and develop volunteering; including the recruitment, retention and management of volunteers; and volunteers who are prepared to mobilise others, organise and deliver community action.
10. To promote and develop a culture of ‘informal volunteering’ and ‘neighbourliness’ where people do something to help someone in their community and/or share their skills informally with others.

4. Outcomes

Strategic Outcomes from our work:

(1) People are better informed about local services, social networks, volunteering opportunities, community activities and community groups in their area, and how to access them.

(2) People are able to meet socially/informally with others through social activities or other services offered in the community.

(3) People are actively involved in the community through their participation in community groups, forums, activities or volunteering.

(4) People are actively involved in leading, planning and/or organising community groups, forums and activities.

(5) People feel less isolated or lonely as a result of participating in social networks, volunteering, community activities and community groups etc.

(6) People have increased fulfilment/satisfaction as a result of being able to help others and/or share their skills with others.

(7) People are able to, individually and collectively, have a greater say in decisions that affect their community's well-being.

(8) Community groups have the people, skills, knowledge, systems and resources to meet the needs of their residents/service users, achieve their aims and recruit, retain and manage volunteers.

Possible Outcomes for Individuals:
As a result of their participation in Community Action's programmes, the individual …..

1. Improved health and well being
1.1 Feels their mental health has improved
1.2 Benefits from an increase in exercise/active living
1.3 Has increased confidence and self-esteem
1.4 Feels less isolated or lonely

2. Independent living maintained
2.1 Receives help with shopping and daily activities
2.2 Receives help with house and garden maintenance
2.3 Obtains needed services or goods that they would otherwise not afford
2.4 Is better informed about, and has been able to access, local services
2.5 Knowing their neighbours and being able to call on others increases their feeling of safety and security

3. Increased participation in the community
3.1 Develops new social networks
3.2 Gives and receives help through a Timebank
3.3 Gains satisfaction from sharing their skills with others in the community
3.4 Participates in community activities, groups, forums or formal volunteering
3.5 Feels increased personal fulfilment/satisfaction from their participation in the community
3.6 Feels less isolated or lonely

5. Evidencing the Value of our Investment

An external Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation of our work found that the main outcomes experienced by service users who were unemployed *were improvements in the quality of their lives through joining with others and being supported in job search and work-related training*. *This began with experiences of feeling less alone and isolated …. gaining in confidence and motivation and hence being able to increase work aspirations and gain better job seeking skills*. The study found that for every £1 invested in the project there was a social return of £10.47, which was considerably higher than many other employment support projects.

A SROI evaluation of our work with residents in Leighton Buzzard found that common needs among residents were the issues of isolation, the need to engage in new relationships outside family and home and the need to have more engagement with the local community. The impact of the project was that, as a result of their participation in the project, residents had:

- reduced isolation and loneliness leading to better mental and physical health.
- decreased stress and anxiety
- improved well-being through wider circle of relationships and local contacts
- improved relationships at home
- increased feelings of safety and security
- improved personal development
- increased opportunities to help others
- access to reliable local information.

87% of residents surveyed stated they felt they had been able to make friends and felt less isolated or lonely as a result of our interventions. The relationships residents formed …. *gave many a lifeline to a better quality of life and they attribute this not just to the existence of the facility but also to the staff who work there*. The study found that for every £1 invested there was a social return of £8.22, which is considerably higher than many community projects of this type.

6. Links to Central Bedfordshire Council Priorities

Our work actively promotes, support and develops the Council's Five Year Plan, which identifies Stronger Communities as or where ….

- people build successful lives; everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential
- people and organisations have the opportunity to do more (for themselves)
- people are supported to help themselves and others
- volunteering creates opportunities for people of all ages
- there is a greater sense of place
- people participate in local affairs and services
- reducing social isolation; promoting social inclusion

CBC Adult Social Care, Health and Housing identifies that customers and carers are ….

- safe and secure
- able to live independently at home
- participating in the community
- not socially isolated or lonely.

7. Impact of Reduced Funding in Central Bedfordshire

Impact of reduced or zero funding of local VCS Support Services

- No means for local residents to find a route into volunteering.
- No support to local volunteer-involving organisations, including CBC and other public sector organisations, in developing and promoting local volunteering opportunities and programmes.
- Reduction in residents' involvement in volunteering, local affairs, active lifestyles and community life, resulting in increased reliance on public services when help is needed.
- Increased pressure on Council services from residents needing non-clinical solutions that will improve their social, emotional or practical needs; enable individuals to take greater control of their own lives; and support their health and wellbeing.
- Much more difficult for public sector to energise communities into doing more for themselves.
- Increased risk of local groups having poor governance, insufficient 'know how', volunteers and other resources needed to provide effective and trusted services.
- Loss of intelligence and data about local voluntary and community services (4,000 organisations across Bedfordshire).
- Reduced visibility for local charities and groups as national ones take centre stage, drawing resources away from Central Bedfordshire.

5. Strengths and Opportunities

Community Action's experience shows that residents are keen to address their own social isolation and loneliness if they are given opportunities to do so in a supportive environment where there are trusted people who can help them make the links and 'broker' opportunities with them. Some also welcome the opportunity to volunteer formally (through organisations and community groups), often to help others, but lack information and networks to do so. Informal volunteering and 'neighbourliness' enables residents to help others or contribute to informal networks. More and more people are attracted to ideas around reciprocity with activities such as Timebanking.

As the only licensed Volunteer Centre for Central Bedfordshire, we have the skills, knowledge and experience; backed by quality accreditation from NCVO and the matrix standard; to deliver, promote and support local volunteering. Community Action also has the energy, skills and experience to imagine new ways of doing things; to adapt our delivery methods and to really focus on the challenges, strengths and opportunities of addressing social isolation and loneliness, volunteering and building stronger communities.

Community Action Bedfordshire **10 September 2018**

Terms and Conditions of Grant

Between:

Central Bedfordshire Council and
Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC),
Community and Voluntary Service (CVS)
and
Voluntary and Community Action South Beds (VCA)

Grant value	
Year One (2016/17)	£98,133.79
Year Two (2017/18)	£71,133.79
Year Three (2018/19)	£44,133.79
Year Four (2019/20) if extended	£17,996.79
Total	£231,398.16
For the period:	1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019

These Terms & Conditions of Grant relate to grant funding to support the Grant Recipient(s) deliver services to other organisations and / or the public. Whilst these services are of benefit to the public, Central Bedfordshire Council does not derive any direct benefit from the service / advice provided.

This agreement is between:

(a) Central Bedfordshire Council of Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, SG17 5TQ. (Referred to as 'the Council' in Parts A and B of this agreement)

Signature (on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council)	
Signature	
Name	**Sue Harrison**
Designation	**Director of Children's Services**
Date	**01.04.16**

(b) The organisations being provided funded and providing services under these Terms & Conditions of Grant. (Referred to as 'the Grant Recipient(s)' in Parts A and B of this document)

Signature (on behalf of 'the Grant Recipient(s)')

By signing these Terms & Conditions of Grant you are confirming that:

- You have the authority to sign on behalf of the Grant Recipient(s).
- You have read and fully understand the terms and conditions in both Part A and Part B of these Terms & Conditions of Grant and commit the Grant Recipient(s) named below to comply with them.

Signature			
Name	Jon Boswell	Martin Trinder	John Gelder
Designation	Chief Executive	Chief Officer	Director
Address	BRCC The Old School, Cardington, Bedford MK44 3SX	CVS 43 Bromham Road Bedford MK40 2AA	VCA Bossard House, West Street, Leighton Buzzard LU7 1DA
Date			

The these Terms & Conditions of Grant are made up of two parts:

- **Part A, Terms & Conditions of Grant**
- **Part B, Specification**

PART A: TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF GRANT

AGREEMENT

Between Central Bedfordshire Council: (known as "the Council" hereafter)
And Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC), Community and Voluntary Service (CVS), and Voluntary and Community Action (VCA), (known as "the Grant Recipient(s)" hereafter).

1. PURPOSE OF THE TERMS & CONDITIONS

1.1 This Agreement relates to Central Bedfordshire Council funding the Grant Recipient(s), for the purpose of:

The Council is wishes to support VCS infrastructure organisations to help achieve the key outcomes in the Council's emerging Five Year Plan; that our towns and villages are sustainable and resilient places where:

- People are supported to help themselves and others;
- People of all ages will be encouraged to volunteer; and
- Residents, community organisations and town and parish councils will have opportunities to do more in and for their communities

A strategy for building resilient and self-sustaining communities is in development to ensure a whole council approach at maximising the contribution of all service areas and steering their impact to ensure community resilience and greater social capital. The Council wishes to extend that approach to include VCS infrastructure organisations to work with us to build strong and resilient communities.

OUTCOMES – (see Part B for more detail)

1. Increase the number of people volunteering

2. Increase the amount of volunteering individuals do

3. Communities doing more for themselves

4. Communities delivering local services
5. Community enablers and active citizens help people to access support as and when they need it
6. Maximise the use of physical assets to support local communities, to create multi-functional community spaces / hubs managed by, with, and on behalf of local communities

7. People feel they can influence decisions in their area

- Broker and facilitate discussions between public bodies and the wider VCS through community forums / liaison groups to help VCS groups engage with decision making organisations.

The Council is making grant funding available as follows:

Grant value	
Year One (2016/17)	£98,133.79
Year Two (2017/18)	£71,133.79
Year Three (2018/19)	£44,133.79
Year Four (2019/20) if extended	£17,996.79
For the period:	1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019

1.2 The detail of these services are as set out in Part B the Specification.

1.3 All parties should comply with the Bedfordshire and Luton Compact which aims to develop a close, efficient and more effective equal working partnership between local voluntary and community organisations and statutory agencies.

2. AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVES

2.1 All correspondence relating to these Terms & Conditions of Grant from the Grant Recipient(s) will be addressed to the Councils authorised representatives named in the table below.

Authorised Individuals		The Council			
To sign the Terms & Conditions of Grant	Name	Sue Harrison	Jon Boswell	Martin Trinder	John Gelder
	Position	Director of Children's Services, CBC	Chief Executive	Chief Officer	Director
	Address	Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford. SG17 5TQ	BRCC The Old School, Cardington, Bedford MK44 3SX	CVS 43 Bromham Road Bedford MK40 2AA	VCA Bossard House, West Street, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 1DA
	Telephone	0300 300 4229	01234 834931	01234 354366	01525 850559
	email	sue.harrison@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk	jonb@bedsrcc.org.uk	martin@yourcvs.org	john@action-centralbeds.org.uk
To be responsible for Monitoring and Reviewing these Terms & Conditions of Grant	Name	Sarah Hughes	Jon Boswell	Martin Trinder	John Gelder
	Position	Community Engagement Manager	Deputy Chief Executive BRCC	Chief Officer, CVS	Director
	Telephone	0300 300 6166	01234 834931	01234 354366	01525 850559
	email	Sarah.hughes@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk	jonb@bedsrcc.org.uk	martin@yourcvs.org	john@action-centralbeds.org.uk
To be responsible for key stages of resolution	Operational level	Sarah Hughes	Jon Boswell	Martin Trinder	John Gelder
	Senior officer level	Peter Fraser			
	Director level	Sue Harrison			

3. STATUS OF THESE TERMS & CONDITIONS OF GRANT

3.1 The parties to these Terms & Conditions of Grant intend that it be legally binding and each party warrants its ability to enter into these Terms & Conditions of Grant.

3.2 The Grant Recipient(s) is/are a separate party to these Terms & Conditions of Grant and is/are not legally an agent or partner to the Council.

3.3 Neither the Grant Recipient(s) nor its/their staff shall in any circumstances hold itself or themselves out as being authorised to enter into any agreement on behalf of the Council or in any way to bind the Council to the performance, variation, release or discharge of any obligation.

4. DURATION / GRANT VALUE AND PAYMENT TERMS

4.1 The date on which these Terms & Conditions of Grant take effect is **01.04.16.**

4.2 The duration of these Terms & Conditions of Grant is for a period of 3 years. This may be extended for a further 1 year bringing the life of the Terms & Conditions of Grant up to a maximum of 4 years. Any such extension of the Terms & Conditions of Grant will be subject to agreement by both parties.

4.3 The Council will pay to the Grant Recipient(s) the sum of which covers the duration of the Terms & Conditions of Grant for the goods or services as detailed in Part B the Service Specification. Payments to the value of the Terms & Conditions of Grant will be made in instalments as agreed by the Council and are detailed in the table at section 7.3. Payments will be made once the Terms & Conditions of Grant has been agreed by all parties, the Council has supplied the Grant Recipient(s) with a Purchase Order number, and the Grant Recipient(s) has supplied the Council with an invoice quoting their Purchase Order number, subject to the terms and conditions outlined

in this Terms & Conditions of Grant. The invoice should be sent to the authorised representative named in Section 2.

4.4 Under these Terms & Conditions of Grant the Grant Recipient(s) comprises of three separate VCS infrastructure organisations. These Grant Recipient(s) have agreed that the funding provided under this these Terms & Conditions of Grant will be allocated as stated in the following table.

Grant value	
Year One (2016/17)	£98,133.79
Year Two (2017/18)	£71,133.79
Year Three (2018/19)	£44,133.79
Year Four (2019/20) if extended	£17,996.79
For the period:	1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019

4.5 All three Grant Recipient(s) (BRCC, CVS and VCA) have agreed with the Council that each is responsible for its own performance against the performance objectives stated in Part B: Specification.

4.6 Should one Grant Recipient(s) fail to achieve agreed objective(s), the remaining Grant Recipient(s) will not be held liable.

4.7 In the event of under-performance or failure to achieve agreed objective(s), in the first instance all efforts will be made by these Terms & Conditions of Grant Officer to work with the relevant Grant Recipient(s) to rectify the situation to the Council's satisfaction.

4.8 Should 4.7 be unsuccessful however, thereafter all parties should refer to clause 7.4 Issue Management.

5. GOVERNANCE

5.1 Section 2 gives details of the representative(s) of both parties with delegated responsibility for making decisions relating to this These Terms & Conditions of Grant. All decisions taken will be with the joint agreement of both parties.

5.2 These Terms & Conditions of Grant will be subject to continuous review to ensure that it reflects the best possible method of delivering the activity / service(s). Any written complaints received by either party will form part of the basis for discussion under the governance arrangements.

5.3 It is the responsibility of the Terms & Conditions of Grant representatives for both parties (detailed in Section 2) to ensure that all decisions and changes affecting the delivery of the activity / service under this these Terms & Conditions of Grant are communicated to all appropriate staff.

6. MONITORING OF THE TERMS & CONDITIONS OF GRANT

6.1 Monitoring arrangements must meet the need to demonstrate accountability and the appropriate use of funding, but should also be proportionate to the level of funding.

6.2 The Grant Recipient(s) will comply with any other appropriate performance monitoring or reasonable data requests made by the Council or their nominated representative. Any subsequent requests for data that breach client confidentiality can be considered as not reasonable.

6.3 Additional monitoring meetings may be arranged if necessary.

6.4 A brief written report to be produced on a time-agreed basis for each service funded, including information on expenditure.

7. PERFORMANCE REPORTING AND ISSUE MANAGEMENT

Performance Reporting

7.1 The objectives, format and frequency of performance reporting linked to outcomes is identified in Part B the Service Specification.

Performance Management Responsibilities

7.2 Performance management and the measuring of performance is the responsibility of the named officers detailed in Section 2.

7.3 The table below details the frequency of performance meetings and performance reporting, payment instalments, insurance and indemnity, risk and policy requirements relating to the different levels of funding available. Please tick the agreed requirement for each section relevant to these Terms & Conditions of Grant. (Where applicable, areas highlighted in each section indicate the minimum suggested requirement for each).

Payment and monitoring schedule	**Grant Value**
*The **grant value** is calculated as being the sum of the funding agreed to be provided over the entirety of the grant period.*	**£60,000+**
Minimum frequency of performance review meetings	
Quarterly	✓
Minimum frequency of performance reports	
Six monthly	✓
Payment instalment applicable to these Terms & Conditions of Grant (See Section 4)	
Bi-Annual payments, 50% in April and 50% in October	✓

Policies it has been agreed the Grant Recipient(s) will submit at the commencement of these Terms & Conditions of Grant. (£60,000 and ABOVE - all documents; £59,999 and BELOW – documents to be supplied as agreed between parties)	
✓All policies ticked must be available for examination from the start of the Terms & Conditions of Grant	
Confidentiality and Data Protection	✓
Whistle blowing	✓
Health and Safety	✓
Safeguarding of Children / Protection of Children Vulnerable Adults	✓
Equal Opportunities	✓
Recruitment and Selection	✓
Discipline	✓
Grievance	✓
Supervision	✓
Environmental / Sustainability	✓
Financial Procedures / Controls	✓

7.4 **Issue Management**

7.4.1 Parties are to notify the other party promptly of any issues, concerns or complaints regarding any matter covered by these Terms & Conditions of Grant. The parties will use every endeavour to resolve, by a process of consultation, any differences or issues arising between them.

7.4.2 However in order to provide a formal mechanism for the resolution of issues that may arise in relation to the provision of activity / service, the following escalation procedure will be used.

7.4.3 If the issue is not resolved at the initiating level, it will proceed to the next level. This escalation process will continue until the issue is resolved.

a) Operational level
b) Senior Management level
c) Director level

7.4.4 The emphasis throughout the process is rapid resolution to avoid escalation and the risk of damage to the reputation of either party, or a commitment to resolve any issues in line with the Compact.

7.5 **Complaint**

7.5.1 Should the actions of either party against the other form the basis of a formal complaint, this should be addressed in writing to the appropriate Director to order an investigation and, if necessary, remedial action within 10 working days.

7.6 **Resolution**

Resolution Process

7.6.1 Regular contact between the nominated representatives of both parties will provide for the resolution of most issues raised, the majority of which will be minor. Where the resolution of any issue requires amendment to these Terms & Conditions of Grant, this will be documented in writing in accordance with Clause 25.

Points of Contact / Responsibilities

7.6.2 Section 2 identifies who is responsible for monitoring and reviewing these Terms & Conditions of Grant, for receiving queries relating to these Terms & Conditions of Grant and for the key stages of resolution.

Escalation Process

7.6.3 In respect of any issues, if an appropriate solution is not possible to agree at operational level, the issue will be escalated to the next level. In order to execute the most timely resolution, the following targets have been set for completion of critical and non-critical issues (from the date at which the issue is first logged).

Level	Target for completion
Operational level	Critical – within 24 hours. Non-Critical – within 48 hours
Senior Management level	Five (5) working days
Director level	Ten (10) working days

7.6.4 Critical issues must be resolved within 24 hours however far up the escalation path the issue goes. Non-critical issues can be extended by agreement with both parties.

7.6.5 Where grant funding provided is £10,000 and above, any aspects requiring resolution should be duly noted and reported, together with relevant detail that may prevent recurrence under this or other Terms & Conditions of Grants / agreements.

8. COMPLIANCE

The parties and their representatives must comply with all statutory requirements and relevant Government policies as they apply to all activities / service required and delivered under these Terms & Conditions of Grant. Immediately upon becoming aware of the same the Grant Recipient(s) shall notify the Council of any breach of any statutory or other provision relating in any way to the provision of or connected with the Service. The parties note in particular, but not exclusively, the following areas:

8.1 Data

8.1.1 Privacy and Confidentiality

It is agreed by both parties that Client Records or any information pertaining to these Terms & Conditions of Grant will be treated as confidential unless it is already in the public domain.

Both the Council and the Grant Recipient(s) will co-operate to respond to requests made to the Council under the Freedom of Information Act.

8.1.2 Personal Data

Both parties acknowledge and will comply with their duties and responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Both parties will also give reasonable assurance and keep one another informed of such requests to comply with any obligations arising under these Acts. The Council will be the data controller, and the Grant Recipient(s) will be the data processor in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

8.2 Record Retention

The Grant Recipient(s) will maintain the appropriate records for the funded activity / service on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council, retaining them in an appropriate location prior to disposition and in such a manner as to be easily accessible.

Personal data should be disposed of when no longer needed (e.g. at the end of the Terms & Conditions of Grant period). Financial and all other non personal information, data, records should be retained as described above for seven years from the close of the record / Terms & Conditions of Grant.

8.3 Risk Management

Where it is appropriate for the Grant Recipient(s) to create and maintain a critical risk register, it must be agreed by both parties, and should be subject to regular review and sign-off. The Register must be produced within 3 months of commencement of service, and should detail nature of risk, probability of risk occurring, effect on service delivery and steps taken to mitigate risks.

8.4 Business Continuity

Terms & Conditions of Grants under £60,000 should ensure adequate continuity of service in the event of an emergency. Terms & Conditions of Grants of £60,000 and above must have Business Continuity Plans in place to ensure that they can continue to exercise their functions in the event of an emergency.

8.5 Quality Assurance

Quality assurance of the work covered by these Terms & Conditions of Grant will be based on the achievement of the outcomes detailed in the Part B the Service Specification and through adherence to appropriate standards for the service, including as appropriate Parliamentary Acts, Best Practice Guidelines, Sector Schemes and Quality Assurance Processes.

9. EFFICIENCY AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

9.1 Service Improvement

The Council expects its suppliers to work with us to constantly improve their service and create efficiencies for the future. Therefore we will conduct annual reviews for all Terms & Conditions of Grants of £60,000 or more to monitor progress on; Communication, Customer Satisfaction, Product Rationalisation, Environment, Equalities, Improvements to service, Innovation, Price and Quality standards.

This review will not only focus on achievements made in these areas from the previous year, but also ideas and proposals for the following year. Both the supplier and an authorised officer from the council will sign off all reviews. Should there be an inflationary clause in a long-running Terms & Conditions of Grant; no payment will be made against that clause until after the review has taken place.

9.2 Change in service

Should the Council deem that a service or part of a service is no longer required, be it transferred to another organisation (i.e. a town or parish council etc), then following appropriate consultation and impact assessment, the Council reserves the right to remove that element from the Terms & Conditions of Grant giving 3 months notice and adjust costs accordingly.

10. INTERPRETATION AND APPLICABLE LAW

10.1 These Terms & Conditions of Grant shall be governed by and interpreted according to the laws of England and Wales.

11. MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING INCLUDING VOLUNTEERS

11.1 The Grant Recipient(s) is/are responsible for its/their own internal management and financial procedures and for engaging suitable staff to ensure that the Services are delivered to agreed standards under proper management and supervision.

11.2 The Grant Recipient(s)'s staff, engaged in the provision of the Services shall be properly and sufficiently qualified, competent, skilled, honest and experienced in the provision of such services and shall at all times exercise care in the execution of their duties.

11.3 The Grant Recipient(s) will ensure that checks with the Criminal Records Bureau are made, as required, for all staff and volunteers engaged in the delivery of the Service prior to any contact with Service Users, and at 3-year intervals

11.4 The Grant Recipient(s) will follow the recruitment and personnel procedures which operate within an equal opportunities framework

11.5 Any employee of the Grant Recipient(s) whose conduct places a Service User at risk or might bring the Council into disrepute shall be the subject of immediate investigation by the Grant Recipient(s) and dealt with to the satisfaction of the Council.

11.6 For the purposes of the provision of services under these Terms and Conditions of Grant, the Grant Recipient(s) will appoint a Senior Manager who will be responsible for:

- the management and oversight of the whole Service
- audit and monitoring of the Service and reporting to the Council and other agencies as appropriate
- acting as a point of contact for the authorised representative detailed in Section 2, for services, and for colleagues from other statutory services.

12. ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

12.1 The Grant Recipient(s) shall:

- Deliver high quality services in full compliance with all current and future environmental legislation
- Support the Council in achieving it's environmental objectives and goals.
- Upon request provide supporting data and information to allow the Council to assess the environmental impact of the services being provided. This includes, but is not restricted to, information relating to utility use, waste produced and recycled and business mileage.
- Be proactive in taking action to reduce the environmental impact of their activities and aspire to make their organisation more sustainable (e.g. use sustainably sourced materials, local suppliers etc)
- Share their best practice with the Council.

13. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & EQUALITIES

13.1 The Grant Recipient(s) shall:

- Deliver high quality, accessible services that meet the needs of all our customers.
- Understand issues relating to disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, age, and sexual orientation.
- Engage with service users, local communities, staff, stakeholders and contractors to identify and implement improvements.
- Tackle barriers which restrict access to services *(e.g. inaccessible buildings, lack of employee understanding about customer needs).*
- Have a representative, well trained workforce.

13.2 The Grant Recipient(s) shall set out its policy on equality issues:

- in instructions to those concerned with recruitment, training and promotion;
- in documents available to its personnel, recognised trade unions or other representative groups of its personnel; and
- in recruitment advertisements and other literature.

13.3 The Grant Recipient(s) shall provide such information as the Council may reasonably request for the purpose of assessing the Grant Recipient(s)'s compliance with Clauses 13.1 and 13.2.

13.4 In the event of any finding of unlawful discrimination being made against the Grant Recipient by any court or employment tribunal, or of an adverse finding in any formal investigation by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights the Grant Recipient(s) shall immediately inform the Council of such a finding and the Council shall have the right to terminate these Terms & Conditions of Grant if, having discussed the matter with the Grant Recipient(s), it is of the opinion

that the actions of the Grant Recipient(s) leading up to the finding were sufficiently serious as to undermine the Council's adherence to the Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice and its own equal opportunities policies.

13.5 The principles are that the Grant Recipient(s) will:

- value people and their differences and enable all volunteers and employees to achieve their full potential,
- seek to recruit volunteers/staff who reflect the make-up of the community,
- take action to address under-representation in their volunteers/staff, make clear the action volunteers/staff may take if they feel unfairly treated, (e.g. using a wider variety of mechanisms and media to advertise vacancies / opportunities, include statements welcoming applicants from all sections of the community, ensuring that Grant Recipient(s) have access to equality training so they have a better awareness of potentially discriminatory behaviour in relation to recruitment and selection),
- provide training to relevant staff so they can put this policy into practice,
- provide equal access to all actual and potential users and volunteers, according to need,
- provide means for actual and potential users and volunteers to participate in planning the way their needs are met,
- ensure that information gained from equality data (e.g. from the Census) is fed into their own service planning processes.

14. HEALTH AND SAFETY

14.1 The Grant Recipient(s) shall at all times comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 ("the 1974 Act") and any other Acts pertaining to the health and safety of employees and others who may be affected by the Grant Recipient(s)'s acts or omissions and shall require that any Grant Recipient(s) carrying out work on the Council's property pursuant to these Terms & Conditions of Grant likewise comply.

14.2 The Terms & Conditions of Grant Manager shall be empowered to suspend the provision of the Services in whole or in part, and recover any advanced payments made, in the event of non-compliance by the Grant Recipient(s) with health and safety matters. The Terms & Conditions of Grant Manager is empowered to make suitable arrangements for the carrying out of suspended Services at the cost of the Grant Recipient(s). The Grant Recipient(s) shall not resume provision of the suspended Services until the Terms & Conditions of Grant Manager is satisfied that the non-compliance has been rectified.

15. INSURANCE AND INDEMNITIES

15.1 The Grant Recipient(s) shall indemnify the Council against and insure against any liability loss or claim or proceedings whatsoever arising under any statute or at common law in respect of personal injury to or death of any person whomsoever arising out of or in the course of or caused by the execution of the Services specified herein due to the acts omissions or negligence of the Grant Recipient(s) its servants or agents or sub-contractors.

15.2 The Grant Recipient(s) shall indemnify the Council in respect of any liability loss claim or proceedings in respect of any injury or damage whatsoever to any property real or personal arising out of or in the course of or by reason of the execution of the Services due to any negligence omission or default of the Grant Recipient(s) its servants or agents or sub-contractors.

15.3 The Grant Recipient(s) shall maintain the following standard insurance cover and provide copies of the relevant insurance certificates to the Council:

- Public Liability Cover £10m (per incident)
- Professional Indemnity Cover £5m
- Employers Liability Cover £10m (per incident)

15.4 If the standard level of cover is considered too high for the type of risk being covered, then a variation can be agreed with the authorised representative of the Council (see Section 2). The levels of cover however must as a minimum be:

- Public Liability Cover £2m (per incident)
- Professional Indemnity Cover £2m (per incident)
- Employers Liability Cover £10m (per incident)

15.5 In the event that levels of cover are varied from that of the standard cover then the authorised representative of the Council (see Section 2) must complete a risk assessment setting out the risk of reducing the insurance limits and the mitigating actions to control this risk. Advice on this process can be obtained from the Council's Insurance Manager who should also receive a final copy of the risk assessment.

15.6 The Council's Insurance Manager may take external advice on the levels of cover proposed and require alternative levels of cover if the proposed levels are deemed unsatisfactory.

15.7 Where following the completion of the risk register and subject to the advice of the Council's Insurance Manager alternative levels of cover are agreed these must be detailed in the box below and be signed by authorised representative of the Council (see Section 2).

Type of cover	Agreed level of cover if different to that in 15.4	Signature of authorised representative of the Council
Public Liability Cover	£5m	
Professional Indemnity Cover	£1m	
Employers Liability Cover	£10m	

16. AUDIT

16.1 The Grant Recipient(s) shall permit or procure permission for any auditor or other authorised representative of the Council (including the Council's external auditors) to have prompt access for audit purposes to information (including financial), premises or equipment used in the provision of the Services. The Grant Recipient(s) shall provide such information, documents and reports in the form as may be reasonably required by the Council. Such access shall include access to those Staff of the Grant Recipient(s) who are engaged in the provision of the Services.

16.2 The Grant Recipient(s) shall not during the Terms & Conditions of Grant period or at any time after, dispose of, destroy or delete any Records relating to the Services without the prior approval of the Council in writing. Prior approval is deemed to have been given if the terms of clause 8.2 of these Terms & Conditions of Grant are complied with.

17. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN

17.1 In the event of a complaint to the Commission for Local Administration in England (the Local Government Ombudsman) involving activities under the Terms & Conditions of Grant, the Grant Recipient(s) shall give to the Council and to the Local Ombudsman every assistance in the investigation of the complaint including access to records of any sort and access to the Grant Recipient(s)'s employees for the purpose of interview.

17.2 The Council will recover from the Grant Recipient(s) any payments made by the Council to a complainant following a relevant finding of maladministration causing injustice or any payments made under the terms of an early settlement of a complaint made to the Local Government Ombudsman without formal investigation and report. Before any complaint made to the Local Government Ombudsman is settled early without formal investigation or report, the Council will consider all representations made to it by the Grant Recipient(s).

17.3 Clauses 17.1 and 17.2 only apply where in Part B of these Terms and Conditions of Grant – The Specification - specifically requires the Grant Recipient(s) to provide services to a third party and or to the public on behalf of or in the name of Central Bedfordshire Council.

18. NOTIFICATION

18.1 Where the Terms & Conditions of Grant specifies in Part B, the provision of specific services to third parties including the public undertaken on behalf of or in the name of the Council, and the Grant Recipient(s) or any of its staff become aware of any incident, accident or other matter which may give rise to a claim or legal proceedings in respect of the provision or failure to provide the Services he shall notify the Terms & Conditions of Grant Manager immediately in writing. Such notification shall include all relevant information to enable the Terms & Conditions of Grant Manager to investigate the matter fully.

18.2 The Grant Recipient(s) will ensure that members of the general public are aware that grant funding in line with Part B the Specification is being provided on behalf of the Council. The Council would wish to see appropriate acknowledgement of its community funding by way of the use of its logo on any locally produced advertising material. Use of the Central Bedfordshire Council corporate identity and logo will be governed by the Central Bedfordshire Council Brand Guidelines (which are available by request from named representative in Section 2), and subject to written approval in advance of publication.

18.3 In limited circumstances where it is deemed necessary to protect the independence of the funded organisation the requirement in 18.2 to make the public aware that the service is funded by the Council will not apply. If clause 18.2 does not apply to these Terms & Conditions of Grant the box below must be signed by the authorised representative of the Council (see Section 2).

	Signature of authorised representative of the Council
If the signature box is signed this indicates that clause 18.2 of these Terms & Conditions of Grant does not apply.	

19. COMPLAINTS

19.1 The Grant Recipient(s) shall ensure that it has a complaints procedure and deals with complaints in a fair and timely manner.

19.2 Where the Terms & Conditions of Grant covers the provision of specific services to third parties including the public undertaken on behalf of or in the name of the Council, the Complaints Procedure operated by the Grant Recipient(s) shall refer to the Complaints Procedure for Central Bedfordshire Council, obtainable from the Central Bedfordshire website. This will make available the contact details within the Council should the public wish to make a complaint.

20. WHISTLEBLOWING

The Grant Recipient(s) confirms that the Council's authorised representatives (see section 2) are authorised as persons to whom the Grant Recipient(s)'s Staff may make a qualifying disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and declares that any of its Staff making a protected disclosure (as defined by the said Act) shall not be subjected to any detriment. The Grant Recipient(s) further declares that any provision in these Terms & Conditions of Grant purporting to preclude a member of its Staff from making a protected disclosure is void.

21. SUB-AGREEMENT AND ASSIGNMENT

21.1 The Council shall be entitled to assign the whole or part of the benefit of its interest in the Terms & Conditions of Grant to any authority or authorities which may succeed the Council in carrying out or providing any of the functions or Services which the Council now carries out in Bedfordshire and shall give written notice of any assignment to the Grant Recipient(s).

21.2 Save for an assignment pursuant to Clause 21.1 neither the Grant Recipient(s) nor the Council may assign its rights under these Terms & Conditions of Grant without the written agreement of the other, which shall not be unreasonably withheld.

21.3 The Grant Recipient(s) may not sub-contract any of its responsibilities under these Terms & Conditions of Grant without the written agreement of the Council.

22. DEFAULTS AND SUSPENSION

Defaults

22.1 If the Grant Recipient(s) commits a Default then The Council shall be entitled to serve on the Grant Recipient(s) a Default Notice. This shall be without prejudice to any other right or remedy that may be available to us, either under these Terms & Conditions of Grant or at law.

22.2 If we serve on the Grant Recipient(s) a Default Notice, which relates to a default that can be put right, then on receiving such a Default Notice, The Grant Recipient(s) shall take the action specified in the Notice, within the timescale set out, at its own cost.

22.3 If there is any disagreement between the parties as to whether a Default has occurred and/or about the action required to be taken and/or the timescale within which the action is to be taken, then either party can refer the matter for resolution, in accordance with Clause 7.

Persistent Default

22.4 If the Grant Recipient(s) commits a Persistent Default or fails to put right a Default within the timescale set out in the Default Notice concerned, then we shall be entitled to:
Terminate these Terms & Conditions of Grant as a whole if the Persistent Default or failure to put right a Default within the timescales in which the Grant Recipient(s) carries out its obligations generally; by giving you not less than 3 months' written notice.

23. DISPUTES

23.1 If a dispute arises between the parties every effort will be made to achieve a local resolution. If unsuccessful, disputes should be referred progressively through senior levels of management to the parties' senior personnel. At any stage, independent advice on conciliation can be sought. The Bedfordshire and Luton Compact Mediation Process should also be followed.

24. FORCE MAJEURE

24.1 Both parties shall be released from their obligations under these Terms & Conditions of Grant in the event of a national emergency or war or prohibitive government regulation or any other cause beyond the reasonable control of the parties which renders the performance of these Terms & Conditions of Grant not reasonably practicable and these Terms & Conditions of Grant shall be terminated forthwith.

25. VARIATION

25.1 Any variation to these Terms & Conditions of Grant must be agreed by both parties and evidenced in writing.

26. TERMINATION OF TERMS & CONDITIONS OF GRANT

26.1 The Council may terminate these Terms & Conditions of Grant immediately confirmed by written notice and recover the costs of such termination from the Grant Recipient(s) if:

(i) the Grant Recipient(s) loses any necessary registration which is required for the completion of these Terms & Conditions of Grant.

(ii) the Grant Recipient(s) becomes bankrupt or has an administration order made against it or presents its petition in bankruptcy or makes an arrangement with or assignment in favour of its creditors or agrees to continue these Terms & Conditions of Grant under a committee of inspection of its creditors or if the Grant Recipient(s) goes into liquidation (other than a voluntary liquidation for the purposes of amalgamation or reconstruction) or has a provisional Liquidator, Receiver or Manager of its business duly appointed or has possession taken by or on behalf of the holders of any debentures secured by a floating charge on any property comprising in or subject to a floating charge;

(iii) the Grant Recipient(s) or any person employed by the Grant Recipient(s) or acting on the Grant Recipient's behalf:

(a) has offered, paid or given directly or indirectly any gift or benefit in money or any other form to any member, employee or agent of the Council or to the Service User or the Service User's relations or carers as an inducement or reward in connection with their behaviour in relation to these Terms & Conditions of Grant (except for marketing and promotional purposes up to the value of £25) and/or

(b) appears to have committed any offence under the Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889 to 1916 or to have paid or offered any fee or reward contrary to Section 177 (2) of the Local Government Act 1972 and/or

(c) in the Council's opinion, delivery of the service is placing people at risk or if there is evidence that the Council's funding is not being used for the agreed purpose.

26.2 In such circumstances the Council will take action to recover such monies as it considers appropriate.

26.3 The Council or the Grant Recipient(s) shall be entitled to terminate these Terms & Conditions of Grant by giving at least 6 months notice in writing to the other Party. It is agreed that this break clause should only be relied upon in exceptional circumstances, and it is expected that both parties would act reasonably.

26.4 These Terms & Conditions of Grant may be terminated at any time by mutual agreement in writing.

26.5 Any act of gross negligence, or such poor performance that it causes a fundamental breach in these Terms & Conditions of Grant, will be subject to an immediate review by the Council and at its discretion may result in immediate termination. The Council as a result of this termination may claim liquidated damages for any losses incurred.

27. DEFINITION OF TERMS

- **Grant Manager** - The Authorised Representative of the Council who is responsible for managing these Terms & Conditions of Grant (detailed in 2)
- **Terms & Conditions of Grant** - The legal relationship between the Council and Grant Recipient(s).
- **For the period** - The duration of the Terms & Conditions of Grant as detailed in Clause 4
- **Council** - Central Bedfordshire Council.
- **Default** - As specified in Part B (The service specification)
- **Grant Recipient(s)** - The Organisation to provide the service.
- **Senior Manager** - The representative of the Grant Recipient(s) responsible for the management of the service (detailed in 2.)
- **Service** - The service provided by the Grant Recipient(s).
- **Service Specification** - The description of the service to be provided.
- **Staff** - Any employee or Volunteer engaged by the Grant Recipient(s) in the execution of the service.

PART B: The Specification

This Agreement relates to Central Bedfordshire Council funding the Grant Recipient(s), for the purpose of:

A key outcome in the Council's emerging Five Year Plan is for our towns and villages to be sustainable and resilient places where:

- People are supported to help themselves and others;
- People of all ages will be encouraged to volunteer; and
- Residents, community organisations and town and parish councils will have opportunities to do more in and for their communities

A strategy for building resilient and self-sustaining communities is in development to ensure a whole council approach at maximising the contribution of all service areas and steering their impact to ensure community resilience and greater social capital. The Council wishes to extend that approach to include VCS infrastructure organisations to work with us to build strong and resilient communities.

The council is making available grant funding for 2016-2019/20 of **£231, 378.79;** through one agreement.

Grant value	
Year One (2016/17)	**£98,133.79**
Year Two (2017/18)	**£71,133.79**
Year Three (2018/19)	**£44,133.79**
Year Four (2019/20) if extended	**£17,996.79**
For the period:	**1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019**

Outcome 1 - Increase the number of people volunteering
Outcome 2 - Increase the amount of volunteering individuals do

- *Promote, encourage and support volunteering, provide a Volunteer Centre service, support Cheering Volunteering Awards and Volunteering Month, explore new ways to stimulate and sustain local volunteering (informal and formal), identify and help to overcome any barriers to volunteering. In particular:*
- *Increase volunteering and neighbourliness*
- *Increase the number of volunteering opportunities that appeal to residents aged 55-75*
- *Remove barriers to volunteering*
- *Engage with faith communities*
- *Explore new ways to stimulate and sustain local volunteering*
- *Strengthen partnership arrangements with voluntary and community organisations*

Delivery

- 3-year promotional campaign encouraging people to become more involved in their local communities through volunteering and neighbourliness – using free-of-charge media where possible, including web / social media, email, press, parish newsletters and community events. Particular focus on national Volunteers Week (including Cheering Volunteering Awards)
- Provide targeted information on opportunities in people's village or neighbourhood; broker opportunities through a slimmed down Volunteer Centre service; and work with volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations to address barriers to volunteering
- Explore new ways of stimulating local community action and citizenship, including informal and micro volunteering and self-help groups
- Strengthen partnership arrangements with volunteer-involving organisations, for example by better co-ordinating the use of volunteers (particularly in rural areas).

Outcome 3 - Communities doing more for themselves
Outcome 4 - Communities delivering local services

- *Work with communities, in particular VCS organisations to enable them to become effective service delivery providers that are client centred, and encourage collaborative working*
- *Help to apply tailored / bespoke services / approaches that respond to local circumstances, particularly in areas where resilience is currently identified as low*
- *Supporting communities to do more for themselves in new and innovative ways*
- *Strengthen partnership arrangements with VCS organisations, including faith communities, and develop innovative methods to help build the capacity of the sector*

Delivery

- Promote a range of opportunities for community action as part of the above campaign, linking in with national campaigns (e.g. Village SOS, My Community) to encourage take-up locally
- Support local action through a community development approach, e.g. identifying needs and community views, action planning and facilitating the creation of groups, particularly in areas of lower resilience
- Develop partnerships and collaborative working within the VCS (including faith communities), e.g. building consortia and brokering space sharing for service delivery
- Build the capacity of the sector through information, advice, training and signposting to external resources, while also developing new and innovative methods

Outcome 5 - Community enablers and active citizens help people to access support as and when they need it

- *Help and train groups of volunteers to signpost more vulnerable members of the community to the right sources of information and advice and link them to other community based activities such as Village Care schemes*

Delivery

- Pilot a new voluntary Community Connectors scheme to signpost vulnerable adults to information and advice, and local services and activities, using our comprehensive database and knowledge of the VCS; if successful, seek to scale up the initiative

Outcome 6 - Maximise the use of physical assets to support local communities, to create multi-functional community spaces / hubs managed by, with, and on behalf of local communities

- *Support communities to take on, run and manage physical assets*
- *Maximise the multiple uses of community facilities with regard to co-production, co-design and co-delivery*
- *Explore collaborative efforts to ensure the long-term financial future of community and village halls*
- *Establish a measure for social value to inform decisions about the future use of community assets*

Delivery

- Map the condition of community-owned assets, identify investment needs and opportunities for new asset creation or transfer to the community
- Take a proactive approach to supporting communities to manage physical assets, for example through targeting community buildings committees that require specific support on governance or management
- Assist communities as required with co-designing specifications for new community buildings, in order to meet identified need while ensuring sustainability and multiple uses; promote and support the use of the Community Right to Bid and Community Asset Transfer
- Establish a social value measure for community assets

Outcome 7 - People feel they can influence decisions in their area
• *Broker and facilitate discussions between public bodies and the wider VCS through community liaison groups to help VCS groups engage with decision making organisations*
Delivery
➢ Work with Council departments and other public bodies to identify specific issues on which they wish to consult with the VCS, and broker solutions (e.g. online surveys, focus groups, workshops) that enable engagement with decision making

Schedule of meetings

The Council will require the submission of 4 quarterly monitoring reports and attendance at quarterly meetings to monitor progress. Every effort should be made to attend these meetings, hence the advance notice.

Period	Date of meeting	Time / Location
Q1 16/17	26 July 2016	2pm PH
Q2 16/17	8 November 2016	
Q3 16/17	24 January 2017	
Q4 16/17	22 March 2017	

Appendix 4

Questions put to VCS Organisations on Task Force visits

1. When you signed up to the 3 year grant and knew it would come to an end - how have you worked towards this and what have you put in place or looked to do differently? How have you explored other funding to be able to continue your services?

2. How has your organisations collaborated to understand where efficiencies can be made across the sector and what evidence have you of this?

3. What support do you get from other local authorities (inc T & P Councils) or organisations and how long is it guaranteed for?
    A. specific to this area of work or grant funds?
    B. For your overall company?

4. How many charities/organisations do you have on your database?

5. How do you engage and sign up new charities/organisations?

6. What customer satisfaction or feedback do you collate and are you happy to share this with us? If not, would you be happy to send out a short questionnaire designed by CBC to your customer base?

7. How many volunteers do you have registered?

8. How do you encourage more volunteers?

9. What is your conversion rate? (Enquiry converted into placement)

10. Can you demonstrate how our grant to you makes CBC more efficient?

11. What level of service can CBC organisations/charities expect when the CBC funding ends?

12. What support would be needed to keep the good working relationship we have currently and how could it be maintained?

13. What do you use CBC monies for ie Staffing? Admin? Overheads etc?

14. Have you any other evidence you would like to share with us now that we can take back to our task force?

Appendix B

Executive – 4 December 2018

Comments from the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29 November 2018

Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Funding Review

Recommended

That subject to a closer inspection of financial matters in Phase II, the Voluntary and Community Sector Funding Review, Phase I, be fully endorsed.

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive **4th December 2018**

Procurement of Facilities Management Contracts

Report of: Cllr Eugene Ghent, Executive Member for Assets and Housing (eugene.ghent@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director(s): Marcel Coiffait, Director of Community Services (marcel.coiffait@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a decision that is Key

Purpose of this report

1. The report proposes that the Executive authorise the procurement of Facilities Management Contracts.

2. The report also proposes that the Executive delegates authority to the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery, to award the Facilities Management Contracts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. approve the procurement of Facilities Management contracts; and

2. grant delegated authority to the Director of Community Services, in consultation with Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery, to award the Facilities Management contracts.

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

3. Agreed with Chair of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny that it was not to be considered by that Committee.

Issues

4. The Facilities Management Team, part of the Assets Service in the Community Services Directorate is responsible for maintaining and operating the Corporate Estate that is currently centrally managed on behalf of service areas and the wider Council. The team also provide services to many schools that voluntarily buy back council services using their delegated budget.

5. They manage a range of functions, including: Statutory building maintenance, asset compliance, responsive repairs, planned and cyclical maintenance, minor capital projects, cleaning, caretaking, security, catering, confidential waste, reception and porterage amongst others.

6. The service is set up as an “intelligent client” function and the majority of its duties and services are delivered through the supply chain, using external contractors and service providers. It is responsible for some 60+ core buildings, plus a number of other assets and services on behalf of client departments and schools. Annual spend through the supply chain is approximately £6.6M.

7. In addition, there are Facilities Management activities taking place in directorates to support specific service activities.

8. The council currently has over 100 provider contracts for Facilities Management, with many expiring shortly.

9. Central Bedfordshire Council is in the process of implementing a “Corporate Landlord”, placing responsibility for assets sitting within a single integrated team, enabling front-line staff to focus on their core areas of service delivery.

10. This approach has been proven to improve quality of service, compliance and customer satisfaction, and is planned to deliver c£0.3M of new efficiencies.

11. As part of the move towards a Corporate Landlord, and the centralisation of spend, contracts for the delivery of Facilities Management Services need to be re-procured.

    The key objectives of the re-procurement are to:
    a) Improve the quality of service delivery
    b) Improve Commercial Controls
    c) Gain efficiencies and savings through the recommission of works
    d) Support the move to Corporate Landlord
    e) Improve compliance across the estate
    f) Ensure contracts are fit for purpose, sustainable and flexible
    g) A shift away from transactional, to long term supplier relationships
    h) An improvement in the social value delivered through the contracts
    i) Supporting SME’s and the local economy
    j) Use innovative approaches to improve and sustain value

Approach to Procurement

12. The intention is to rationalise the number of contracts to allow more time to be invested in developing supplier relationships to improve value and quality of services delivered.

13. The requirements are split into three key areas – Hard Services, Soft Services and Minor Projects which each having a number of sub-lots.

14. The lots and associated annual values are shown below:

Service	Lot	Value (Annual)	Value (7 Years)
Hard FM	M&E up to £5k	£350K	£2.45M
Hard FM	Gen Build up to £5k	£350K	£2.45M
Hard FM	Compliance Testing	£250K	£1.75M
Hard FM	Emergency Repairs	£50K	£350K
Minor Works	Minor Projects £5k+	£4M	£28M
Soft FM	Core FM	£1.5M	£10.5M
Soft FM	Documents & Archives	£50K	£350K
Soft FM	Gritting & Winter Maint	£50K	£350K
Total		**£6.6M**	**£46.2M**

15. The majority of the spend in the above table is for maintaining and operating the Corporate Estate that is already centrally managed, with some further specific spends that have already agreed to be centralised including corporate alarm service contracts and some building maintenance items.

16. Work is ongoing to refine further spend areas and budgets to be centralised under Corporate Landlord prior to the Invitation To Tender (ITT) going to market in December 2018.

17. All the new contracts will have provision for increasing spend through them with associated mechanics to improve value for money based on economies of scale e.g. School Buy Back.

18. Procurement will be conducted through an Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) compliant “Open” process with Hard and Soft services using a Measured Term Contract and Minor Projects being a Framework/Call off agreement.

19. Contractors will be able, and encouraged, to bid for multiple lots – this will result in the Council having between 2 and 8 core contractors. The preference is to consolidate suppliers down to 2-3, unless it is economically advantageous to have more. The procurement process will favor those contractors that bid for multiple lots, but will not mandate it, to ensure that the procurement is as inclusive as possible and does not preclude SME's.

20. Robust market engagement is being undertaken, including issue of a Prior Information Notice (PIN) and supplier engagement events, taking a highly commercial best practice approach to procurement of these contracts. The lot and structure of the contracts may change following meaningful consultation with the market, but the principles will remain the same.

21. Subject to market engagement, the contracts will be awarded for a period of 7 years, with the option to extend up to a further 3 years. This is to enable long term working relationships to be built up.

Innovative Principles

22. Partnership Fund – the contract will feature a "partnership fund", an alternative take on traditional compensation events and penalty clauses. The idea has been well received by the market and internal procurement team. Contractors essentially have to issue the council a "credit note", when KPI's are not achieved, this fund can then be spent against council priorities across the corporate estate.

23. Industry Best Practice – this procurement will build on best practice from both private and public sectors in the UK, using industry standards and approaches that have been evidenced to work. Using standardised approaches like this reduced uncertainty for both customer and contractor. For example, using the National Schedule of Rates – NSR, to price works, SFG20 as the technical specification for compliance activities, standard form of contract such as New Engineering Contract - NEC or Joint Contracts Tribunal, - JCT and an Integrated Workplace Management System (Facilities Management Software).

24. Continuous Improvement – there are multiple measures, controls and KPI's relating to improving performance overtime, to ensure that the procurement is good value and fit for purpose initially, but more importantly, that it doesn't leak value or reduce quality overtime.

25. Business Intelligence – intelligent data and analysis will be a core part of this approach and will help the council manage and improve its estate in an efficient, effective and sustainable way. We will be asking suppliers to supply smart data, allowing us to tailor our maintenance regimes in a more proactive, and preventative way.

26. Digital by design – the sector and the Council are both on journeys to digitalisation and this will grow and evolve significantly over the 7 year life of this contract. The ability to build in new and innovative technology is key, including internet of things and artificial intelligence, as well as more routine tech such as repetitive process automation and application interfaces.

27. Co-production and Partnership Working – the approach to procurement recognises that we need to work in partnership with the market and build up long term, sustainable relationships, and move away from transactional type arrangements. All parties will be expected to invest in the partnership to improve outcomes.

28. Social Value – a contract worth over £6M a year, with a large portion of the spend relating to local labour, has the potential to be a catalyst for social value. Social value is being built in as a core part of this contract and approach and not an afterthought.

29. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) – the procurement process is designed to be as open and inclusive of SME's as possible, including the lotting of packages into manageable sizes for SME's, and the Council will be hosting a range of workshops and briefings to assist SME's (and other bidders) in the procurement process, working in partnership with CBC's Investment and Employment Service and Procurement teams.

Reason/s for decision

30. To re-procure the Facilities Management contracts to support implementation of Corporate Landlord for the 1st of April 2019.

Council Priorities

This re-procurement supports the following Council's priorities:

31. A more efficient and responsive Council by improving the quality of service, levels of compliance and customer satisfaction; and by delivering c£0.3M of new financial efficiencies.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

32. LGSS Law have considered the proposed procurement and have no reservation as to the procurement or value or method proposed (open OJEU). There may be better value for the authority, in terms of contractor relationship and or rates, if the minor works lot is procured as a separate framework. This is an alternative which can be considered but is not a bar on the current suggested procurement.

Financial and Risk Implications

33. Implementation costs of Corporate Landlord, which include this procurement activity, is funded through the Council's Transformation Reserves.

34. The current MTFP identified £55K of efficiencies in 19/20 through retendering of all Facilities Management contracts and £60K in 19/20 through the corporate landlord model.

35. The proposed MTFP includes additional £274K over the life of the MTFP in relation to the Corporate Landlord model which includes retendering of FM contracts.

Equalities Implications

36. 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.

37. The Facilities Management Team are working with the Community Intelligence Manager to ensure that specific equality considerations are built into the procurement process.

Conclusion and next Steps

38. The conclusion of the report is to recommend that Executive approve the procurement of Facilities Management contracts as outlined in this paper, and to avoid any impact on implementing Corporate Landlord on the 1st April 2019 that delegated authority is granted to award the contracts.

39. Subject to Executive approval the next steps are set out below:

Activity	**Date**
Issue ITT	10th December 2018
Close ITT	14th January 2019
End of interviews/Clarifications	28th January 2019
Evaluate Responses	1st February 2019
Standstill & Award	11th February 2019
Mobilisation	February 2019
Contracts go live	1st April 2019

Background Papers
None

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive 4 December 2018

Award of Contract – The repairs, maintenance and capital works programme

Report of: Cllr Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Health & Housing (carole.hegley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk) &

Cllr Richard Wenham, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources (richard.wenham@centalbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director(s): Julie Ogley, Director of Social Care, Health and Housing (julie.ogley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a Key Decision

Purpose of this report

1. This report seeks approval to award the contract for the repairs, maintenance and capital works programme to the Council's housing stock.

RECOMMENDATION

The Executive is asked to:

1. **approve the award of the most economically advantageous tender to Contractor A for delivery of the repairs, maintenance and capital works programme to the Council's housing stock.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments / Recommendations

2. This report does not need to be presented at Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the award of contracts is a matter for the Executive.

Background

3. This report outlines the outcome of tendering of the Council's programme for repairs, maintenance and planned capital works to the whole of housing stock to be procured under an open book cost management system.

4. The Tenderer recommended for acceptance will enter into a bespoke form of the Term Alliance Contract (TAC-1) published by the Association of Consultant Architects for an initial term of ten years extendable at the Council's sole discretion for a period of five years, giving a total term of fifteen years.

5. The value of the works and services to be delivered is expected to be up to £12.5m per annum with a maximum value over the whole fifteen-year term of up to £190m. All costs quoted exclude Value Added Tax.

6. It is intended to award a Term Alliance Contract with a single contractor ('Provider'). The Contract will govern the issue of orders for all works and services in accordance with the Council's agreed budgets, planned programmes and stock condition.

7. The report recommends Tenderer A are appointed to the Term Alliance Contract with effect from 1st March 2019.

8. The works and services required are in relation to the delivery of repairs, maintenance and planned investment works (together the 'Programme') to the Council's residential housing stock.

9. Specifically, the Programme includes the following twelve Core activities:

    i) A 24/7/365 day to day responsive repairs and maintenance service including electrical repairs and void (empty) property repairs and refurbishment;
    ii) Replacement of flat entrance and internal doors to individual dwellings;
    iii) Replacement of communal doors and entry systems to blocks of flats;
    iv) Installation and maintenance of Aids and Adaptations equipment for residents with reduced mobility;
    v) A programme of electrical rewiring following periodic testing;
    vi) Passenger and goods lift maintenance and repairs;
    vii) Maintenance and repairs to domestic stair lifts and Aids & Adaptation equipment;
    viii) Statutory compliance testing, inspections, maintenance and surveys to include for:
        - Asbestos removal;
        - Firefighting equipment (including replacements where necessary);
        - Water hygiene treatment;
        - Electrical installation and PAT testing;
        - Communal and Emergency Lighting testing; and,
        - Lightning protection.

ix) Routine servicing, maintenance and repair of communal alarm systems in supported and sheltered housing units;
x) Planned preventative maintenance to sump and booster pumps;
xi) A programme of pre-paint repairs and cyclical decorations; and,
xii) Surveys and maintenance of existing trees for insurance and arboriculture purposes.

10. The Council may, at their discretion and on the agreement of the Provider, include the following Additional works and services to the Programme at any time post award. It is expected they will be brought in at the expiry of their current contractual terms:

(i) Planned internal capital investment works to the housing stock including but not limited to replacement kitchens, bathrooms, commercial and domestic boilers, and heating systems;
(ii) Planned external capital investment works including but not limited to roof refurbishment and renewals, and window replacements;
(iii) A Three-Star gas servicing, maintenance and repair service;
(iv) Estate services including cleaning and window cleaning; and,
(v) Various property refurbishment works.

11. The Provider will be encouraged and supported to seek out and engage SMEs and social enterprises in Central Bedfordshire through the procurement of goods and services in respect of the Programme.

12. The Provider will be required to offer realistic, sustainable employment and skills development opportunities to disadvantaged people in Central Bedfordshire. Working in partnership with the Client, the Provider shall identify a range of initiatives for employment, apprenticeships and skills opportunities which people in the Central Bedfordshire can access and benefit from.

The Public Contracts Regulations, 2015

13. The value of the Programme obliged the Council to comply with the Public Contracts Regulations, 2015 (SI 2015 No 102) that governed the tendering and selection exercise. A two stage process was followed where initial expressions of interest were sought to select the tender list, followed by inviting detailed tenders from those firms satisfying the pre-determined selection criteria.

14. A Contract Notice was published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) on 23rd February 2018. 20 firms expressed an interest in the Programme and were sent a Selection Questionnaire. 16 firms subsequently returned their completed applications by the closing date of 12:00 Noon, 27th March 2018.

15. Following a comprehensive evaluation exercise, seven firms were invited to submit tenders.

Reasons for decision

16. Full details of the scores awarded to each Tenderer are set out in the Appendix. Tenderer A were awarded the highest overall score and are therefore recommended for acceptance.

17. It is evident the competence and approach demonstrated by Tenderer A are the closest match to the Council's requirements. They have demonstrated the technical ability and alliancing approach necessary to deliver the Programme and submitted a competitive tender that falls 10% lower than the Council's pre-tender estimate. Their submission therefore represents the most advantageous tender for the Council in all respects.

Council Priorities

18. The actions support the Council priorities by:
    - Enhancing Central Bedfordshire – Improving the quality of council owned accommodation within the Central Bedfordshire area
    - Great resident services - Deliver a quality service to our customers where expectations are managed correctly and the service is delivered.
    - Improving education and skills - Create careers, employment and training opportunities through contract procurement and apprenticeship programmes.
    - Protecting the vulnerable; improving wellbeing - Ensure the housing portfolio provides for the needs of older people, vulnerable, special needs and minority households. Improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock. Helping to reduce carbon emissions and reduce levels of fuel poverty.
    - Creating stronger communities - Through procurement support local business, labour and training.
    - A more efficient and responsive Council. - Raise performance and customer satisfaction whilst keeping costs down.

Legal Implications

19. The procurement and high total value of this contract for services is subject to compliance with the full remit of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended) ("PCRs") and has been conducted by the Council in liaison with its own Procurement team, independent consultants, Savills (UK) Limited, and legal advice and support from the Procurement and Contracts team at LGSS Law limited.

20. As indicated in the report above, the European and National requirements for advertising and competition have been undertaken by way of publishing a Contract Notice in the OJEU to open up the contract opportunity to the market. The proposal and recommendation to award the contract is in accordance with the mandatory award criteria of Most Economically Advantageous Tender under Regulation 67 of the PCRs following a fair and transparent two stage selection and evaluation of bids process. The use of the industry standard Term Alliance Contract (TAC-1) is an acceptable form of legal contract for use of open book accounting in a long term partnering arrangement over the initial and any extended term. Sufficient contractual safeguards are built in to minimise the risks to the Council.

21. If the recommendation to award is approved by the Executive, the Council will be required to allow a standstill period (alongside any call in period) of a minimum of 10 calendar days before formal award of the contract can be authorised. All unsuccessful bidders will be notified of the winning bidder and provided with feedback information in connection with their respective bids including the relative characteristics of the bids against the winning bid and their overall ranking in the tender process during the standstill period to mitigate any potential challenges to the procurement process (as set out in more detail under Feedback to Tenderers and Leasehold Consultation).

Financial and Risk Implications

22. The anticipated value in the first year of the contract is £7.05M, expected to increase to £12.5m per annum over future years as additional workstreams are added.

23. The budget for repairs, maintenance and capital works likely to be provided by the contractor to housing properties is Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funded: £4.9M revenue and £2.15M stock protection. The funding has been included in the HRA Business Plan and is reviewed annually.

24. If the contract is awarded to Contractor A as proposed, expenditure will be contained within the allocated budgets, which have already had financial efficiencies applied in anticipation of the new Repairs Delivery Model.

25. The awarding of the contract will mitigate the risks of failing to discharge responsibilities to maintain housing properties to an appropriate standard, failing statutory compliance, failing to support the Council's priorities and failing to deliver value for money.

Equalities Implications

26. 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.

27. Equality and diversity are key issues for all directorates within Central Bedfordshire Council. As part of ongoing contract monitoring arrangements, the Council will check that statutory service delivery and employment requirements relating to equality are met.

Conclusion and Next Steps

28. Following a comprehensive and robust assessment of all the tendered submissions, it is recommended Tenderer A are appointed to the Term Alliance Contract as the Council's Repairs, Maintenance and Capital Works Provider.

29. Officers consider the offer to be realistic and that the Provider will be able to provide the required level of service at their tendered price. The evaluation panel recommends the tender from Tenderer A is accepted.

30. Formal award of contract is expected to conclude in February 2019 at which point the mobilisation phase begins in February that will allow the programme to begin from 1st July as planned. The Contract start will be dated 1st March 2019 accordingly.

Appendices

Appendix A: Tender Evaluation

Appendix B: Tender Summary - Exempt

Report author(s): James Yeomans

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Appendix A: Tender Evaluation

Tender Evaluation

1. Tenders were invited on 13th June 2018 with a closing date of 27th July. Two bidders withdrew during the tender period with the remaining five bidders all returning completed tenders by the closing date and time.

2. A panel comprising Council officers, residents and consultants Savills evaluated the submissions. Tender submissions were evaluated on a pre-determined quality / price ratio of 60:40. A total of 250 marks were available where 100 marks (40%) were allocated to price and 150 marks (60%) to the qualitative aspects of the bids.

3. Both aspects of the evaluation were undertaken separately of each other so that reviewers evaluating the qualitative submissions would not be influenced by having any prior knowledge of the Tenderer's price.

4. In accordance with the Council's corporate procurement policy and the advice of LGSS Law Limited; to comply fully with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 Restricted Procedure that governed this procurement, tender interviews did not form part of the evaluation. The assessment was made solely following a desk top evaluation of the detailed written tenders.

Open Book Pricing

5. The whole of the Programme will be managed by way of Open Book Accounting. That will require the Provider to declare their actual costs and allow the Council access to their books, ledgers, suppliers invoices, operative time sheets and the like at any time so that joint decisions can be made on improving productivity and value for money whilst preserving the Provider's margins.

6. An Open Book Review will be held quarterly chaired by an independent cost consultant to assess and validate all costs associated with the Programme.

7. One of the abiding principles of Open Book Accounting under this Contract is shared budget and cost control. In the event the Programme is projected to over spend any agreed budget, the Alliance Members will agree the interventions necessary to ensure the programme remains affordable. In the event the Provider

exceeds any agreed budget without the Client's prior approval, the cost of completing those works or services may be met by the Provider.

8. Tenderers were required to submit prices for their Site Based Overheads (Preliminaries), Central Office Overheads and Profit separately from the cost of the works for each work stream. This enabled a comprehensive assessment of the actual cost of the works to be undertaken in tandem with a review of each Tenderers costs to deliver them.

Incentivisation

9. The Council wishes to incentivise the Provider to deliver actual, audited savings from the annual budget for each work stream. In that regard, Providers were invited to tender the percentage of any such saving (as confirmed in the final Open Book Report for each year) they would be paid (the 'Gain') along with the percentage of any unauthorised over spend) that would be returned to the Council (the 'Pain').

10. Those tendered percentages will remain unchanged throughout the Contract Term unless with the express, written approval of the Council.

Evaluation of Price

11. A pre-tender estimate was prepared for the Programme based on the project teams' knowledge and understanding of the prevailing market. The pre-tender estimate for the Programme was valued at £12,735,484.

12. An analysis of the prices received compared to the pre-tender estimate are summarised in Table 1 overleaf.

Table 1 – Tenders Received

Tenderer	Tender Sum
Tenderer A	£11,465,449.53
Tenderer B	£12,890,591.98
Tenderer C	£12,541,804.46
Tenderer D	£12,143,608.47
Tenderer E	£12,535,787.39
Pre-Tender Estimate	£12,735,484.00

13. Prices were scored against a simple model to provide a fair analysis of each element of the Tenderers bid. Prices for the net cost of the Works were scored separately from the Overheads and the Pain and Gain mechanism.

14. A maximum of 100 Marks were available for Price with the Gain mechanism apportioned 20 marks, the Pain mechanism 10 marks, the cost of delivering the Core Services 40 marks and the Additional Services, 30 marks.

15. Tender prices were scored against that weighting all as described to Tenderers in the Invitation to Tender documents and again at the Mid-Tender Briefing.

16. By way of an example, the maximum available for Core Works is 40 marks. The lowest acceptable Core Works price is that of Tenderer A at £7,054,535.73 with the second lowest being Tenderer C at £7,350,362.44. Tenderer C were therefore awarded 38.39 marks being 95.98% of the maximum marks available:

    £7,054,535.74 / £7,350,362.44 x 100= 95.98%

    40 marks x 95.98% = 38.39 marks

17. Table 2 overleaf below sets out the scores applied to each of the tenders received using that scoring mechanism. The price offering the best value for money is shaded in green.

Table 2 – Price scoring

Tenderer	Gain %	Score max 20 marks	Pain %	Score max 10 marks	Core Works	Score max 40 marks	Add Works	Score max 30 marks
Tenderer A	25%	15.00	100%	10.00	7,054,535.73	40.00	4,410,913.80	30.00
Tenderer B	0%	20.00	90%	9.00	8,034,518.78	35.12	4,856,073.20	27.25
Tenderer C	0%	20.00	100%	10.00	7,350,362.44	38.39	5,191,442.02	25.49
Tenderer D	0%	20.00	50%	5.00	7,447,629.32	37.89	4,695,979.15	28.18
Tenderer E	10%	18.00	90%	9.00	7,784,634.59	36.25	4,751,152.80	27.85

Tenderer	Total Tender Sum	Total Score Max 100 marks	Rank
Tenderer A	£11,465,449.53	95.00	1
Tenderer B	£12,890,591.98	91.37	3
Tenderer C	£12,541,804.46	93.88	2
Tenderer D	£12,143,608.47	91.07	5
Tenderer E	£12,535,787.39	91.10	4

18. The prices received ranged from £11.46m to £12.89m; an average bid of £12.3m that compares favourably to the Council's pre-tender estimate of £12.7m. The bid recommended for acceptance is within 10% of the pre-tender estimate that falls within a satisfactory margin and meets the Council's expectations.

19. The price from Tenderer A recommended for acceptance is just under 10% lower than the pre-tender estimate and 6.9% lower than the average of all five tenders. Analysis found they were comparable to the other bidders across all net works costs but their percentage for Overheads and Profit was some 6% lower.

20. Tenderer A's total bid for Overheads and Profit for all Core and Additional Services equated to 14.05% of the net cost of the works that compared to an average of 20.1% across all five bids. It was found they had not priced for any additional Overhead to deliver the Additional Services that had the effect of reducing their overall total.

21. In their response to a clarification request of 17th August, Tenderer A confirmed they could deliver the quoted throughput of Additional Works without having to increase their site based resources that meant they were able to hold the level of their tendered Overheads. Note the Contract does not permit any increase to the Overhead (or any price) without the approval of the Core Group that governs the Programme.

Evaluation of Quality

22. The qualitative assessment was measured against 17 'Tender Action Points' set out in the Invitation to Tender document covering the service areas listed in Table 3 below:

Table 3 – Tender Action Points

TAP	Topic	Marks Available
1	Service delivery (method, mobilisation, programme)	30
2	The Alliancing Team (resources, structure, Core Group)	10
3	Open Book Accounting	20
4	Unequivocal acceptance of the Contract	Pass / Fail
5	Sustainability (minimising waste, carbon reduction)	5
6	Resident involvement (method, resource, liaison, access)	30
7	Alliancing with the Supply Chain (supply chain involvement)	10
8	Quality management (system for zero defects)	10
9	IT (links to the Council's parent ICT system)	20
10	Acceptance of specified Key Performance Indicators	Pass / Fail
11	Risk management	5
12	Compliance with specified insurance and security cover	Pass / Fail
13	Social Value (incl. apprenticeships, training, local employment)	5
14	Health & Safety	5

TAP	Topic	Marks Available
15	Organisation information (any change since the SQ was submitted)	Information only
16	Submission of Confidentiality and Non-Collusion certificates	Pass / Fail
17	Submission of the completed Pricing Framework	Pass / Fail
	Total marks available	**150**

23. Evaluation of the Tenderer's qualitative submission were undertaken by a team of council officers, tenant representatives and the independent consultant.

24. The evaluation of each Tenderer's submission was based on the criteria set out in the Invitation to Tender and was scored against pre-determined weightings for each criterion. Each member of the team undertook an independent evaluation and then agreed combined quality scores.

25. Bidders were advised in the Invitation to Tender that scores will be adjusted after marking so that the Tenderer with the highest score for quality will be awarded 60% of the marks (i.e. full marks). All other Tenderers' scores would be adjusted by the same ratio to reflect the difference between their score and the score of the highest scoring Tenderer. This approach ensures the quoted 60:40 split between quality and price is maintained.

26. As expected at this stage of the process, the tender submissions were to a good level of quality with just 25 marks separating the bids. A summary of the scores awarded to each Tenderer are set out in Table 4 below where 150 marks are the maximum available. The top qualitative bid is shaded in green:

Table 4 – Qualitative Evaluation results

Tenderer	Weighted Score	Adjusted to 60% Weighting	Rank
Tenderer A	135.00	148.35	2
Tenderer B	123.00	135.16	3
Tenderer C	120.00	131.87	4

Tenderer D	113.00	124.18	5
Tenderer E	136.50	150.00	1

27. Having taken account of the scoring applied to Price and Quality for each Tenderer and based on the published evaluation criteria, Table 5 below summarises the outcomes of the process and highlights Tenderer A as the highest scoring bidder.

Table 5 – Tender Outcome

Tenderer	Price	Price Score (max 100)	Quality (max 150)	Total Score (max 250)	Rank
Tenderer A	£11,465,449.53	95.00	148.35	243.35	1
Tenderer B	£12,890,591.98	91.37	135.16	226.53	3
Tenderer C	£12,541,804.46	93.88	131.87	225.75	4
Tenderer D	£12,143,608.47	91.07	124.18	215.25	5
Tenderer E	£12,535,787.39	91.10	150.00	241.10	2

Feedback to Tenderers and Leaseholder Consultation

28. Under Regulation 86 of the Public Contracts Regulations, 2015; the Council is required to give reasons to each Tenderer as to why their bid was successful or unsuccessful. However, the Council may not issue such feedback until the Executive have approved the recommendations in this report and the Home Ownership Team have concluded the second stage of formal consultation with Leaseholders (the 'Notice of Proposal').

29. It is expected Notices of Proposal will be issued to leaseholders affected by the Programme in late October with the consultation period due to expire in early December. Subject to any leaseholder's observations being concluded to their satisfaction, Savills will then issue detailed feedback (known as the 'Regulation 86 letters') to each Tenderer on behalf of the Council in December.

30. Among other things, the Regulation 86 letter offers 10 calendar days (the 'Standstill Period') from the date of issue for the unsuccessful Tenderers to seek further clarification for the reasons they were not appointed, or to lodge a formal

challenge if they feel the process in any way breached the Regulations. During that 10 day Stand Still Period, the Council may not proceed further until the expiry date passes without challenge. Savills will deal with any requests for clarification or challenges that may arise during that period.

EXECUTIVE 4 December 2018

Revenue Budget Monitoring September (Q2) 2018

Report of Cllr Richard Wenham, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources (richard.wenham@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Charles Warboys, Director of Resources & S151 Officer (charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a Non Key Decision

Purpose of this report

The report sets out the forecast outturn financial position for 2018/19 as at the end of September 2018. It sets out spend against the approved budget and it excludes the Housing Revenue Account which is subject to a separate report. Explanations for the variances are set out below in Appendix A.

This report enables the Executive to consider the overall financial position of the Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Executive is asked to:

1. **note the current revenue forecast outturn position for 2018/19 which is an overspend of £1.6M (before the release of the contingency);**

2. **note that the budget includes £2.1M of contingency costs against which no call has yet been made. If this contingency is released then this results in an underspend of £0.5M; and**

3. **request that officers continue to look for compensatory savings in order to deliver a balanced budget.**

Issues

1. The forecast outturn position as at September 2018 is £1.6M over budget (before the release of the contingency).

2. SCHH is forecasting an overspend of £1.0M which relates to increased Homecare costs (including the full year effect of the new contract arrangements from last year), increased Respite and Residential package costs and also increased mental health costs.

3. Community Services is forecasting an overspend of £0.8M which mainly relates to the changes in the market for recyclate materials. Previously we sold recyclate materials and gained an income, but this is now a cost to dispose. Market conditions are fluctuating so this will need careful monitoring throughout the year.

4. Children's Services is forecasting an overspend of £0.5M. This is due to increases in Independent Fostering and Adoption and additional costs in residential care.

5. Regeneration are forecasting £0.3M below budget mainly relating to pay underspends.

6. The Chief Executive Directorate is under by £0.1M and Public Health is on budget.

7. Resources is forecasting an overspend of £0.3M due mainly to increased Legal costs incurred across the Council.

8. Corporate costs is under by £0.7M due to lower than budgeted pensions costs and reduced interest costs.

9. We are holding a contingency of £2.1M against which no call has yet been made. If this contingency is released then this results in an underspend of £0.5M.

10. The table below details the full year variances by directorate:

	Year to Date - September P06			Full Year		
Directorate	**Budget £m**	**Actual £m**	**Variance £m**	**Budget £m**	**Forecast Outturn £m**	**Variance £m**
SCHH	37.6	37.8	0.2	75.3	76.3	1.0
Childrens Services	18.1	18.4	0.3	35.7	36.2	0.5
Community Services	25.8	26.8	1.0	51.2	52.0	0.8
Regeneration	2.0	1.8	(0.2)	5.5	5.2	(0.3)
Public Health	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0
Chief Executive's	0.7	0.7	(0.0)	1.4	1.3	(0.1)
Resources	6.3	6.3	(0.0)	12.6	12.9	0.3
Corporate Costs	2.5	2.3	(0.3)	8.0	7.4	(0.7)
Total Excl Landlord Business	**93.1**	**94.1**	**1.1**	**189.7**	**191.3**	**1.6**

Reserves Position

11. The table below shows the forecast net movement in earmarked reserves during 2018/19. All movements were budgeted in the MTFP.

	£M	£M
Opening 2018/19		**51.0**
Use of Reserves		
SCHH	(1.4)	
Children's Services	(1.0)	
Community Services	(3.8)	
Regeneration	(0.2)	
Public Health	(0.2)	
Corporate Costs	0.0	
		(6.6)
Receipts in Advance & Technical Adjustments		
New Homes Bonus	2.0	
S31 Grant to offset NNDR Discounts	2.2	
Other	0.3	
		4.5
Closing Balance 2018/19		**49.0**

General Reserves

12. The opening position for 2018/19 is £15.7M. There are no further planned additions.

Council Priorities

13. 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 6 Council priorities.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

14. None.

Financial Implications

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

Equalities Implications

16. Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken prior to the allocation of the 2018/19 budgets and Members were advised of significant equality implications relating to the budget proposals when setting the Council's Budget in February 2018.

Appendices

Appendix A – Detailed Directorate Commentary
Appendix B - Debt Management
Appendix C – Treasury Management

APPENDIX A – DIRECTORATE COMMENTARY

Social Care, Heath and Housing (SCHH)

1 The Directorate General Fund provisional outturn is above budget by £1.0M as at September 2018.

2

Month: September 2018	Year to date				Year				
Director	Budget	Actual	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Variance	Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Forecast Variance after use of earmarked reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Social Care Health and Housing									
Director of Social Care, Health, Housing and MANOP	142	213	(163)	(91)	283	559	276	(333)	(57)
Procurement and Customer Services	676	607	-	(69)	1,352	1,339	(13)	-	(13)
Housing Solutions (GF)	1,779	1,614	-	(165)	3,557	3,457	(100)	-	(100)
Care and Support	5,938	5,515	(61)	(483)	11,875	11,630	(245)	(97)	(342)
OPPD - Care Management	17,505	19,369	-	1,865	35,009	37,680	2,671	-	2,671
LD Care Management & MH Packages	12,413	12,277	-	(136)	24,825	25,297	472	-	472
Head of Integrated Services + Other IS	416	486	-	71	831	862	31	-	31
Commissioning	4,368	4,312	-	(56)	8,736	8,234	(502)	-	(502)
Resources	(5,606)	(5,877)	(482)	(753)	(11,212)	(11,429)	(217)	(943)	(1,160)
Total Social Care and Health	**37,628**	**38,516**	**(705)**	**183**	**75,256**	**77,629**	**2,373**	**(1,373)**	**1,000**

3 Director of SCHH and MANOP : The Director of SCHH (including expenditure associated with MANOP) is forecast to underspend by £0.057M. £0.333M has been drawn down from the Outcome Based Commissioning Reserve to meet the cost of the MANOP programme in 2018/19.

4 Customer Services is forecast to overspend by £0.077M in 2018/19. Profiled recruitment to vacant posts (inclusive of employer oncosts) is the major factor associated with this forecast variance.

5 Procurement is forecast to underspend by £0.090M due to staff vacancies and a favourable Comensura rebate.

6 Housing Solutions (General Fund) is forecast to underspend by £0.100M.

7 Care and Support forecast is forecast to underspend by £0.342M. Reablement continues to experience recruitment difficulties contributing to a forecast underspend of £0.651M. Continued use of interim staff and overtime to cover staff shortfalls within Learning Disabilities Direct Services and In House Care Homes continues to be a challenge.

8 Older People is forecast to overspend by £2.671M. Within the Older People 65+ external package budgets, there is an overspend on residential and nursing placements of £0.216M and £2.924M on non-residential packages. Customer income is forecast to over achieve by £0.220M.

9 Learning Disability (Assessment and Care) is forecast to underspend by £0.224M. The service area forecast includes the draw down of a £0.300M Learning Disability Nurses provision. Customer income is forecast to overachieve by £0.414M. Working Age Mental Health and Physical Disability is forecast to overspend by

£0.696M. This is, primarily, a consequence of the flow through of increased costs from last year and continued cost increases this year.

10 The Commissioning Service is forecast to underspend by £0.502M. Within this service area the Learning Disability Transfer block contract is underspent by £0.449M and Commissioning Operations £0.117M. These underspends are driven by reduced care package costs and staff vacancies respectively.

11 The Resources division is forecast to underspend by £1.160M (after the release of the Adult Social Care Transformation Reserve - £0.711M).
Customer income, reported within Resources, is forecast to overachieve by £1.153M.

12 The HRA is reported separately.

Children's Services

13 The Directorate outturn position is £0.5M above budget as at September 2018.

14

Month: September 2018	Year to date				Year				
Director	Budget	Actual	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Variance	Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Forecast Variance after use of earmarked reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Children's Services									
Director of Children's Services	306	454	-	148	512	512	-	-	-
Children's Services Safeguarding & Early Help	9,139	9,106	-	(33)	18,148	18,702	554	(313)	241
LAC Placement Costs	4,718	4,901	-	183	9,547	9,946	399	(241)	158
Education and Transformation	4,307	4,340	-	33	8,294	8,867	573	(455)	118
Partnerships	256	242	-	(14)	516	516	-	-	-
Total Children's Services (ex Schools / Overheads)	**18,726**	**19,043**	**-**	**317**	**37,017**	**38,543**	**1,526**	**(1,009)**	**517**
DSG + ESG Contribution to Central Support	(666)	(666)	-	-	(1,331)	(1,331)	-	-	-
Total Children's Services (excluding Schools)	**18,060**	**18,377**	**-**	**317**	**35,686**	**37,212**	**1,526**	**(1,009)**	**517**

15 The full year projected outturn position for 2018/19 as at August 2018 is an overspend of £0.517M. This is largely due to a higher than budgeted number of children placed with Independent Foster Carers (an increase of 17 or 23% year on year (see following table).

16 Other pressures includes staffing overspends within Access & Inclusion team and an unachievable efficiency against the Court & Permanency Team that has been mitigated in part by other in year savings.

Looked After Children

17 The table below highlights the year on year movement for Looked After Children.

	September 2017		September 2018		% change
Number of LAC :		**267**		**287**	7.5%
In House Foster Placements	120		125		4.2%
Independent Foster Placements (Inc. Mother & Baby IFA's)	73		90		23.3%
Residential Homes & Schools	9		5		-44.4%
Parent & Baby (Inc. mother & baby IFA's)	3		2		-33.3%
St Christopher's (Clophill & Bunyan Road)	5		7		40.0%
St Christopher's (Stewartby)	0		0		0.0%
Semi - Independent Living (aged 16 & 17)	12		14		16.7%
Supported Lodgings (16-18)	0		0		0.0%
Placed for Adoption/ with Parents	36		31		-13.9%
CWD (Maythorn, Children's homes and Residential School)	4		8		100.0%
YOs serving custodial sentences/Temp Accom/YO/NHS	5		5		0.0%
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children:		**38**		**39**	2.6%
In House Foster Placements	9		10		11.1%
Independent Foster Placements	3		5		66.7%
Semi Independent Living (aged 16 & 17)	26		24		-7.7%
Total Number of LAC:		**305**		**326**	6.9%

	September 2017	September 2018	% change
Non care placements :			
Special Guardianship Orders	144	155	7.6%
Residential Orders	33	35	6.1%
Adoption Allowances	50	55	10.0%
Other information:			
Child Protection Plan	211	205	-2.8%
Children in Need	1371	1322	-3.6%
Number of Referrals (YTD)	989	668	-32.5%

(including UASC)	Movement YTD
LAC (10th April Panel 308)	18
In House Placements (April 131)	4
Independent Foster Placements (April 84)	11
Semi Independent Living (April 38)	0
Special Guardianship Orders (April 140)	15

Note the UASC YTD movement shows the last quarter only.

Community Services

18 The Directorate forecast outturn position is above budget by £0.795M as at September 2018.

19

Month: September 2018	Year to date				Year				
Director	**Budget**	**Actual**	**Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves**	**Variance**	**Approved Budget**	**Forecast Outturn**	**Forecast Variance**	**Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves**	**Forecast Variance after use of earmarked reserves**
	£000	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**	**£000**
Community Services									
Community Services Director	115	111	-	(4)	231	231	-	-	-
Highways	1,674	1,174	(4)	(504)	3,723	4,153	430	(646)	(216)
Transport	5,609	6,516	(538)	369	11,719	13,572	1,853	(1,218)	635
Waste	10,447	11,170	(159)	564	20,569	22,307	1,738	(849)	889
Leisure	1,370	1,034	(34)	(370)	2,877	2,480	(397)	(34)	(431)
Community Safety	439	371	(68)	(136)	541	498	(43)	(153)	(196)
Public Protection	355	932	(368)	209	867	1,201	334	(312)	22
Corporate Assets	(510)	(352)	(158)	-	(1,144)	(873)	271	(260)	11
Capital Construction	194	453	(46)	213	388	381	(7)	(48)	(55)
Facilities Management	2,891	2,975	-	84	4,924	4,996	72	(180)	(108)
IT	3,231	3,851	(22)	598	6,463	6,852	389	(145)	244
Total Community Services	**25,815**	**28,235**	**(1,397)**	**1,023**	**51,158**	**55,798**	**4,640**	**(3,845)**	**795**

20 **Highways Transportation**

The forecast outturn for Highways is a £0.216M underspend, after the use of reserves of £0.646M. The major variances are:

- £0.310M) increased income from Section 38 and Section 278 agreements (£0.060M)
- £0.100M additional costs for winter maintenance to fill up new Salt Barn based on 2000 tonnes
- £0.048M underspend in costs for consultancy spend as activity is now being completed in house
- £0.015M additional to Luton Borough Council for managing traffic signals
- £0.021M increase in telephone spend due to upgrade of old A5 traffic signals to 4G compliant

21 **Transport**

Transport are forecasting a £0.635M overspend after the use of reserves of £1.218M.

School Transport

- £0.327M overspend on school transport of which £0.418M is mainly Special Educational Needs transport contracts offset by an increase in income of £0.091M for bus passes and the use of the Extended Rights Grant of £0.327M.

Passenger transport are forecasting an overspend of £0.308M, which includes:-

- £0.308M staffing overspends of which £0.043M is due to Agency spend to cover vacant posts and ensuring routes are staffed and £0.087M due to non-achievement of vacancy factor and £0.072M on the remaining staffing budget
- £0.107M overspend on contract hire for vehicle to run the new routes
- £0.101M non achievement of efficiency in concessionary fares
- £0.058M reduction in income of which relates to non achievement of efficiency relating to adult social care transport
- £0.175M underspend on bus subsidy
- £0.048M underspend on community transport due to routes no longer running
- £0.024M underspend due to new fuel supplier and use of bunker at Thorn Turn

22 **Waste**

Waste are forecasting a £0.889M overspend after the use of reserves of £0.849M.

- £0.986M overspend for waste disposal, this is a result of loss of recyclate income of £0.245M as now having to pay for the disposal of recylate and increased recyclate waste disposal costs of £0.683M £0.024M underspend

on kerbside collection due to actual and expected 3% increase (due Oct 18) indexation
- £0.029M underspend on staffing due to a vacant position for part of the year
- £0.025M underspend on building repairs & maintenance and car mileage
- £0.020M underspend on furniture & equipment

23 **Leisure**

Leisure are forecasting a £0.431M underspend after the use of reserves of £0.034M.

- £0.311M additional income on the Leisure Management Contracts (£0.335M), due to new contracts in the south & inflationary rises, this has been slightly offset by a reduction in library income (£0.024M)
- £0.186M underspend on staffing due to vacancies within the library service where there are currently 15 vacant posts. These are starting to be filled
- £0.021M underspend on Library Link and car mileage where shorter routes and a newer vehicle have resulted in savings on repairs and fuel
- £0.069M overspend on 3rd Party costs this includes £0.140M for start up costs for the Dunstable Leisure Centre and a loss of income at Sandy & Saxon Leisure centres. This has been partly offset by a saving of £0.071M on the new contract at the Grove Theatre.
- £0.016M professional services relating to preparation for the new leisure strategy

24 **Community Safety**

The service is forecasting a £0.196M underspend, after the use of reserves of £0.153M

- £0.084M additional parking income
- £0.040M reduction in professional services, rates and private contractors spend for contracts and the CYS call centre
- £0.090M underspend on staffing due to reduced overtime and vacancies not being filled when expected
- £0.018M increase in court & legal costs

25 **Corporate Assets**

Corporate Assets are forecasting a £0.011M overspend after the use of reserves of £0.260M

- £0.035M additional costs for the renewal of software licences for Technology Forge Asset database
- £0.023M increased cost of premises maintenance
- £0.058M overspend on staffing costs
- £0.005M essential landlord repairs to Westbury Close
- £0.016M overspend on security costs due to vacant land/ premises
- £0.020M underspend on rates also due to reduction in number of vacant business units
- £0.103M additional rental income which includes arrears for leases

26 **Capital Construction Team**

Forecasting an £0.055M underspend on salaries.

27 **Facilities Management**

Forecasting a £0.108M underspend after the use of reserves of £0.180M.

- £0.218M overspend on staffing
- £0.047M overspends on running costs at Houghton Hall & Thorn Turn
- £0.046M overspend Samange licences to implement online assets helpdesk facilities
- £0.037M overspend due to increased security at Bedford Square, Kingsland and Libraries
- £0.019M additional costs for repairs and treeworks at Kingsland
- £0.013M increased cleaning contract costs due to cost of living increase
- £0.156M underspend on utility costs due to reduced use
- £0.037M lower Kingsland service charges.
- £0.304M lower rates mainly due to credit for Bedford Square revaluation of the rateable value.

28 **Information Technology**

The forecast outturn for IT £0.244M overspend after £0.145M of reserves.

- £0.324M staffing underspend due to vacancies within the service
- £0.022M increase in recharge income for the BUPA funding from adults
- £0.029M increased recharge income for first call for elderly emergency alarms.
- £0.287M increase in professional services which includes £0.106M OLM Gcloud procurement, £0.130M for a Service Manager Support for the service desk, £0.041M for consultant to aid the implementation of new infrastructure applications
- £0.388M increase in Data Network charges, includes efficiencies which haven't been achieved, cost associated with changing networks from DUCL to BT and dual running costs
- £0.093M increase in software costs for licencing etc
- £0.050M reduction in computer hardware costs in the datacentres following a review
- £0.144M net underspend on schools networks, as network facility is being closed down
- £0.040M reduction on Multifunctional Device (Printers/Copiers) income due to overall reduction in printing across the Council

Regeneration and Business Support

29 The Directorate outturn position is £0.251M below budget as at September 2018.

Month: September 2018	Year to date				Year				
Director	Budget	Actual	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Variance	Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Forecast Variance after use of earmarked reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Regeneration and Business									
Director	112	107	-	(5)	224	224	-	-	-
Client Development Services	613	480	133	-	1,232	1,232	-	-	-
Business Performance	324	324	-	-	648	648	-	-	-
Business & Support	100	160	-	60	1,428	1,428	-	-	-
Development Infrastucture	832	603	-	(229)	1,966	1,866	(100)	(151)	(251)
Total Regeneration and Business	**1,981**	**1,674**	**133**	**(174)**	**5,496**	**5,396**	**(100)**	**(151)**	**(251)**

30 The forecast underspend is due to vacancies in Planning & Strategic Growth areas and additional Planning Income.

Public Health

31 Public Health's outturn is a balanced budget after proposed use of and contributions to reserves. The Public Health grant is currently ringfenced so any under/overspend results in a movement against the carried forward reserve from 2017/18.

Month: September 2018	Year to date				Year				
Director	Budget	Actual	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Variance	Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Forecast Variance after use of earmarked reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Public Health									
Director of Public Health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assistant Director of Public Health	42	(437)	479	-	84	324	240	(240)	-
Total Public Health	**42**	**(437)**	**479**	**-**	**84**	**324**	**240**	**(240)**	**-**

Chief Executive

32 The Directorate outturn position is below budget by £0.052M as at September 2018.

Month: September 2018	Year to date				Year				
Director	Budget	Actual	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Variance	Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Forecast Variance after use of earmarked reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Chief Executive's									
Chief Executive	153	153	-	-	306	304	(2)	-	(2)
Communications	528	503	-	(25)	1,055	1,005	(50)	-	(50)
Total Chief Executive's	**681**	**656**	**-**	**(25)**	**1,361**	**1,309**	**(52)**	**-**	**(52)**

33 The Chief Executive Directorate is below budget by £0.052M. The main drivers are:

- £0.015M Higher than budgeted HRA Recharge - in line with last year's outturn
- £0.014M Additional income relating to advertising in Info Central
- £0.030M Salary underspend due to part year vacancies.

Resources

34 The Directorate outturn position is above budget by £0.290M as at September 2018.

Month: September 2018	Year to date				Year				
Director	Budget	Actual	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Variance	Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Forecast Variance after use of earmarked reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Resources									
Director of Resources	22	21	-	(1)	44	42	(2)	-	(2)
Finance Performance and Control	1,732	1,846	-	114	3,464	3,718	254	-	254
Housing Benefit Subsidy	(364)	(364)	-	-	(728)	(728)	-	-	-
Revs & Bens	857	857	-	-	1,714	1,714	-	-	-
Audit	268	269	-	1	535	535	-	-	-
Legal Services	865	952	-	87	1,730	1,898	168	-	168
Governance	1,189	1,001	-	(188)	2,378	2,312	(66)	-	(66)
People	1,746	1,732	-		3,492	3,428	(64)	-	(64)
Total Resources	**6,315**	**6,314**	**-**	**13**	**12,629**	**12,919**	**290**	**-**	**290**

35 The forecast outturn for Resources is £0.290M overspent due to:

- 0.168M overspend in Legal Services, which is based on the management information bill run rate up to Q2. The service is overachieving on income, however not enough to fully mitigate the pressures on legal costs.

- £0.254M Financial Operations which is due to: £0.038M Lower than budgeted insurance buyback income partially offset by lower than budgeted premiums, £0.174M Unachievable Efficiencies within Financial Transactions (relates to payment cards), £0.016M Higher than budgeted IT contract spend relating to OCR & Readsoft, £0.053M Lower than budget Deferred Payment Agreement income & Blue Badge Income, £0.024M Overspend on Capita & Cardnet Costs, £0.028M Salary underspend due to part year vacancies, £0.022M Meridian income relating to deletion of duplicate Purchase Orders and Higher than budgeted income relating to brokerage

- £0.066M underspend in Governance due to: £0.014M underspend on salaries due to 3 partially vacant posts in Executive Support, Democratic Representatives and Registration of Electors. £0.018M overspend relating to the inability to achieve the vacancy factor £0.050M underspend due to lower than budgeted allowances.

- £0.064M underspend in People due to: £0.041M Children's Workforce Development salary underspend, £0.021M Underspend on salaries relating to apprenticeships.

Corporate Costs

36 The Corporate Costs outturn position is an underspend of £0.672M as at September 2018.

Month: September 2018	Year to date				Year				
Director	Budget	Actual	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Variance	Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast Variance	Proposed (use of) / contribution to Earmarked reserves	Forecast Variance after use of earmarked reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Corporate Costs									
Debt Management	4,947	4,884	-	(63)	9,894	9,569	(325)	-	(325)
Premature Retirement Costs	1,379	1,215	-	(164)	3,294	2,994	(300)	-	(300)
Corporate Public Health Recharges	(316)	(316)	-	-	(631)	(631)	-	-	-
Corporate HRA Recharges	(60)	(60)	-	-	(120)	(120)	-	-	-
Efficiencies	(411)	(434)	-	(23)	(688)	(735)	(47)	-	(47)
Contingency and Reserves*	(2,999)	(2,999)	-	-	(3,713)	(3,713)	-	-	-
Total Corporate Costs	**2,540**	**2,290**	**-**	**(250)**	**8,036**	**7,364**	**(672)**	**-**	**(672)**

37 Corporate Costs underspend is due to: Reduced Interest payable and Increased interest receivable £0.325M, (£0.300M) Central Pension costs currently forecast to be less than originally anticipated; impacted when schools transfer to Academy £0.300M and increased purchase of annual leave £0.046M.

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Appendix B – Debtors

1 Overall debt in September was £10.5M. Within that £5.1M is under 30 days (49%). Debt over 61 days is £3.9M (37%). Of the Over 61 days - £3.3M is actively being chased, £0.2M have instalment arrangements in place. £0.5M is being dealt with through legal channels. A further £1.3M is in respect of house Sales.

2 The table below details the spread of age of debt.

September																
DIRECTORATE	1 to 14 Days		15 to 30 Days		31 to 60 Days		61 to 90 Days		91 to 270		271 to 365		1 year and		Total Debt	
	£k	%	£k	%	£k	%	£k	%	£k	%	£k	%	£k	%	£k	%
Social Care Health & Housing	2,104	38%	813	15%	177	3%	144	3%	612	11%	271	5%	1,414	26%	5,535	95%
Children's Services	59	15%	148	39%	52	14%	14	4%	52	14%	28	7%	29	8%	382	93%
Community Services	462	18%	916	36%	317	13%	7	0%	374	15%	290	11%	158	6%	2,524	89%
Regeneration	298	16%	172	9%	957	50%	358	19%	50	3%	6	0%	79	4%	1,920	100%
Resources	27	11%	121	47%	11	4%	-8	-3%	57	22%	8	3%	40	16%	256	97%
Public Health	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Unallocated & Non Directorate	0	0%	-2	1%	-30	21%	-12	8%	-34	23%	-3	2%	-65	45%	-146	98%
GRAND TOTAL	2,950	28%	2,168	21%	1,484	14%	503	5%	1,111	11%	600	6%	1,655	16%	10,471	
PREVIOUS MONTH	2,782		2,226		1,470		558		1,272		255		1,696		10,259	

3 **Social Care (SCHH)**
SCHH outstanding debt (excluding Health) is £2.935M and is under active management (with solicitors, payable by instalments etc).

4. Within SCHH, Health Service debt at the end of September was £2.600M of which £0.702M or 27% is more than 61 days old. A schedule of all outstanding debts is being shared and discussed regularly with the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

5. Total debt due for Children's Services is £0.382M of which £0.123M (32%) is debt over 61 days.

6. Total debt for Community Services is £2.524M of which £829k is debt over 61 days (33%). All debt is under active management.

7. Total debt for Regeneration & Business Support is £1.920M of which £0.493M (26%) is debt over 61 days.

8. Total debt for Chief Executive and Corporate Resources is £0.256M of which £0.097M (38%) is debt over 61 days. All debt is under active management (with solicitors, payable by instalments etc.).

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Appendix C- Treasury Management

Section A : Debt Information

Borrowing

1. As at 30 September 2018 the Council's total borrowing was £299.5M. Of this amount, £261.9M was with the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), £24.0M was short-term temporary debt from other local authorities and £13.6M was market debt from banks. The table below also shows the split between the General Fund and HRA.

	PWLB Fixed £M	PWLB Variable £M	Temporary Debt £M	Market (LOBO) £M	Total £M
General Fund	97.0	0.0	24.0	13.6	134.6
HRA	120.0	44.9	0.0	0.0	164.9
TOTAL	**217.0**	**44.9**	**24.0**	**13.6**	**299.5**

2. To manage interest rate risk, the Council's debt is split between 72% fixed rate PWLB debt, 15% variable rate PWLB debt, 8% short-term temporary debt and 5% fixed rate market (LOBO) debt; this is shown in A1 on the Treasury Management Performance Dashboard.

3. Based on the latest available annual benchmark analysis conducted by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), A2 of the Dashboard shows the Council's cost of borrowing is significantly lower than the 3.8% average annual interest rate paid by other local authorities. The average annual interest rate paid by the Council was 2.7% as at 31 March 2018, which is mainly due to a higher proportion of variable rate and short-term temporary debt.

4. In line with the Council's borrowing strategy, new short-term temporary borrowing was taken out during Quarter 2 at a cost of between 0.45% p.a. and 0.75% p.a. (inclusive of brokerage fees).

5. The Council's underlying need to borrow as measured by its Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) was £519.2M at 31 March 2018. Given external borrowing of £317.1M (inclusive of a £16.5M PFI outstanding liability) as at 31 March 2018, deferred borrowing was £202.1M using internal resources to fund the capital programme. In line with the approved treasury strategy, the Council used internal resources in lieu of borrowing to the full extent as this has continued to be the most cost effective means of funding capital expenditure.

Investments

6. When investing, the Council prioritises security and liquidity and aims to achieve a yield commensurate with these principles. To diversify the investment portfolio, the Council continues to invest in a range of funds such as notice accounts, call accounts and Money Market Funds as well as using a

number of different financial institutions. B1 of the Dashboard shows the breakdown by investment counterparty as at 30 September 2018. It should be noted that as cash investments are maintained at minimal levels for operational purposes, the £5.6M long-term investment in the UK commercial property-based Lime Fund now represents a higher proportion of total investments even though the cash amount invested in it has not changed.

7. The latest available CIPFA Treasury Management investment benchmarking results are as at 31 March 2018. B2 of the Dashboard shows that the Council's average rate of return on investments was 1.9% which was higher than the benchmarked local authority average of 0.8% – this was due to the relatively high investment return on the Lime Fund (inclusive of capital appreciation).

8. In addition to the Lime Fund investment, the Council has cash deposits placed on varying interest rates ranging between 0.50% and 0.95%. The Council holds the majority of its investments in liquid form so it is available for cash flow purposes. As at 30 September 2018, the Council held cash investments of £12.2M (exclusive of the £5.5M Lime Fund investment). Of the total cash investment balance, £7.7M was held in liquid form in instant access call accounts and Money Market Funds (MMFs); and the remaining £4.5M was held in notice accounts.

Cash Management

9. The average cash balance the Council holds is considerably lower than other benchmarked local authorities. The 12-month rolling average investment balance as at the 31 March 2018 for the Council was £26.7M (inclusive of the Lime fund) compared to a benchmarked local authority average of £180.4M. This reflects the Council's long-standing strategy of holding low cash balances to reduce investment counterparty risk and contain borrowing costs by utilising internal cash balances in lieu of external borrowing to fund capital expenditure.

10. **Budget**

A budget underspend of £0.5M is forecasted in 2018/19 in respect of Treasury Management activities reflecting:

- new borrowing being taken from local authorities and other public sector bodies such as Police and Crime Commissioners on a short-term temporary basis at lower than budgeted rates; and
- Capital Programme slippage which has been higher than originally assumed in the interest payable budget, leading to a lower level of overall borrowing being required than assumed in the 2018/19 budget.

11. **Outlook**

The UK economy expanded by 0.6% in the three months to 31 July 2018, its highest since August 2017. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was estimated to have increased by 1.7% between 2016 and 2017. The annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) measure of inflation decreased to 2.4% as at the end of September 2018, down from 2.7% in August 2018. The labour market saw the unemployment rate for the three months to 31 July 2018 at 4.0%, down from 4.3% a year earlier and at its lowest level for 40 years.

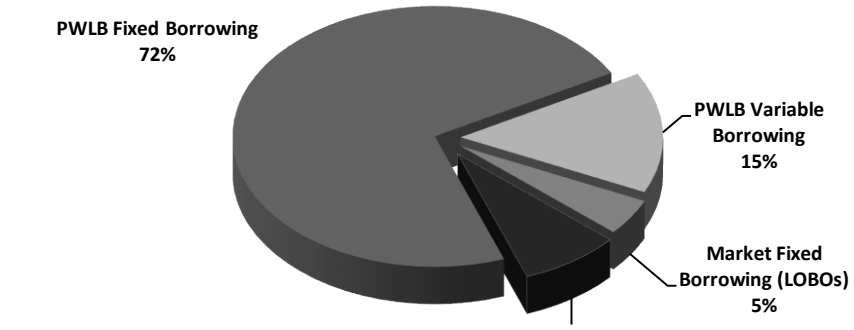
12. The Bank of England's MPC sets monetary policy to meet the 2.0% inflation target, and help sustain growth and employment. At its meeting ending on 12 September 2018, the MPC voted unanimously to maintain the Base Rate at 0.75%. A relatively weak economic environment limits the speed of any further rises in the Base Rate, although the Bank is of the view that it will "need to raise interest rates a bit more over the next few years". The long term neutral level of Base Rate is considered by the Bank to be between 2% and 3%.

13. The Council has continued to source its new borrowing requirements from local authorities and other public sector bodies such as Police and Crime Commissioners on a short-term temporary basis. The low market interest rates for temporary debt offer revenue cost savings relative to borrowing on a long-term basis from the PWLB. This borrowing strategy assumes that interest rates will continue to remain at historically low levels for the medium term.

14. However, the Council advised by Arlingclose will continue to monitor long-term rates with a view to fixing a portion of any borrowing requirement if rates available are viewed as favourable.

Section B: Treasury Management Performance Dashboard

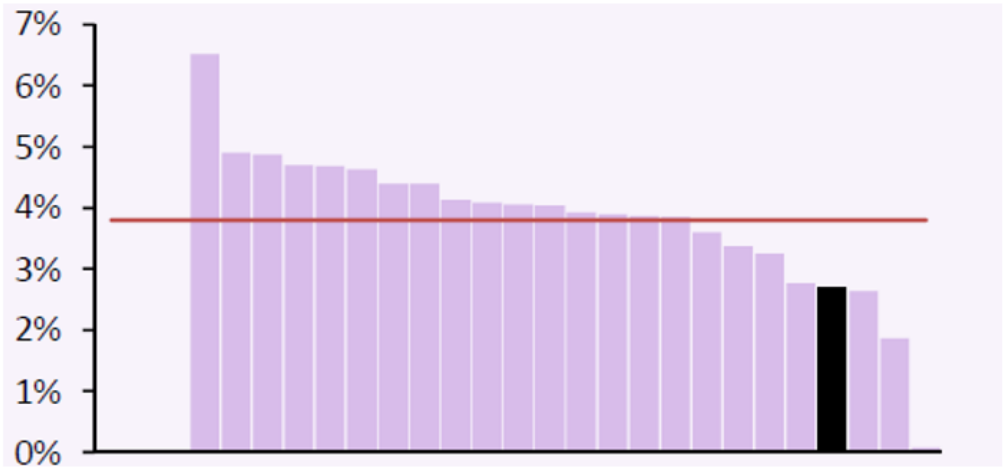
A1 **Analysis of borrowing type as at 30 September 2018**
Total £299.5M



PWLB Fixed Borrowing	£217.0M
PWLB Variable Borrowing	£44.9M
Market Fixed Borrowing (LOBOs)	£13.6M
Temp Variable Borrowing	£24.0M

Authorised Limits
- Fixed Rate Borrowing 100%
- Variable Rate Borrowing 50%

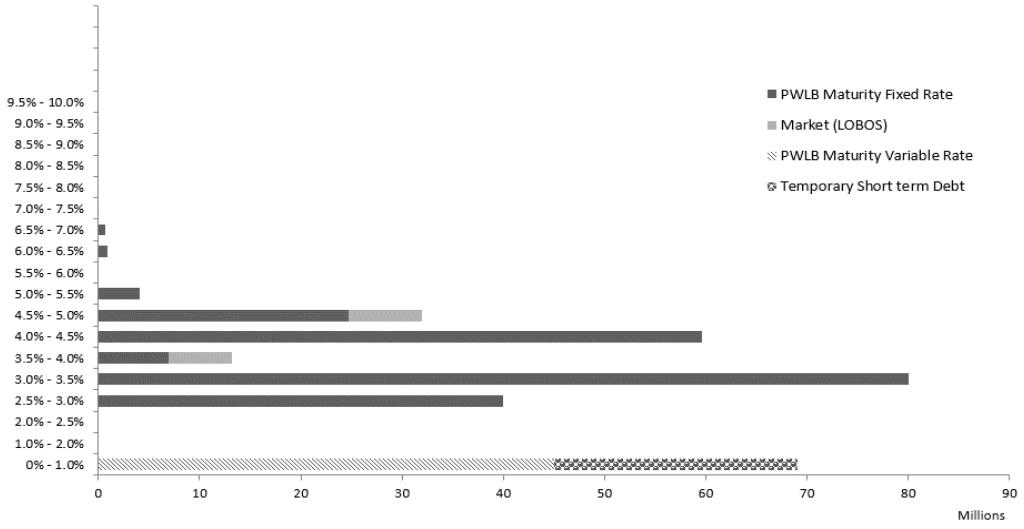
A2 **Annual benchmark analysis of average interest rate paid compared to other local authorities as at 31 March 2018 (CBC shown as the black line)**



CBC average 2.7%
Benchmark average 3.77%

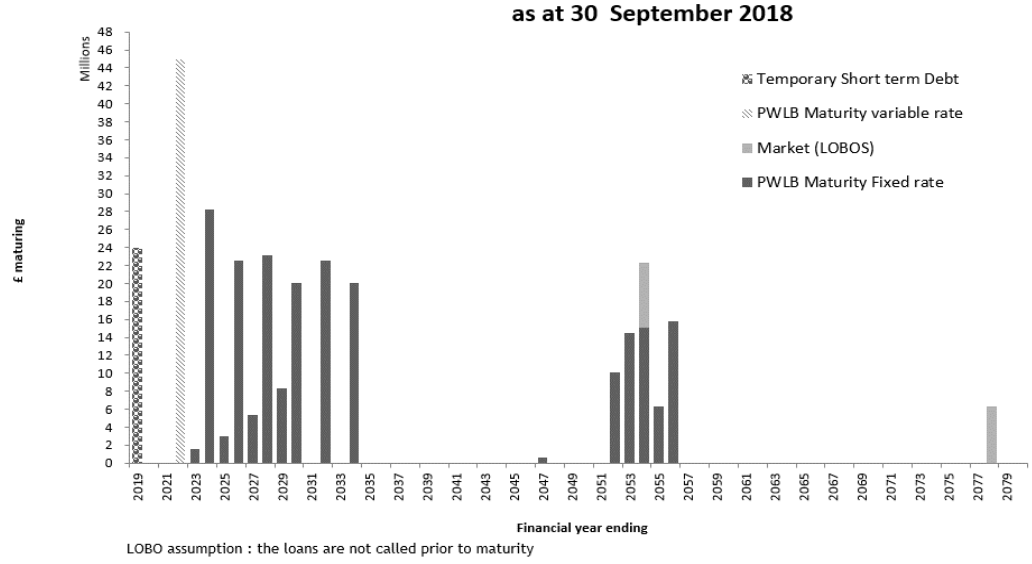
A3

Analysis to show Interest Rate Profile on Debt as at 30 September 2018 (Average 2.97%)



A4

Central Bedfordshire Council: Borrowing Maturity Profile as at 30 September 2018

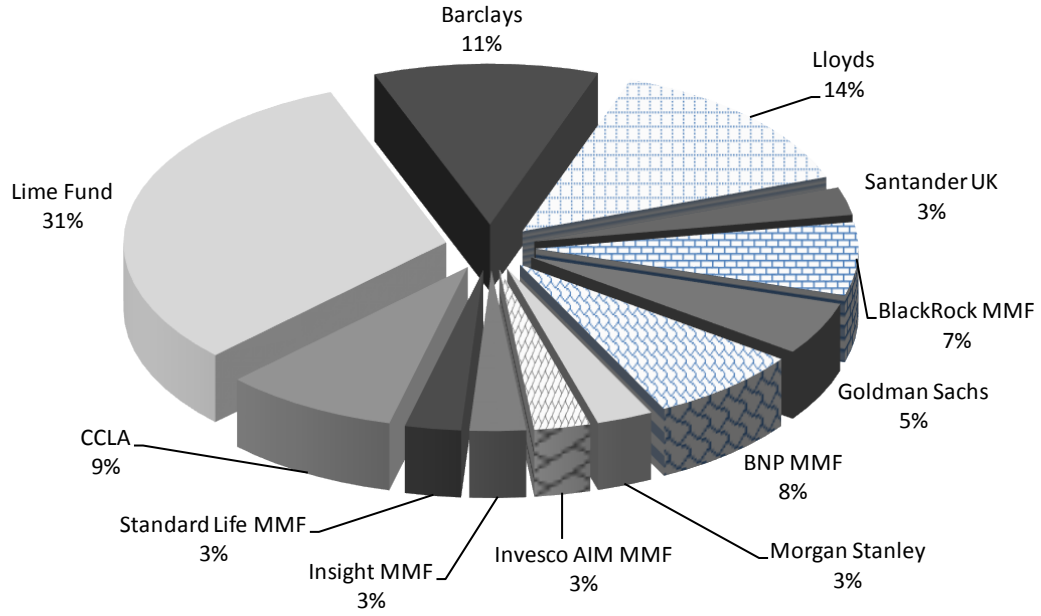


LOBO assumption : the loans are not called prior to maturity

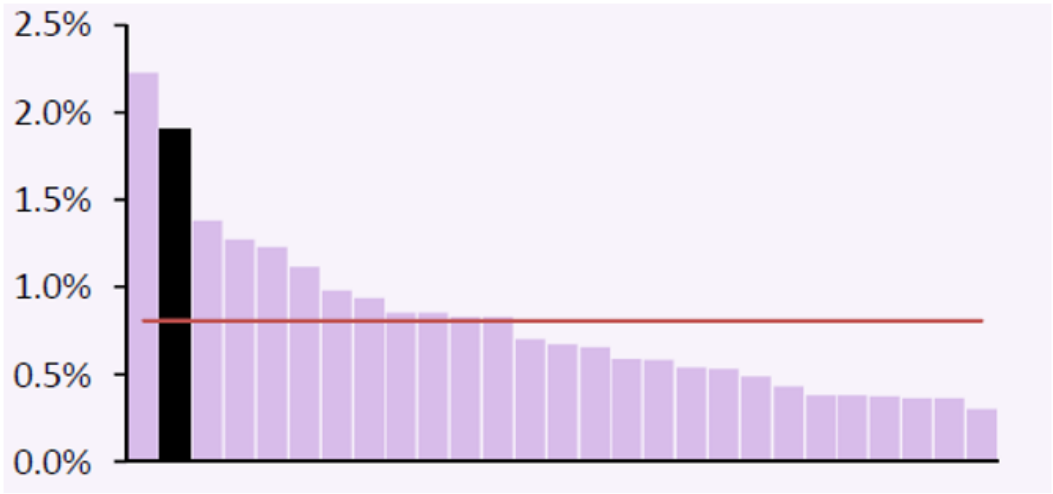
SECTION B: INVESTMENT INFORMATION

B1

Analysis of investments as at 30 September 2018
Total investments £17.7M



B2 **Average interest rate received on investments compared to other local authorities as at 31 March 2018 (CBC shown as the black line)**



CBC average 1.9%
Benchmark average 0.8%

EXECUTIVE 4 December 2018

September 2018 (Q2) Capital Budget Monitoring Report

Report of Cllr Richard Wenham, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources (richard.wenham@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officers: Charles Warboys, Director of Resources & S151 Officer (charles.warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a Non Key Decision

Purpose of this report

1. The report sets out the Capital forecast outturn for 2018/19 as at the end of September 2018. It excludes the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which is subject to a separate report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. **note that the capital gross forecast outturn position is a spend of £101.5M (£63.2M in 2017/18) demonstrating the continued significant capital investment made by Central Bedfordshire to support its community; and**

2. **approve an increase of £200K for the 2018/19 Capital programme for work required at Biggleswade Skate park. The present facility is at the end of its life and beyond repair, and is currently closed. The proposal is to invest in a replacement concrete skate park which will be will be cheaper to maintain and will respond to local demand by providing a modern fit for purpose facility that meets local need. Options for its future maintenance is being discussed with Biggleswade Town Council. This scheme is included in the reserve list for 2018/19.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

2. This report is based on the 2018/19 budget approved by Council at its February 2018 meeting. The reported budget also includes deferred spend from 2017/18 which was approved under delegated authority and subsequently approved by the Executive in June 2018. The approved budget excluding HRA and including deferred spend from 2017/18 is £141.0M (gross), £89.2M net.

Principal variances

3. The approved budget excluding HRA but including deferred spend from 2017/18 is £141.0M gross (£110.7M in 2017/18) and £89.2M net (£59.4M in 2017/18).

4. The gross forecast is below budget by £39.5M. The net forecast is £28.5M below budget.

5. Community Services are forecasting to be below gross budget by £28.6M and below net budget by £20.0M. Proposed gross slippage is £29.3M. There are a number of schemes that this relates to, however the most significant schemes (gross) are:

   £8.2M A421- M1 Junction 13
   £7.6M Purchase of the Waste Fleet.
   £3.1M Integrated Health & Care Hub (Biggleswade)
   £2.6M Crematorium
   £2.8M Stratton Industrial Units
   £1.1M New Car Parks

6. Note that the proposed slippage is greater than the below budget position due to the mix (schemes under/over – not all slip).

7. SCHH are forecasting to be below gross budget by £8.4M, and £6.4M net. Proposed slippage is £8.2M (gross), £6.1M net. The most significant schemes (gross) are:

   £5.0M MANOP Non-HRA Extra Care Schemes
   £1.9M Review of Accommodation/Day Support, "New Approaches to Outcomes“
   £0.8M MANOP Care Home reprovision
   £0.4M NHS Campus Closure £0.4M

Capital Receipts

8. The overall budget for Capital receipts is £10M. The forecast is £20.1M. To date we have received £12.0M (£11.5M August) the bulk of which relates to Fairfield.

9. A summary of the position is in the table below.

Directorate	Year to Date P06			Full Year 2018/19			Year to Date P06			Full Year 2018/19		
	Gross Budget	Gross Actual	Gross Variance	Gross Budget	Gross Forecast Outturn	Gross Variance	Net Budget	Net Actual	Net Variance	Net Budget	Net Forecast Outturn	Net Variance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
CS	3.4	4.0	0.5	6.4	8.8	2.3	0.7	0.1	(0.6)	1.4	1.4	0.0
Community Service	31.3	24.2	(7.1)	105.3	76.8	(28.6)	20.1	15.9	(4.1)	71.6	51.6	(20.0)
Chief Executive's	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Resources	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Regeneration	4.2	2.5	(1.7)	15.8	10.9	(4.9)	1.4	(0.6)	(2.0)	7.3	5.1	(2.1)
ASCHH	6.9	1.9	(5.0)	13.4	5.1	(8.4)	4.4	0.2	(4.2)	9.0	2.6	(6.4)
Total Exc HRA	**45.8**	**32.5**	**(13.3)**	**141.0**	**101.5**	**(39.5)**	**26.6**	**15.6**	**(11.0)**	**89.2**	**60.8**	**(28.5)**

(Note: Any minor rounding differences are due to linking to detailed appendices)

Reasons for decision

10. To complete schemes currently underway and facilitate effective financial management and planning.

Council Priorities

11. 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 6 Council priorities.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

12. None.

Financial Implications

13. The financial Implications are contained in the report.

Equalities Implications

14. Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken prior to the allocation of the 2018/19 budgets and Members were advised of significant equality implications relating to the budget proposals when setting the Council's Budget in February 2018.

Appendices

Appendix A – Detailed Directorate Commentary

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Appendix A – Detailed Directorate Commentary

Social Care Health and Housing

1. The directorate forecast outturn is under gross budget by £8.4M and under net budget by £6.4M.

2. The tables below highlight the areas of spend:

SCHH Full Year Gross Budget and Forecast					
Scheme Categories	**Gross Budget**	**Gross Forecast**	**Variance**	**Deferred Spend**	**Over / (Under) spend**
	£k	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**
Additional Gypsy and Traveller Sites	901	901	0	0	0
Adult Social Care ICT Projects	190	100	(90)	90	0
Better Care Fund Capital Grant	992	992	0	0	0
Disabled Facilities Grants Scheme	2,212	2,000	(212)	0	(212)
Empty Homes	374	170	(204)	204	0
MANOP Care Home Reprovision	978	150	(828)	828	0
MANOP Non-HRA Extra Care Schemes	5,100	100	(5,000)	5,000	0
NHS Campus Closure	374	0	(374)	374	0
Old People's Homes	0	220	220	0	220
Renewal Assistance	400	400	0	0	0
Review of Accommodation/Day Support, "New Approaches to Outcome"	1,906	20	(1,886)	1,666	(220)
Total	**13,427**	**5,053**	**(8,374)**	**8,162**	**(212)**
% of Budget		**37.6%**			

SCHH Full Year Net Budget and Forecast					
Scheme Categories	**Net Budget**	**Net Forecast**	**Variance**	**Deferred Spend**	**Over / (Under) spend**
	£k	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**
Additional Gypsy and Traveller Sites	676	676	0	0	0
Adult Social Care ICT Projects	46	0	(46)	46	0
Better Care Fund Capital Grant	0	0	0	0	0
Disabled Facilities Grants Scheme	1,544	1,300	(244)	0	(244)
Empty Homes	354	100	(254)	254	0
MANOP Care Home Reprovision	978	150	(828)	828	0
MANOP Non-HRA Extra Care Schemes	5,100	100	(5,000)	5,000	0
NHS Campus Closure	0	0	0	0	0
Old People's Homes	0	0	0	0	0
Renewal Assistance	300	300	(0)	0	(0)
Review of Accommodation/Day Support, "New Approaches to Outcome"	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**8,998**	**2,626**	**(6,372)**	**6,128**	**(244)**
% of Budget		**29.2%**			

3. MANOP Care Home Re-provision/ MANOP non HRA Extra Care Schemes.
The current year forecast includes £0.150M relating mainly to the demolition of the buildings on the Hockcliffe Rd, Leighton Buzzard site.

Options including private sector provision or a Council provision are currently under review for the Steppingley Road, former Flitwick Leisure Centre site. A Re-development project for the site is just starting. This could provide an option to deliver a new extra care scheme, a residential care home and some social housing. This is currently shown in the 2019/20 Capital programme though the funding requirement is still uncertain. The proposed slippage of £5.8M would toward funding this is if approved.

4. **Review of Accommodation/Day Support**
The Review of Accommodation (including Day Centre provision, Linsell House and Digitisation) is linked to the Transformation Programme where potential (suitable) alternatives to the existing provision are being trialled with the use of alternative sites and/or use of Community Hubs to be assessed and reported to Executive before progressing to consultation and eventual implementation. No significant outcomes are expected in 2018/19.

5. **Disabled Facility Grants**

The grants provided to residents through the Disabled Facility Grant 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 who may then be unable to remain in their own homes. 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.

The table below provides details of adaptations for Q2 2018/19 compared to last year.

Type of adaptation	**Q2 2017/18**	**Q2 2018/19**
Level access shower/wet room	29	34
Straight stair lift	5	11
Curved stair lift	12	6
Toilet alterations	16	6
Access ramps	7	9
Dropped kerb and hard standing	0	2
Wheelchair/step lift	0	0
Through floor lift	3	1
Major extension	1	1
Kitchen alterations	2	0
Access alterations (doors etc)	14	19
Heating improvements	4	6
Garage conversions/minor additions	5	3
Safety repairs/improvements	2	3
Other	18	7
Total	118	108

Children's Services

6. The directorate forecast outturn is above gross budget by £2.3M, and on net budget (i.e. no cost to the Council).

7. The tables below highlight the areas of spend:

Children's Services Full Year Gross Budget and Forecast					
Scheme Categories	**Gross Budget**	**Gross Forecast**	**Variance**	**Deferred Spend**	**Over / (Under) spend**
	£k	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**
Healthy Pupil Capital Grant	0	171	171	0	171
Children's Home and Assessment Centre	500	500	0	0	0
LPSA & LAA Grant	0	0	0	0	0
New School Places	4,034	6,132	2,098	0	2,098
Schools Access Initiative	200	200	0	0	0
Schools Devolved Formula Capital	450	450	0	0	0
SEND 1&2	541	541	0	0	0
Temporary Accomodation	705	783	78	0	78
Total	**6,430**	**8,777**	**2,347**	**0**	**2,347**
% of Budget		**136.5%**			

Children's Services Full Year Net Budget and Forecast					
Scheme Categories	**Net Budget**	**Net Forecast**	**Variance**	**Deferred Spend**	**Over / (Under) spend**
	£k	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**
Healthy Pupil Capital Grant	0	0	0	0	0
Children's Home and Assessment Centre	500	500	0	0	0
LPSA & LAA Grant	0	0	0	0	0
New School Places	0	0	0	0	0
Schools Access Initiative	200	200	0	0	0
Schools Devolved Formula Capital	0	0	0	0	0
SEND 1&2	1	1	0	0	0
Temporary Accomodation	705	705	0	0	0
Total	**1,406**	**1,406**	**0**	**0**	**0**
% of Budget		**100.0%**			

8. **New Schools Places**

This programme provides capital investment to deliver new school places required by population growth in areas of limited surplus capacity within our schools. The Council's School Organisation Plan is the evidence base that supports the commissioning of these new school places over a rolling five year period. The programme is funded by a combination of sources including DfE basic need grant, developer contributions, Council borrowings and capital receipts. The rolling five year programme is dynamic with perpetual changes in forecasts of income and expenditure across financial years including those arising from variances in S106 totals and trigger points and in the timing and therefore cost profile of many projects.

9. **Schools Access Initiative**

Central Bedfordshire Council provides capital funding to enable pupils with disabilities access to mainstream education. All Central Bedfordshire maintained schools (except for Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies who access funding through an alternative mechanism) can apply for funding on an application basis. In exceptional circumstances where an Education, Health and Care Plan has named an academy or Voluntary Aided school an application may be considered. Applications are assessed by a Panel, comprising of Council officers and representatives from Central Bedfordshire Special and Maintained Schools Funding is awarded on a priority basis, as identified in the Council's Accessibility Strategy.

10 The budget allocation for 2018/19 is £0.200M and is forecast to be fully spent. Demand has been high again this year and £0.193M has been allocated to fund building works/adaptations and for the purchase of specialised equipment. The remaining £0.007M is being held for the Leighton Middle School project, which is approved in principle pending confirmed costs. Initial tender quotes were extremely high and it was necessary to go back out to the market.

11 **School Devolved Formula Capital**

The allocation to Schools is for use on capital condition / improvement works on their buildings in line with the priorities in their School Improvement Plan. The schools have three years to spend the grant. The budgeted gross expenditure for 2018/19 is £0.450M. The forecast outturn for 2018/19 is on budget, wholly funded by grants.

12 **Temporary Accommodation**

The primary purpose of the Council's temporary accommodation programme is to meet either short term needs at schools where there is a small, or temporary rise in numbers which cannot be physically accommodated through alternative means, but for which an alternative funding stream, e.g. S106 capital investment/Basic Need grant is unavailable and/or where this results in the need for organisational changes in structure to meet KS1 class size legislation.

The secondary purpose of the programme is to replace temporary accommodation, which is reaching the end of its design life, with permanent build to meet a permanent need for places.

The capital budget allocation for 2018/19 is £0.400M, plus slippage of £0.305M which is forecast to be fully utilised on the replacement of temporary accommodation which has reached the end of its design life with permanent build. Priority projects have been identified based on condition survey data and school site visits.

Funding of £0.251M has been allocated to the installation of a temporary unit on the Ivel Valley secondary site. The temporary accommodation budget will forward fund the total cost and be reimbursed £0.150M from the SEND capital receipt. Funding of £0.366M has been allocated to the construction of 2 classrooms at Maple Tree Lower. A £0.010M S106 contribution has also been secured for this project. £0.210M of revenue funded feasibility costs has been capitalised for the Ivel Valley and Maple Tree projects.

£0.200M has been allocated to fund temporary accommodation at Etonbury Academy to accommodate the 2019 Pix Brook intake, ahead of the new Pix Brook Free School provision to be completed in September 2020. It is intended to capitalise the revenue funded feasibility costs. Cost of the temporary provision is estimated at £2.00M with £1.45M being funded by the DfE and the remainder being funded by S106. The project will span two years with £0.068M of S106 secured in 2018/19 and further S106 funding available in 2019/20.

Planning renewal fees due for the retention of temporary units at Caddington Village School, Chalton Lower, Dunton Lower, Maulden Lower and Robert Peel Lower, totalling £0.004M will also been funded from this budget. £0.111M remains to be allocated

Community Services

13 The directorate outturn is below budget by £28.6M (gross) and below budget by £20.0M (net).

14 The table below highlights the areas of spend:

Community Services Full Year Gross Budget and Forecast					
Scheme Categories	**Gross Budget**	**Gross Forecast**	**Variance**	**Deferred Spend**	**Over / (Under) spend**
	£k	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**
Major projects	65,812	40,788	(25,024)	25,146	122
Minor projects	15,047	11,358	(3,689)	4,162	473
Rolling programme - Assets	5,367	5,367	0	0	0
Rolling programme - IT	1,475	1,475	0	0	0
Rolling programme - Highways	15,596	15,696	100	0	100
Rolling programme - Other	680	723	43	0	43
School Assets	1,351	1,351	0	0	0
Total	**105,328**	**76,758**	**(28,570)**	**29,308**	**738**
% of Budget		**72.9%**			

Community Services Full Year Net Budget and Forecast					
Scheme Categories	**Net Budget**	**Net Forecast**	**Variance**	**Deferred Spend**	**Over / (Under) spend**
	£k	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**
Major projects	45,603	28,572	(17,031)	17,013	(18)
Minor projects	11,785	8,853	(2,932)	3,043	111
Rolling programme - Assets	3,367	3,367	0	0	0
Rolling programme - IT	1,475	1,475	0	0	0
Rolling programme - Highways	8,670	8,670	0	0	0
Rolling programme - Other	665	665	0	0	0
School Assets	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**71,565**	**51,602**	**(19,963)**	**20,056**	**93**
% of Budget		**72.1%**			

15 **Major Projects**

This programme provides capital investment to a number of major schemes delivering benefits to the community. The overall net budget is £45.6M, forecast spend of £28.57M. There are forecast underspends of £0.240M, overspends of £0.210M and slippage of £17.01M which are detailed below:-

Underspends :-

- Section 106 funding £0.140M has been received for the Ivel Medical Centre which was not in the budget. (funding £0.140M)
- Stratton Street Railway Bridge final account adjustment £0.120M

Overspend:-

- There is a forecast overspend of £0.200M for completion of the Highways depot south - this is for completion of work to Thorn Road and corrals and signage to the bridleway which are part of the planning conditions

Slippage:-

- The Health Care Hub is to provide integrated health and care services. The project is at the feasibility stage which will continue until March 2019. The current forecast is £0.200M and the remaining £3.000M slippage will be added to the new budget for 2019/20 for the construction.

- Stratton 5a is to construct a unit for rental to increase revenue income. Feasibility has been completed and work is underway to gain planning approval with construction due to start in early part of 2019. The current forecast is £2.000M and the remaining £2.800M of the £4.800M budget will be spent in 2019/20 to complete the build.

- The construction of a new crematorium. The feasibility is complete and work is underway to gain planning approval which includes design work with total costs of £0.300M in 2018/19. The remaining £2.600M will be spent in 2019/20, along with the 2019/20 budget for build costs.

- There is a budget for Westbury Units of £0.800M. This has been slipped to next year with a report will going to the Executive in December 2018 setting out the options of whether the units should be sold or repaired.

- The major scheme of widening of the A421-M1 at junction 13. preliminary works and planning have commenced and £7.000M is forecast to be spent in 2018/19, all of which is externally funded. The remaining £8.000M gross expenditure budget will be spent in 2019/20 in accordance with project plan. Land deals are being concluded to facilitate the carriageway widening and utility diversion works ae being planned. Final discussions taking with preferred contactor.

There is also slippage of £7.600M for the Waste Fleet where the purchase of vehicles has been delayed due to contract start date having bee deferred.

Schemes

Crematorium
Work is progressing with planning application process.

Depot north
Phase 1 of the project, the road, is nearing completion. Work on the site is progressing well and it is hoped to be operational ahead of programme

Library and Leisure Centre Renewal Dunstable
Rendering works in the pool area is complete. Work is progressing on electrical and ventilation work above both pools and on external and internal brickwork. Work has commenced on curtain walling and soffit works. The project is on track for opening in winter 2018.

16 **Minor projects**

This programme provides capital investment for a number of minor schemes including the A5 residual works, Footway Improvements, Schools Compliance works, Enhancement and Preparation for Disposal, Carparks and Highways Surface Dressing programme. The overall net budget is £11.800M, forecast spend £8.850M.

There are forecast overspends of £0.110M and slippage of £3.040M as detailed below.

Overspend:-

- Tree backlog £0.050M
- Fleet Replacement £0.060M

Slippage:-

- Schools Compliance where feasibility studies have been commissioned and some works will slip into next year £0.500M.

- Energy Efficiency project has been slipped due to lack of resources £0.050M.

- The carpark project is in the feasibility stage and the delivery stage has been slipped to next year £1.100M.

- Slippage from the National Productivity Investment budget for the redesign of the Clophill roundabout £0.700M which is grant funded Sundon Landfill slipped £0.050M.

- Slippage due to lack of resources for works at Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre £0.200M.

- Slippage for the CCTV programme £0.700M.

- Slippage for the Priory House Accommodation plan where the costs for the furniture has been slipped £0.350M.

Schemes

Houghton Hall Park
Minor works to the visitor centre and play area have been completed. The visitor centre won the regional Local Authority Building Control (LABC) award for best commercial project and will go forward to the LABC finals in November.

Sundon
Work on final landscaping is progressing and the contract for internal fencing is due to be awarded shortly and both elements are due for completion this financial year. Engagement with Parish Councils and Greensands Trust continue.

17 **Rolling Programme**

There are ongoing annual programmes that deliver benefits in assets, IT and highways. The forecast is as per the overall net budget of £14.200M.

Regeneration and Business Support

18 The Regeneration and Business Support annual gross expenditure budget approved by Council for 2018/19 is £2.553M, a net expenditure budget for the Council of £1.029M. Slippage from 2017/18 revises the gross expenditure budget to £15.954M and net £7.445M.

19 The September forecast position for 2018/19 is £4.905M below gross budget and £2.126M below net budget and relates mainly to the need to bring forward funding from 2019/20 for the M1/A6.

20 The tables below highlights the areas of spend:

Regeneration & Business Full Year Gross Budget and Forecast					
Scheme Categories	**Gross Budget**	**Gross Forecast**	**Variance**	**Deferred Spend**	**Over / (Under) spend**
	£k	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**
Strategic Infrastructure	6,959	4,445	(2,514)	2,590	76
Other	8,809	6,418	(2,391)	2,391	0
Total	**15,768**	**10,863**	**(4,905)**	**4,981**	**76**
% of Budget		**68.9%**			

Regeneration & Business Full Year Net Budget and Forecast					
Scheme Categories	**Net Budget**	**Net Forecast**	**Variance**	**Deferred Spend**	**Over / (Under) spend**
	£k	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**	**£k**
Strategic Infrastucture	2,833	1,912	(921)	1,921	1,000
Other	4,426	3,221	(1,205)	1,164	(41)
Total	**7,259**	**5,133**	**(2,126)**	**3,085**	**959**
% of Budget		**70.7%**			

Strategic Infrastructure

21 **East West Rail**

22 East West Rail will see the delivery of a train route from Oxford to Cambridge via Milton Keynes. The western section of the route will follow the Bletchley to Bedford line. In the context of the capital programme this project focuses solely on this element and the delivery of improved station facilities, namely a new carpark, at Ridgemont. The Council is one of a number of Local Authority stakeholders along the route with the project being delivered by the EWR Company and Network Rail.

Gross Expenditure Budget £0.527M
Gross Expenditure 18/19 Forecast £0.400M

23 **Dunstable High Street / Regeneration**

Dunstable High Street Regeneration – Phase I of this project will deliver improvements to the public realm in West Street, Church Street, High Street North/South and Middle Row, helping attract greater community use and increased footfall. Works are scheduled over the period Sep-Nov 2018 and include replacement street lighting, gateway treatments, on street parking provision and associated carriageway narrowing, pedestrian guardrail removal, provision for cyclists.

This phase is funded through a £1.500M Highways England contribution from their 'designated funds'. It is planned to secure the funding for phase 2 through the same source.

Budget £1.369M Gross Expenditure with External Funding £1.269M
Gross Forecast £1.0M, Ext Funding Forecast £1.0M, so net nil.

24 **M1 - A6**

The scheme comprises the provision of a new 4.4km dual and 2-lane carriageway link road between the new M1 junction 11a in the west and the A6 in the east, to effectively form a northern bypass for Luton and open up land for the potential development of up to 4,000 dwellings, up to 20ha of employment land, community facilities and open spaces, and provision of a new sub-regional rail freight interchange incorporating around 40ha of associated employment land.

- The current estimated scheme cost is £67M.
- Department for Transport (DfT) have confirmed that this will be a retained scheme due to being above the £20M threshold.
- Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) have been awarded £11M and £21.750M from Local Growth Fund 2 and Local Growth Fund 3 respectively. It should be noted that this element of funding must be spent by end March 2021, we currently have a programme to achieve this.
- The funding 'gap' is approximately £34.250m and is likely to be found from developer contributions – Rail Freight Interchange/Housing Development.

DfT has granted £1.000M upfront development funding from the £32.750M.

Budget £2.707M Gross Expenditure with External Funding £2.707M.

Forecast 2018/19 Expenditure £2.300M with External Funding £1.300M, need to bring forward £1.000M of the 2019/20 planned council contribution. Overall external funding is £2.7M with a shortfall of £1.000M in 2018/19. The Council will therefore forward fund that and recoup in 2019/20.

25 **Leighton Buzzard and Biggleswade Transport Interchange**

The scheme is to remodel the Leighton Buzzard Station forecourt to provide an enhanced bus-rail interchange. Discussions are to be held with Network Rail and West Midland Trains on the outline proposal. The Biggleswade Station scheme is to deliver a bus interchange. The original Business Case will be reviewed in response to renewed interest from Network Rail.

The capital funding allocation falls a long way short of what would be needed to deliver the envisaged proposals. This includes the limited S106 contribution towards the scheme cost from east of Leighton Buzzard, given the expected increase in services visiting the station.

Budget £0.177M Gross Expenditure - Leighton Buzzard
Forecast spend is nil
Budget £0.262M Gross Expenditure - Biggleswade
Forecast is on budget

26 **Other**

Broadband

In Quarter 1, OpenReach failed to meet its contractual quarterly target for the broadband project. Delivery targets are predicated on a service being available and ready for order. Last quarter, OpenReach delivered services to only 1,387 premises which was 475 short of the contractual quarterly target, significantly less than the wider delivery plan and failed to offset the shortfall seen from the previous quarter.

It must be noted that the Central Superfast Project has also been awaiting, for several months, a Change Impact Assessment from OpenReach in respect of 7 separate change requests. A number of these change requests have been raised with a view to descoping structures, and therefore premises, out of the contract, due to either duplication or alternative commercial investment, which should ultimately improve the delivery position.

A remedial plan was also due to be supplied by 10th July, which would outline OpenReach's approach to recovering and delivering the shortfall from Quarter 1 as well as how they intend to see us through the last 6 months of the project and contract closure at the end of December.

The document was received in an unacceptable format. OpenReach now outline a required extension of 2 quarters to the contract end date (June 2019), but failed to provide any substantial detail or plans to support this. Discussions are ongoing, it is anticipated that a full delivery plan will be received by mid-October once all the structures are out of planning.

Take up of broadband services continues to be considered as best in class, at 56%. Having secured an additional £3.480M external funding from SEMELP and BDUK, the third procurement round was launched. The third contract was awarded to BT and signed on 25th May 2018. Discussions are ongoing to finalise the deployment plans. It is anticipated that these details will be finalised at the end of the Summer.

Budget £6.123M Gross Expenditure with External Funding £4.172M
Gross Exp 2018/19 Forecast £3.749M, Ext funding forecast £2.962M

Market Towns Programme

27 The Market Towns Programme is made up of two funding streams. The Market Town Regeneration Fund (MTRF), which works directly with town Council's to deliver improvements to their town Centres and the High Street Improvement Scheme (HSIS), which provides 60% grant funding for improvement to shop fronts.

MTRF – A total of 7 bids from Ampthill, Dunstable, Flitwick, Leighton-Linslade, Sandy and Shefford Town Councils are progressing well in the MTRF programme. All the Town Councils are moving swiftly towards delivering their final outputs by the end of 2018, with the Ringway Jacobs public realm themed works having begun in Ampthill, Sandy and Shefford in Q1 of 2018/19.

HSIS – 23 businesses are now currently involved in the HSIS with several that could not progress dropping out of the scheme. The appointed building contractors, BRAC, are working with these businesses and the CBC project team with phase 1 works (Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard) nearing completion and Phase 2 underway (Shefford, Ampthill, Potton, Sandy & Biggleswade). All works should be completed by November 2018.
The MTRF Board continues to meet quarterly to review progress.

Budget £2.669M Gross Expenditure with External Funding £0.194M
Gross spend forecast £1.000M, Ext funding £1.000M (no cost to the Council).

28 **Flitwick Redevelopment**

The Flitwick Interchange/ station redevelopment project is moving forward, with the Executive agreeing the mixed use regeneration of the site.

Following members briefing in September 2018 the project is being split in two Flitwick Town Centre redevelopment (transport interchange) and Flitwick Town Centre redevelopment (wider site) projects. Work to complete full costings and delivery schedule for the transport interchange is underway. At the end of September 2018, Homes England advised of potential external funding available subject to negotiations that have yet to commence. A review of options to deliver the wider site projects is underway. This is scheduled for completion end Nov 2018. It is proposed to slip £1.150M into 2018/19.

Budget £1.653M Gross Expenditure with External Funding £0.150M.

29 **European Regional Development Fund**

The Innovation Bridge programme is funded through The European Regional Development Fund which works directly with Council as project lead and three university partners, Bedfordshire, Anglia Ruskin and Suffolk, to award grant funding to Small and Medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to achieve business growth. The capital grant element of the programme acts as an enabler to SMEs by providing support to purchase capital equipment. Forecast spend for 2018/19 £0.076M fully funded by grant.

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Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive **4 December 2018**

September (Quarter 2) Housing Revenue Account Budget Monitoring

Report of: Richard Wenham, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources (cllr.richard.wenham@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)
Cllr Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care and Housing (cllr.carole.hegley@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Responsible Director(s): Charles Warboys, Director of Resources, (Charles.Warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a Non Key Decision

Purpose of this report

1. The report provides information on the 2018/19 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) projected outturn revenue and capital position as at September 2018.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to note and approve:

1. **that the Revenue forecast position is to achieve a balanced budget with a contribution to HRA Reserves of £6.660M, thus strengthening the Council's ability to invest and improve its stock of Council Houses;**

2. **that the Capital forecast position indicates a net outturn of £22.838M, representing a positive variance against budget of £2.292M, with proposals for slippage of £2.265M;**

3. **the proposal that principal debt repayment, budgeted at £0.200M for 2018/19, should not occur, due to the recent announcements concerning scrapping of the HRA debt cap and the potential to take out additional borrowing to build more homes; and**

4. **that Right to Buy (RtB) sales will be monitored for the possible impact on predicted surpluses in the medium to longer term.**

Issues

2. The **revenue** forecast position as at the end of September 2018 projects a year end surplus of £6.660M compared to a budgeted surplus of £6.501M, an increase of £0.159M.

3. The forecast position for the HRA **capital** programme indicates a net outturn of £22.838M against a budget of £25.130M; this includes deferred works of £4.944M from 2017/18.

4. The 2018/19 budget for the HRA anticipated a contribution to the Independent Living Development Reserve (ILDR) of £1.156M and a contribution to the Strategic Reserve of £5.345M. The year end forecast indicates a contribution to Reserves of £6.660M; it is proposed to allocate £6.590M to the Strategic Reserve and £0.070M to the Life Cycle Reserve. It is proposed not to make an additional contribution to the ILDR in this financial year as the start on site at Houghton Regis Central has been delayed, and a balance of £17.900M already exists in this Reserve. Total Reserve balances are forecast at £24.796M.

Council Priorities

5. 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 6 Council priorities.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

6. None

Financial Implications

7. The financial implications are contained in the report.

Equalities Implications

8. Equality Impact Assessments were undertaken prior to the allocation of the 2018/19 budgets and each Directorate was advised of significant equality implications relating to their budget proposals.

Conclusion and next Steps

9. The report presents the 2018/19 HRA financial position as at the end of September 2018. It sets out spend to date against the profiled revenue and capital budgets, the forecast financial outturn, and provides explanations for any variations. This report enables the Executive to consider the overall financial position of the HRA.

Appendices

Appendix A – Housing Revenue Account Detailed Commentary

APPENDIX A

HRA REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)

1. The HRA annual expenditure budget is £22.168M and income budget is £28.669M, which allows a contribution of £6.501M to reserves to present a net budget of zero.

2. A subjective breakdown of the provisional outturn position is shown in **Table 1** below.

	2018/19 Budget	Budget YTD	Actual YTD	Variance YTD	Full Year Forecast	Variance Full Year Forecast to Budget
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Total Income	(28.669)	(14.370)	(14.137)	**0.234**	(28.940)	**(0.271)**
Housing Operations	8.647	4.324	4.187	**(0.136)**	8.659	**0.012**
Financial Inclusion	0.543	0.271	0.193	**(0.078)**	0.410	**(0.133)**
Housing Investment	0.094	0.047	0.031	**(0.016)**	0.064	**(0.030)**
Corporate Resources	2.008	1.004	1.004	**(0.000)**	2.008	**-**
Maintenance	5.047	2.524	2.465	**(0.058)**	4.917	**(0.130)**
Debt related costs	0.103	0.051	0.051	**-**	0.103	**-**
Direct Revenue Financing	3.154	1.577	1.577	**-**	3.154	**-**
Efficiency Programme	(1.681)	(0.841)	(0.569)	**0.272**	(1.137)	**0.544**
Interest repayment	4.053	2.026	2.051	**0.024**	4.101	**0.049**
Principal repayment	0.200	0.100	-	**(0.100)**	0.000	**(0.200)**
TOTAL Expenditure	22.168	11.084	10.991	**(0.093)**	22.280	**0.112**
Surplus	(6.501)	(3.287)	^ (3.145)	**0.141**	(6.660)	(0.159)
Contribution to / (from) reserve (at year end)	6.501	3.287	^3.145	**(0.141)**	6.660	**0.159**
Net Expenditure	-	-	-	**-**	-	**-**
^ Included for balancing and illustrative purposes only						

3. There is a year to date adverse variance of £0.141M, whilst the full year forecast shows a favourable variance of £0.159M, resulting in a full year forecast surplus of £6.660M. The full year forecast variance is a result of additional income generation (£0.271M), savings within Financial Inclusion (£0.133M), and a reduced forecast outturn on the maintenance budgets (£0.130M); further it is proposed that no principal debt repayment occurs in this financial year, delivering a saving of (£0.200M). This is offset by the underachievement of the 2018/19 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) efficiency programme (£0.544M).

4. In the Budget of Autumn 2017, it was announced that Local Authorities would be given the opportunity to bid for an additional £1Bn of borrowing headroom, £0.5Bn of which was ringfenced to areas outside of London. The Council was eligible to bid for this funding and submitted bids in September 2018 for an additional £37.400M of HRA borrowing. On 3 October 2018 the Prime Minister announced that the debt cap would be scrapped altogether. Further details are yet to emerge concerning this proposal. In light of these significant developments, the Council's approach to repaying principal HRA debt has been reconsidered and it is proposed that no principal debt repayments are made in 2018/19.

5. Within the efficiency programme there was an ambitious income generation target (£1.200M) relating to rent and service charge income at acquired properties, which has not been fully achieved and accounts for the shortfall of £0.544M. There have been delays in purchasing some of the properties identified for acquisition at the time of the budget build and redevelopment of acquired properties has taken longer than envisaged.

HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME

6. The HRA Capital budget is £25.130M which includes slippage from 2017/18 of £4.944M. Across the HRA Capital Programme there is a year to date favourable variance of £2.292M, which is predominantly due to the underspend in Future Investment projects (£2.215M). However, slippage will be requested for this amount. The full year forecast within Stock Protection is showing a slight favourable variance of £0.077M, of which £0.050M is proposed as slippage with £0.027M as an underspend.

7. Analyses of the outturn position and variance, for each HRA scheme, is presented at **Table 2** below. The proposed funding of the programme is shown at Table 3.

Table 2

	Budget 2018/19	Full Year Forecast	Variance	Monthly Budget Monitoring September 2018		
				Profiled YTD	Actual YTD	Variance
Stock Protection	**£'000**	**£'000**	**£'000**	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Enhancements	107	300	193	95	137	42
Fire Safety & Alarm Systems	108	25	(83)	25	22	(3)
Garage Refurbishment	115	35	(80)	10	16	6
Paths & Fences Siteworks	112	145	33	70	73	3
Estate & Green Space Improvements	361	295	(66)	43	34	(9)
Energy Conservation	459	381	(78)	10	11	1
Roof Replacement	566	566	0	100	98	(2)
Assisted Living Technology	51	30	(21)	20	13	(7)
Central Heating Installation	724	724	0	220	217	(3)
Rewiring	240	240	0	100	100	0
Kitchens and Bathrooms	882	900	18	100	86	(14)
Central Heating communal	28	250	222	5	3	(2)
Door Replacement	296	246	(50)	140	124	(16)
Structural Repairs	204	204	0	120	136	16
Aids and Adaptations	434	434	0	70	61	(9)
Drainage and Water Supply	39	39	0	18	19	1
Capitalised Salaries	420	380	(40)	150	145	(5)
Asbestos Management	245	245	0	150	143	(7)
Parking Schemes	50	25	(25)	0	0	0
Investment Panel Programme	50	35	(15)	0	0	0
Communal/PIR Lighting	0	0	0	0	0	0
Targeted Door Replacement	6	2	(4)	3	2	(1)
Sheltered Housing Refurbishment	300	300	0	15	13	(2)
New Windows	141	60	(81)	50	28	(22)
Stock Protection Total	**5,938**	**5,861**	**(77)**	**1,514**	**1,481**	**(33)**
Future Investment						
Stock Remodelling	985	535	(450)	50	38	(12)
Houghton Regis Central	2,588	2,588	0	100	120	20
Site Development	422	0	(422)	5	6	1
Garage Site Development	260	13	(247)	15	12	(3)
Croft Green	638	200	(438)	0	1	1
New Build & Acquisitions	11,813	13,229	1,416	5,904	6,440	536
Crescent Court	297	0	(297)	0	0	0
The Brook Houghton Regis	1,547	212	(1,335)	10	8	(2)
Potton Road Wrestlingworth	642	200	(442)	0	0	0
Future Investment Total	**19,192**	**16,977**	**(2,215)**	**6,084**	**6,625**	**541**
TOTAL HRA	**25,130**	**22,838**	**(2,292)**	**7,598**	**8,106**	**508**

Table 3

Proposed Funding of HRA Capital Programme

Source	**£'000**
Revenue Contributions	3,154
Useable Capital Receipts	10,000
Independent Living Development Reserve	2,588
Strategic Reserve	7,096
Total	**22,838**

STOCK PROTECTION

8. It is anticipated that Stock Protection will outturn with a slight favourable variance of £0.0770M. There are a number of minor forecast outturn variances, which for the most part net each other off leaving a forecast underspend of £0.027M.

9. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is investigating flat entrance 30 minute fire doors. As a result the door manufacturing industry is currently reviewing test procedures and has halted all future installations of fire doors. This has delayed the door replacement programme resulting in a proposed slippage of £0.05M from the 2018/19 capital programme.

10. There are a number of minor year to date variances across Stock Protection due to expenditure being either marginally behind or ahead of profile on various projects, resulting in an overall favourable variance of £0.033M.

FUTURE INVESTMENT

11. It is also anticipated that Future Investment will outturn with a favourable variance of £2.215M, with this amount to be requested as slippage into 2019/20. Future Investment has an overall adverse year to date variance of £0.541M, which is predominantly a result of expenditure being ahead of profile for the New Build and Acquisitions programme with 21 purchases to date. Of the 21 purchases in the current year, 1 is a former hotel which will be converted into a 17 unit homeless hostel. Another is a site comprising 8 one bed flats, which requires only limited refurbishment. Both these schemes will supply Transitional Accomodation (TA), reducing cost to the Council's General Fund (GF).

12. Houghton Regis Central is a site comprising the vacant former Co Op site, the Grade II listed Red House and Red House Court in Houghton Regis town centre. The project will involve re-development in two stages, with construction initially taking place on the Co Op site to allow the current Red House Court residents to move to new apartments. This would enable the existing building (Red House Court) to be demolished, to then provide homes and new facilities on the existing site. The scheme will comprise 168 independent

living apartments on a mixed tenure basis together with 8 re-ablement suites and a number of commercial units.

13. The scheme received planning consent in November 2016. Galliford Try have been awarded preferred contractor status following Executive approval in September. The aim is to have the contract signed in November 2018. Start on site is planned for February 2019. Workstream planning workshops have taken place with colleagues involved in the Operations and the Commercial Workstreams.

14. The Brook, Houghton Regis is a greenfield site that was identified as a suitable location to deliver a TA scheme. There has been a delay in the project plan due to the re-design required to the scheme to obtain planning approval. The decision was taken (considering staff resource, design risk to the Council, planning implications and required re-design), that the most suitable way to progress the project was to procure a full multi-disciplinary design team to produce the re-design and take the scheme through all of the RIBA plan stages. This changed the procurement strategy to a traditional “fully designed” route as opposed to a “design and build” model. Obtaining approvals for this and the required procurement processes and timescales resulted in a delay to the project programme during this financial year, but the ultimate completion date for the project is broadly in line with the previously issued programme of works.

15. A new Project Board structure and project governance was set up to enable clear sign off and approval requirements. The multi-disciplinary design team has now been appointed and are attending regular design team meetings to progress the scheme, with the view to obtaining planning approval in the fourth quarter of 2018/19. The forecast for this year is predominately made up of design and consultancy fees; no construction costs are envisaged to be paid within this financial year. It is therefore anticipated that only £0.212M will be spent in 2018/19, with the rest of the budget (£1.335M) to be proposed as slippage.

16. The development at Potton Road in Wrestlingworth will be a Rural Exception Site, which would not obtain planning permission for housing without meeting an identified affordable housing need. The proposal is to deliver a mix of shared ownership and affordable rented units. Procurement for a designer is underway, with tenders due back in October. It is forecast that £0.200M will be spent in 2018/19, with proposed slippage of £0.442M.

17. Croft Green is intended to be refurbished to provide seven units (four 1 beds and three 2 beds). The tender is out to award the contract for the works to start on site in December 2018, and it is expected that the cost will be in line with the budget of £0.638M. Project practical completion is expected in May 2019, accounting for the proposed slippage of £0.438M from the 2018/19 capital programme.

18. The Stock Remodelling 2018/19 programme will fund redevelopment of The Red House, The Birches in Shefford, and Puddlehill (formerly known as the Vicarge) in Houghton Regis. Puddlehill will be extended to deliver an additional 8 self contained bedrooms to

provide homes for 16 to 25 year olds who require supported TA. Work on site is forecast to commence in the Autumn of 2018. The continuing works to The Red House are to ensure this important Grade II listed building is protected.

19. There is a forecast adverse variance of £1.416M relating to New Build & Acquisitions, delivering a projected outurn of £13.229M. This offsets other identified underspends within various site development and remodelling project codes. The budget will be used to continue the approach of reducing GF expenditure by purchasing properties for use as TA. Up to the second quarter a total of £6.440M has been spent, adding 43 units of urgently required new stock (1,2,3 and 4 bed) to the HRA. There are circa 20 further purchases going through legal process with LGSS Law and work is continuing to identify, appraise, survey and offer on suitable properties at pace.

20. There are increasing homelessness pressures, which are impacting upon GF TA budgets. The approach being taken is to create “system resilience” for the future, establishing flexible provision across Central Bedfordshire, to be managed intensively as either TA or other supported housing. The Housing Service has created an Intensive Property Management Team (within the HRA) that will manage all the properties and rooms that are used for TA on a ‘hotel-style’ basis, in part to maximise income; but more importantly, to avoid cost at the level seen in neighbouring Local Authorities.

21. Over time, it is envisaged that this provision will increase to circa 250 units (homes, single rooms, shared accommodation). The use of this circa 250 units will function flexibly, as both TA and accommodation based supported housing, the main aim being to avoid cost to the system. Whilst management and maintenance costs are significantly higher for this type of accommodation, the greater concentration of tenancies will also generate additional income for the HRA. More importantly, this approach directly facilitates the Housing GF efficiencies, to reduce TA Budget provision over a three year period.

22. As part of this approach Franklin House (the former care home previously known as Greenacre), was transferred from the GF into the HRA in March 2017, and is now fully occupied. In the short to medium term this can provide flexible bedsit accommodation for up to 42 households, addressing demands for TA or Supported accommodation. In the longer term the site could be regenerated to provide new housing supply and would certainly enhance the HRA’s portfolio of assets.

23. As part of the MTFP process it was agreed that a further care home, The Birches in Shefford, will be transferred to the HRA at a value of £1.15M. The Birches will provide 17 units (comprising of a variety of flats, micro flats and mobility standard units all with shared

lounge and kitchen). As this will be an internal transfer it will be funded by Reserves rather than the HRA Capital programme.

HRA EFFICIENCY PROGRAMME

24. The Housing Service has been using Housemark to provide a benchmarking service. The analysis provided has assisted in identifying the areas where HRA expenditure is high relative to other stock retained authorities. Benchmarking has indicated, for example, that we should review the Repairs Delivery model, the result of which has been the achievement of in year savings and further proposals for HRA efficiencies going forward.

25. The HRA revenue budget for 2018/19 was reduced by £1.681M, as part of the Council's efficiency programme. This year's HRA efficiency target comprised mainly increased growth of rental and service charge income from acquired properties (£1.2M) and increased Supported Housing service charge income (£0.150M). The remaining £0.331M was made up of: savings related to Business Process Review and Management rationalisation, changes to the repairs delivery model and contract management and reduced communications costs resulting from the use of new media.

26. The overall efficiency target for 2018/19 is forecast to be achieved with the exception of the £1.2M income efficiency where there is a £0.544M forecast adverse variance due to delays in purchasing properties and the time required for refurbishment and conversion.

HRA ARREARS

27. **Table 4** shows a breakdown of the HRA debt position at September**.**

Debt Analysis - Tenant Arrears

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	0.178	0.132	0.073	0.108	0.000	0.491
Former Tenant	0.007	0.004	0.001	0.007	0.583	0.602
						1.093

Debt Analysis - Other Arrears

Description of debt	From 1 to 30 days	From 31 to 60 days	From 61 to 90 days	From 91 to 365 days	Over 1 yr	TOTAL
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Misc recoveries	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Shops	0.008	0.000	0.000	0.014	0.007	0.029
Void recoveries	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.031	0.034
	0.008	**0.000**	**0.003**	**0.014**	**0.038**	**0.063**

28. Total tenant debt amounted to £1.093M compared to £1.162M at the end of quarter 1 2018. Current Tenant Arrears (CTA) are £0.491M or 1.6% (£0.521M or 1.7% at quarter 1)

of the annual rent debit of £30.146M, against a target of 1.8%, whilst Former Tenant Arrears (FTA) are at 2% with a balance of £0.602M against a target of 1.75% (2.1% with a balance of £0.641M at quarter 1). £0.002M tenant debt was written off in quarter 2 of 2018/19. Housing Benefit payments account for 51.18% of the rent and service charge income received.

29. There is currently £0.063M of non tenant arrears (£0.063M at quarter 1), which comprises the following: rents at shops owned by the HRA, service charges and property damage relating to existing and former tenants.

PROMPT PAYMENT INDICATOR

30. The performance target for payment to suppliers, where there is no dispute over the amount invoiced, is 90% of invoices paid within 30 days of invoice receipt date. The HRA performance for September was 94.86% of 292 invoices (80.8% of 323 invoices in June paid on time). Work is ongoing to create 'end to end' system integration between the SAP financial system and the QL Housing system, so as to improve performance overall. This project is progressing well and has significantly improved timescales for making payment.

HRA CAPITAL RECEIPTS

31. New Right to Buy (RtB) discounts and proposals for re-investing the capital receipts came into effect from April 2012, which increased the maximum discount available to tenants from £0.034M to their current level of £0.081M.

32. Up until the end of September 2018, 28 RtB applications were received with 11 properties being sold, compared to 35 Applications and 14 sales over the same period in 2017/18. It is currently projected that the number of RtB sales will be approximately 15 to 20 for the year, resulting in a residual receipt for the year of circa £3M.

33. The Council has a balance as at quarter 2 of useable capital receipts of £9.536M of which £4.248M is reserved for investment in new social housing. The Council has entered into an agreement with the Secretary of State to invest these receipts in new social housing. The use of these receipts is restricted to schemes that do not receive Homes England (formerly the Homes and Communities Agency - HCA) funding.

34. The retained receipt from RtB sales can represent no more than 30% of the cost of the replacement properties. Since the agreement was signed in 2012, £12.419M has been spent on replacement properties up to 30 September 2018. The Council is committed to spend a further £14.161M on replacement properties by 30 September 2021.

35. The HRA's Budget proposals for the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) propose significant investment in new build (in excess of £15.6M by 30 September 2021).

36. 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 30 September 2021, then this would pose a threat to the surpluses predicted both in the medium and longer term.

37. If additional sales continue to represent a small percentage of the Council's stock, so there is no material impact on the Business Plan, there is a significant benefit as retained receipts will provide the Council with additional funds for reinvestment.

38. As at 1 April 2018 the balance of HRA Usable Capital receipts was £8.145M. It is anticipated that £3.000M of RtB receipts will be retained in the current year, to deliver a subtotal of £11.145M. It is proposed to use £10.000M of usable receipts to part fund the Capital programme, so the balance carried forward is forecast to be £1.145M.

RESERVES

39. The total reserves available as at year end 2017/18 were £28.970M, comprising £2.000M in HRA Balances, £20.500M in the Independent Living Development Reserve, £6.141M in the Strategic Reserve, £0.129M in the Life Cycle Reserve and £0.200M in the Major Repairs Reserve.

40. A new earmarked Reserve has been created at the end of 2017/18, for Life Cycle costs at Priory View. Leaseholders at Priory View make a monthly contribution to capital replacement works, but as the building was only completed in 2016 these costs are unlikely to materialise for a number of years so a Reserve is required. This is often referred to as a "Sinking Fund", and enables leaseholder contributions to be set aside so they can be matched against the cost of works as they are required in future years.

41. As part of the MTFP, approval has been granted for the transfer of The Birches in Shefford into the HRA. The building was owned by Assets but has been transferred to the HRA at a cost of £1.150M. This cost will be financed from the Strategic Reserve, so the total contribution from that Reserve will be £8.246M, comprised of £7.096M contribution to the Capital programme and £1.150M to finance the transfer of The Birches from the GF.

42. The current position indicates a year end balance in Reserves of £24.796M. HRA Balances are to remain at a contingency level of £2.000M, with the Independent Living Development Reserve reducing to £17.912M, the Strategic Reserve reducing to £4.485M, the LifeCycle Reserve increasing to £0.199M, and the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR)

remaining at £0.200M. This equates to a forecast contribution to Reserves of £6.660M, offset by spend from Reserves of £10.834M to result in a net decrease of £4.174M.

43. An Investment Strategy has been formulated, that sets out proposals for the use of the Reserves that are forecast to materialise in the short to medium term. This strategy is referred to in the HRA Budget Report that has been approved by Council in February 2018, and continues to be refined as part of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

Table 5 - Reserves

Description	Opening Balance 2018/19	Spend against reserves	Release of reserves	Proposed transfer to Reserves	Proposed Closing Balance 2018/19
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
HRA Balances	2,000	-	-	-	2,000
Independent Living Development Reserve	20,500	(2,588)	-	0	17,912
Strategic Reserve	6,141	(8,246)	-	6,590	4,485
Life Cycle Reserve	129			70	199
Major Repairs (HRA)	200	-	-	-	200
	28,970	**(10,834)**	**-**	**6,660**	**24,796**

Table 6 – Summary by Service Area

Month: September 2018	Year to date				Year				
Director	Budget	Actual	Use of Reserves	Variance	Approved Budget	Provisional Outturn	Variance	Transfers to/(from) reserves	Variance after use of earmarked reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Assistant Director	8,684	8,516	-	(168)	17,367	16,969	(398)	-	(398)
Housing Operations	(11,340)	(11,716)	-	(377)	(22,679)	(23,216)	(537)	-	(537)
Repairs HRA	2,473	2,407	-	(66)	4,946	4,803	(143)	-	(143)
Housing Initiatives	661	592		(69)	1,321	1,200	(121)	-	(121)
Financial Inclusion	(525)	89	-	614	(1,049)	180	1,229	-	1,229
Housing Investment	47	23	-	(24)	94	64	(30)	-	(30)
Total	**0**	**(89)**	**0**	**(89)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Central Bedfordshire Council

EXECUTIVE **4 December 2018**

2018/19 Quarter 2 Performance Report

Report of Cllr Richard Wenham, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources (Richard.Wenham@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Advising Officer: Charles Warboys, Director of Resources (Charles.Warboys@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

This report relates to a non-Key Decision

Purpose of this report

1. To report Quarter 2 2018/19 performance for Central Bedfordshire Council's Medium Term Plan (MTP) indicator set.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. note performance against the indicators currently being used to help support the monitoring of progress against the Medium Term Plan priorities, and to ask officers to further investigate and resolve underperforming indicators as appropriate.

2. Since the Council was created in 2009, it has endeavoured to strengthen Central Bedfordshire as a great place to live and work. This means delivering great value and services to residents, making sure that both businesses and individuals have great prospects for the future, in terms of education, skills and employment, and enhancing Central Bedfordshire as a place.

3. In 2015, the Council updated its plans for delivering its ambitions. This culminated in The Five Year Plan 2015-2020 being adopted by Council in November 2015, based on six key priorities:

- Enhancing Central Bedfordshire
- Delivering Great Resident Services
- Improving Education and Skills
- Protecting the Vulnerable; Improving Well-being
- A More Efficient and Responsive Council
- Creating Stronger Communities

4. This report represents the Quarter 2 2018/19 view of the Council's suite of key indicators, which are reported together with the previous year's performance.

5. Performance data and additional commentary is also available through the Central Bedfordshire Performance Portal at: http://centralbedfordshireperformance.inphase.com

Quarter 2 2018/19 Summary

6. The Council has identified 46 key performance indicators, four of which are in development.

7. Data on these indicators is collected at a variety of intervals (some annually, others on a quarterly or monthly basis) and in each case the most recent available data is included.

8. The appendix to this report includes the latest available data for all indicators.

9. Where specific targets have been agreed for key indicators, the performance is highlighted by direction of travel arrows, which show if things have improved or deteriorated.

10. Additionally, performance is highlighted by a Red/Amber/Green system where targets have been set, with green symbolising a positive position and red symbolising a negative position.

11. Some data is subject to future revisions.

Overall Performance Against Targets and Direction of Travel

Quarter 1 2018/19 to Quarter 2 2018/19

12. Of those measures that currently have targets set:

- 7 are reporting as green
- 12 are reporting as amber
- 3 are reporting as red

This compares to reporting in Quarter 1 2018/19 of:

- 10 reported as green
- 7 reported as amber
- 6 reported as red

13. Of those measures that currently have a Direction of Travel (DoT) set:

- 20 are reporting DoT in a positive direction
- 1 are reporting DoT as neither positive nor negative
- 15 are reporting DoT in a negative direction

This compares to reporting in Quarter 1 2018/19 of:

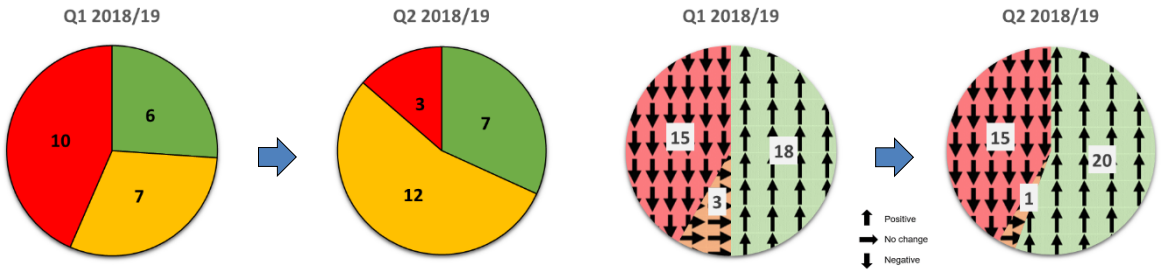
- 18 were reporting DoT in a positive direction
- 3 were reporting DoT as neither positive nor negative
- 15 were reporting DoT in a negative direction

14. Quarter 2 2018/19 saw a rise in the number of measures reporting as Amber from seven to twelve when compared with Quarter 1 2018/19. At the same time, Red decreased from six to three whilst Green decreased from ten to seven. One measure that reported a target in the previous quarter has no target assigned for Quarter 2 2018/19.

15. Since Quarter 1 2018/19, the net movement remains positive with two additional measures (twenty) reporting DoT in a 'positive' direction and a decrease of two measures reporting as neither positive nor negative.

Commentary is provided later in this report to explain performance for measures reporting new data.

Charts illustrating quarterly comparison of performance



Quarter 2 2017/18 to Quarter 2 2018/19

16. Annual comparisons of performance provide a longer view of progress and remove seasonal variations.

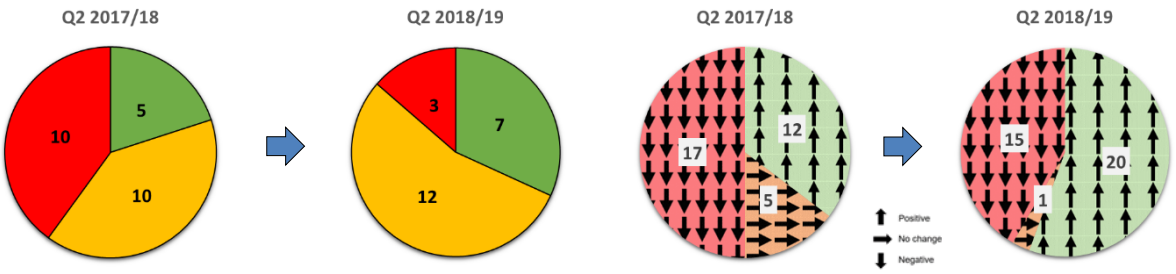
17. Comparing back to Quarter 2 2017/18, there has been a decrease in the number of indicators reporting as green (from ten to seven); whilst the number of indicators reporting as amber has increased (from ten to twelve). At the same time, the number of indicators reporting as red decreased (from five to three). Three measures which should not have had a target assigned at the outset have had that target removed whilst one additional measure is now reporting against a target. One measure that reported a target in the Quarter 2 2017/18 has no target assigned for Quarter 2 2018/19.

Commentary is provided later in this report to explain performance for measures reporting new data.

18. Comparing back to Quarter 2 2017/18, eight additional measures are reporting DoT in a 'positive' direction. There has been a decrease of two measures in a 'negative' direction and a decrease of four measures reporting as neither positive nor negative. Two additional measures are now reporting a Direction of Travel.

Commentary is provided later in this report to explain performance against Direction of Travel.

Charts illustrating annual comparison of performance



Specific Performance Reporting on Indicators with New Data

Enhancing Central Bedfordshire

19. **New Homes Completions.**
Target: 1,600 by end March 2019
July to September 2018 saw an additional 554 new homes completed in Central Bedfordshire. This takes the total to date for 2018/19 to 979. There were also an additional 1,422 under construction.

20. **Town Centre Vacancy Rates.**
No Target
Only 7% of Central Bedfordshire's Town Centre Units are now vacant, this is a decrease of 0.7% since June 2018 with 7 fewer vacant units. There are 5 vacant units in Ampthill, 7 in Biggleswade (-7), 33 in Dunstable (-3), 2 in Flitwick (+2), 2 in Houghton Regis (+1), 9 in Leighton Buzzard (-1), 3 in Sandy (+1), 1 in Shefford and none in either Stotfold or Arlesey. The Council will continue to support businesses through the use of our own assets and packages of support.

Delivering Great Residents Services

21. **Satisfaction with highways maintenance.**
Target: 49%
For 2018, the Central Bedfordshire result remained at just 1% lower than the target of 49%. While Central Bedfordshire's relative position to the national average remains the same, both have seen a decrease in result this year.

22. **Leisure facility usage rates.**
Target: 441,847 visitors per quarter
Even with Dunstable Leisure Centre still closed for refurbishment, the leisure centre usage figure remains fairly steady. The result for July to September 2018/19 was 440,406, just 1,441 less than the same period in 2017/18.

23. **Libraries facility usage rates.**
No Target
Over the last four years the physical use of the libraries has been declining as more people are taking to technology to access services. Whilst there was still a decrease in 2017/18, it was the smallest in recent years at only 1.27%. During 2017/18 footfall across Central Bedfordshire libraries was 822,408, a decrease of 10,663 on the previous year. A large scale flood in Leighton Buzzard Library meant that it was only partially open between 27 December 2017 and 11 June 2018. This will also impact the 2018/19 result.

Improving Education and Skills

24. **% of schools rated Good or Outstanding.**
Target: 90%
Performance as at the end of September 2018 was slightly lower at 86%. The School Improvement Service provides guidance to all schools about being prepared for inspection. The service has been strengthened with the appointment of three school improvement advisors, with a further advisor joining in September 2018. The service will sharpen the focus of all schools on pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds through the 'diminishing the difference' initiative as well as the performance of pupils who are not disadvantaged.

Protecting the Vulnerable; Improving Wellbeing

25. **Children's Safeguarding - Referrals as a percentage of the child population.**
No Target
The number of Referrals to Social Care has continued to fall suggesting that additional support is continuing to have a positive effect.

26. **Percentage of referrals of children leading to the provision of a social care service.**
Target: 99.7%
Performance continues to be on or above the target of 98.4%

27. **% of care leavers at age 17-21 who are engaged in education, training or employment.**
Target: 67%
Performance is currently slightly behind target due to the level of complexity of issues for a few Care Leavers. However, performance continues to be above the national average.

28. **Proportion of adults subject to a safeguarding enquiry of those known to adult social care.**
No Target
As at September 2018, of the 6,548 adults known to Adult Social Care, 114 were subject to a safeguarding enquiry (1.7%). This is a slight reduction of 18 from the previous quarter (April to August 2018), whilst the total number of adults known to Adult Social Care increased by 168.

29. **Total non-elective admissions in to hospital (general & acute), all-age, per 100,000 population.**
Target: 2,491 per 100,000 population
Performance for April to June 2018 exceeded the required target of 2,491 per 100,000; although this was a reduction on the previous six months. There are a number of prevention schemes working to reduce A&E attendance which has an impact on non-elective admissions. These include; Hear and Treat, See and Treat, Early Intervention Vehicle, and direct GP bookings with Herts Urgent Care.

30. **Average age of customers admitted to a residential care home (65+).**
No Target
The average age of admissions to residential care from July to September was at 84.9, a slight increase on the previous 3 months. The average age of residential admissions for the whole of 2017/18 was 84.6.

31. **Delivery of new dwellings suitable for older people.**
No Target: to be confirmed
No additional dwellings were delivered between July to September 2018, although the contract to deliver a 168 apartment scheme for older people at Houghton Regis Central has been awarded during this period with a start on site anticipated to be during February 2019. Work is ongoing to establish a whole Council approach to tracking the delivery of dwellings for older people as part of the Housing Delivery Strategy. Accordingly, targets for the rest of the year have not yet been confirmed.

A More Efficient and Responsive Council

32. **Time taken to process Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, new claims & change events.**
Target: 16 days
The benefits speed of processing for July to September 2018 was 20.1 days against a target of 16 days. This was a dip of 3 days in the overall time taken to process benefits compared to the same period in 2017/18, although performance still compares well to the same period in 2016/17 of 32 days. Performance has improved slightly compared to Quarter 1 of 2018/19 and is expected to show continued improvement the next time this measure is reported.

33. **Call wait times average (seconds).**
Target: 180 seconds
The implementation of Interactive Voice Response (IVR) on the busiest lines continues to have a positive impact on call waiting times, with IVRs directing calls appropriately and fewer repeat calls improving response times.

34. **Number of web visitors.**
No Target
Web visitors from July - September 2018 were up by 9% compared to the same period in 2017. There were spikes in traffic during this period due to announcements regarding major road developments (M1-A6 Link Road and A421 dualling). Other new projects, such as the recycle shop at Thorn Turn opening and the proposed crematorium at Flitwick also generated additional website traffic.

Creating Stronger Communities

35. **Number of volunteers engaged within the community (currently the village care schemes).**
Target: 916 volunteers
There has been a slight reduction overall of 3 volunteers between April – June 2018. The number of Good Neighbour Schemes established and operative is not likely to increase in the immediate future as most communities have a scheme. The focus for the future is maintaining support to existing schemes and to encourage them to take on a greater diversity of tasks, linking to social prescribing and other networks.

36. **Number of customers supported within the community (currently by the village care schemes).**
Target: 830 customers
There was an increase of 45 customers from April – June 2018. Areas that have seen the noticeable rise in customers supported are in Houghton Regis, Biggleswade, Clophill, Flitwick and Sandy, whilst a reduction of customers supported was seen in Leighton Linslade and Toddington. The number of Good Neighbour Schemes established and operative is not likely to increase in the immediate future as most communities have a scheme. The focus for the future is maintaining support to existing schemes and to encourage them to take on a greater diversity of tasks, linking to social prescribing and other networks.

Council Priorities

37. The measures selected for the reporting of performance reflect the Council's priorities. Measures are reported under the headings in Central Bedfordshire Council's Five Year Plan.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

38. None directly, however any areas of ongoing underperformance would reflect a risk to both service delivery and the reputation of the Council.

Financial Implications

39. None directly, although the Medium Term Plan indicator set provides a view of the value for money delivered by the Council.

Equalities Implications

40. 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.

41. 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

42. The Medium Term Plan indicator set includes measures on premature deaths and use of leisure centres.

Sustainability

43. A broad range of indicators relating to sustainability including those covering employment, library usage, active recreation and waste are included in the Medium Term Plan indicator set.

Community Safety

44. The measures included cover perception of safety both during the day and at night.

Risk Management

45. Effective monitoring of performance indicators mitigates the risk of failing to deliver the Council's priorities, reputational risks and the risk of failing to deliver statutory responsibilities.

Appendix 1

Arrows in the scorecard show the performance 'direction of travel' and the RAG symbols show whether or not agreed targets are being met.

Performance Judgement		
Direction of travel (DoT)	RAG score	
↓ Performance is reducing	▲	Target missed – Performance at least 10% below the required level of improvement
→ Performance remains unchanged	●	Target missed – Performance less than 10% below the required level of improvement
↑ Performance is improving	★	Target achieved

Enhancing Central Bedfordshire	Performance will be reported	Last Reported	Latest Data	DoT	Current Status
*% of Central Bedfordshire residents satisfied with the local area as a place to live	Resident's Survey	Sep 16	90%	↓	★
*% feel safe when outside in their local area during the day	Resident's Survey	Sep 16	97%	↓	n/a
*% feel safe when outside in their local area after dark	Resident's Survey	Sep 16	81%	↑	n/a
~*Number of new jobs	Annual (Dec)	Dec 16	11,500	↑	★
~*People in employment aged 16 to 64 (% above national average)	Quarterly	Mar 18	7.2%	↓	★
~*Average Earnings for Workers	Annual (April)	Apr 17	£523.6	↑	n/a
~*New Homes completions (cumulative)	Quarterly	Sep 18	979	n/a	●
~*Town Centre Vacancy Rates	Quarterly (Feb,May,Aug,Nov)	Aug 18	7.0%	↑	n/a

Delivering Great Resident Services					
*Perception of Council - Good quality services	Resident's Survey	Sep 16	70%	↓	n/a
*Percentage of Central Bedfordshire residents satisfied with living environment	Resident's Survey	Sep 16	84%	n/a	n/a
~*Kg/household of black bin waste	Quarterly	Mar 18	144	↓	●
~*Satisfaction with highways maintenance	Annual (April)	Apr 18	48.0%	↓	●
~*CBC's relative position for condition of roads (principal)	Annual (March)	Mar 17	98%	↓	★
~*CBC's relative position for condition of roads (non-principal)	Annual (March)	Mar 17	97%	→	●
~*Leisure facility usage rates	Quarterly	Sep 18	440,406	↓	●
~*Libraries facility usage rates	Annual (March)	Mar 17	822,408	↓	n/a
*Customer Services - numbers of service failures reported	Quarterly				

Improving Education and Skills					
~*School readiness % of children achieving a good level of development at the Early Years Foundation	Annual (Sept)	Sep 17	71.7%	↑	▲
~*Attainment 8 - ranking	Annual (Dec)	Dec 17	88	↑	▲
*% of Schools rated Good or Outstanding (Quarterly)	Quarterly	Sep 18	86%	↑	●
~*% of young people aged 16-17 who are in education, employment or training (EET)	Annual (Feb)	Feb 18	93.4%	↑	●
~*Employer Skills Gaps	Annual (Dec)	Dec 16	27%	↑	n/a

Protecting the Vulnerable; improving well-being					
~*Children's Safeguarding - Referrals as a percentage of the child population	Quarterly	Sep 18	1.1%	↑	n/a
~*Percentage of referrals of children leading to the provision of a social care service	Quarterly	Sep 18	98.4%	↓	●
~*LAC - School attendance (when entering care and registered at school)	Annual (July)	Jul 17	97.1%	↑	n/a
~*% of care leavers at age 17-21 who are engaged in education, training or employment	Quarterly	Sep 18	63.6%	↓	●
~*Proportion of adults subject to a safeguarding enquiry of those known to adult social care	Quarterly	Sep 18	1.70%	n/a	n/a
~*Total non-elective admissions in to hospital (general & acute), all-age, per 100,000 population	Quarterly	Jun 18	2,677	↑	●
~*Avoiding admissions to Care Homes	Quarterly				
~*Average age of customers admitted to a residential care home (65+)	Quarterly	Sep 18	84.9	n/a	n/a
~*Delivery of new dwellings suitable for older people	Quarterly	Sep 18	229	n/a	No target set
*Premature Deaths (persons per 100,000)	Annual (Dec)	Dec 16	277	↑	●
~*Hate Crime incidents reported	Quarterly	Mar 18	51	↓	n/a
*No. of Domestic Abuse incidents reported	Quarterly	Mar 18	1,032	↑	n/a

A more efficient and responsive Council					
*Perception of the Council Value for money	Resident's Survey	Sep 16	58%	↓	★
*Perception that Council acts on the concerns of residents	Resident's Survey	Sep 16	55%	↑	n/a
*Time taken to process Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, new claims & change events - Days	Quarterly	Sep 18	20.1	↑	▲
*Call wait times average - (seconds)	Quarterly	Sep 18	125	↑	★
*Number of web visitors - Quarterly	Quarterly	Sep 18	583,403	n/a	n/a
*Repeat issues (2nd calls or more to contact centre)	Monthly				

Creating stronger communities					
*Perception that people can influence decisions in their own area	Resident's Survey	Sep 16	39%	↑	n/a
*Perception that people in the local area pull together to improve the local area	Resident's Survey	Sep 16	75%	↑	n/a
*Percentage that volunteer	Resident's Survey	Sep 16	35%	↓	n/a
~*Number of volunteers engaged within the community (currently the village care schemes)	Quarterly	Jun 18	913	↓	●
~*Number of customers supported within the community (currently by the village care schemes)	Quarterly	Jun 18	875	↑	★
*Town and parish survey satisfaction	Resident's Survey				

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