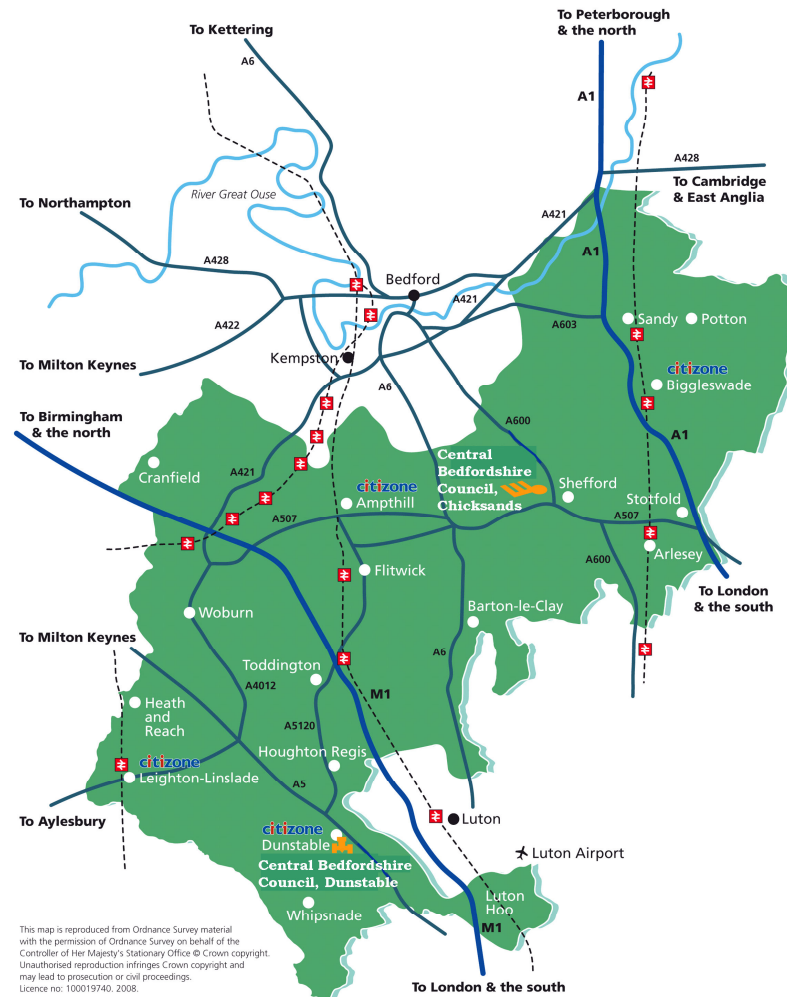


## DRAFT CAA SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT

## About the Central Bedfordshire area

- Central Bedfordshire is home to approximately 250,000 people (2007) living in 105,000 households. It is estimated that housing growth will increase the population to over 280,000 by 2021, a 12% increase.
- However, there will be a much higher rate of increase among older people. People aged 65 or over currently constitute 14.2% of the total population in Central Bedfordshire, compared to 16.0% in England. This is predicted to increase by 53% between 2007 and 2021, from 35,900 to 55,000. The increase will be higher still among the over 75s, at 64% between 2007 and 2021.



- Around 115,000 people in Central Bedfordshire (46% of the total population) live in rural areas. In total 137,000 people live in the towns, with 37,000 in Leighton Linslade (14% of the total population), 35,000 in Dunstable (14%), 17,000 in Houghton Regis (7%) , 17,000 in Biggleswade (7%), 13,000 in Flitwick (5%), 12,000 in Sandy (5%) and 7,000 in Ampthill (3%).
- Central Bedfordshire covers some 712 square kilometres from Leighton Linslade and Dunstable in the west to Sandy and Arlesey in the east. The Chiltern Hills, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, form a major feature in the south west including chalk scarp and downlands and the Greensand Ridge runs eastwards through the area. There are some 32 sites of special scientific interest in Central Bedfordshire as well as three national nature reserves and 11 local nature reserves.

- Central Bedfordshire has good north to south communication routes including the M1 in the west and A1 in the east with the A507 being the main east to west route. Other transport links include good regional and national rail lines and nearby Luton and Stansted airports. The Grand Union canal also passes through.
- 50% of Central Bedfordshire's resident workforce commutes outside the area for work; many heading to the surrounding employment centres of Bedford, Luton, Milton Keynes and Hertfordshire as well as London, 40 miles to the south. Car dependency is high with the majority of work journeys being made by car, with limited alternatives available for people without a vehicle in rural areas.
- In the near future, we will have a major new visitor attraction in the new Centre Parcs Holiday Village near Flitwick and, potentially, the NIRAH aquatic life centre. These will increase both employment and visits to the area, complementing the well known Woburn Safari Park & Abbey, Whipsnade and Dunstable Downs.
- In environmental terms, much of Central Bedfordshire has a suburban or rural feel and is a highly desirable place to both live and work. Affordable housing is however an important local issue, as house prices are in general above the norm compared to other areas within the East of England and nationally.
- The area is diverse with picturesque villages, hamlets and historic market towns. However, it is at the same time one of the most rapidly growing areas in England and is planning for substantial additional development as part of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area.
- Around 6% of people living in the area are from ethnic minority communities. The largest of these groups are 'White Other' (2.0%), 'White Irish' (1.3%) and Indian (0.6%). Data from the annual school census shows that more than 80 different languages are spoken at home by children in Central Bedfordshire schools.
- In the 2001 Census, most of the population stated their religion as Christian (75%), with 17% stating no religion, and other religions constituting 8% of the population.
- Overall health in Central Bedfordshire is better than the UK norm. However, there are significant health inequalities by location, gender, income and ethnicity in parts of Houghton Regis, Biggleswade, Sandy, and Flitwick East wards.
- In terms of overall deprivation, no areas within Central Bedfordshire are within the 20% most deprived nationally. However, for some of the individual aspects of deprivation (such as education, crime and income) communities within Dunstable, Flitwick, Houghton Regis and Sandy do fall into the worst 10% nationally.
- Although unemployment in Central Bedfordshire has risen over the last year to 3.1% in April 2009, it remains lower than the national average of 4.1%. Major employers located in Central Bedfordshire include Amazon, Cranfield University, Millbrook Proving Ground, Renault Trucks UK, the RSPB and Whitbread Group PLC.

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE:  
AREA ASSESSMENT THEME – How well are families supported?**

**What is the story for Central Bedfordshire?**

Where are we now? (Background)

Around 254,900 people live in Central Bedfordshire. The number of births in Central Bedfordshire has been around 3,000 for the last three years. The birth rate is slightly lower than the England and East of England rates. Central Bedfordshire's proportion of low birth weight babies is slightly lower than the East of England average.

Fourteen children's centres have been established and eight more will be in place by 2010. Early intervention is a key part of the service they offer to ensure that families are able to access the services they need. Specialist services have a good relationship with the local children's centres for referral and self-referral. A number of children's centres offer basic parenting courses and some work closely with Adult and Community Learning, helping families to get back into work and training. Getting Started courses are being run at the centres, or advertised by the centres, with crèche facilities offered to parents accessing training. Many schools now have access to a Parenting Support Adviser.

103 settings are offering the 12.5 hours free offer to children aged 3 and 4 and sufficiency assessments indicate adequate availability. 167 settings offer early years out of school childcare.

Our commissioning model for delivering high level family support is well embedded and supported through a range of inter-agency panels. Access to earlier identification and support is through the common assessment framework multi-agency panel arrangement, which supports delivery of targeted family support packages.

There is a good range of services for disabled children and their families which are being developed further through the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme. Children with special educational needs receive support in line with their assessed need through a range of inclusive provision within mainstream schools, with special schools meeting more complex needs across the phases.

What are the Issues? (include LAA priorities)

- We need to reduce the impact of domestic violence on children and young people.
- We need to address the numbers of children living in poverty, particularly those who have an increased vulnerability to poor outcomes.
- We need to raise the aspirations of children and young people and their families.
- Targeted action is needed in the Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Biggleswade and Sandy areas.
- We need to improve housing for people living in our most deprived wards.
- We need to attract inward investment and create more local jobs.

**Plans to tackle priority issues**

Where do we want to be? (Vision for the theme)

The Children's Trust partnership is working to increase the integration of services in the localities. Further integration will achieve earlier identification and response to children with additional needs, using common processes based on CAF, aligned practice expectations and through identifying appropriate pathways. We aim to get to the right children, young people and families early to raise aspirations, identify young people at risk of offending and work with

parents to reduce this risk. We aspire to think beyond the individual child or young person and to 'think family'. We want to reduce levels of child poverty and embed our parenting strategy across all services.

#### What are we doing to get there?

We are:

- developing a comprehensive new Children and Young Peoples Plan that will respond to the needs of children and young people and their parents and carers;
- re-commissioning services devoted to improving people's economic well-being so that they are accessible to those families with the greatest need;
- developing one stop shop multi-agency settings in priority areas;
- working to improve employability and increase economic opportunities for individuals to participate fully in the region's economy through the Economic Participation programme and the European Social Fund;
- co-ordinating the promotion of local job opportunities;
- developing the skills and knowledge of adults and children through learning as a whole family approach, and supporting adults in gaining meaningful employment;
- providing parenting provision and developing confidence, communication and practical skills to support family life and contribute towards children's' well-being;
- providing programmes for priority groups such as adults who have literacy, language or numeracy needs, adults without formal qualifications or those who have not reached a level 2 qualification.

#### How far have we got? (What have we achieved?)

- The Harmful Risk Taking Behaviour Board has developed a work plan to reduce alcohol consumption, drug misuse, and risky behaviour.
- We have created four integrated youth support service teams to facilitate multi-agency working in specific geographic areas.
- We have formed a child poverty network with a range of agencies.
- We provide subsidised transport for children and young people and free swimming for all children aged 16 and under.

#### What still needs to be done?

- Further develop the "Think Family" approach.
- Produce a Central Bedfordshire Homelessness strategy.
- Ensure early access to antenatal care and advice to reduce smoking, improve nutrition and promote breastfeeding.
- Build on existing good practice to develop a locality approach to reduce the number of young people Not in Employment Education or Training, targeting areas with the highest NEET levels.
- Provide support to children, young people and their families who need assistance in improving their quality of life, particularly with regard to housing, transport, parenting and early years intervention.
- Work with employers, the voluntary sector, colleges and schools to increase the range and quality of local training, volunteering and job opportunities.
- Inspire our most vulnerable young people to raise their aspirations and provide integrated support, particularly to Care leavers, young offenders, young carers, young people with physical and learning disabilities, gypsy and traveller children and teenage parents.

## **AREA ASSESSMENT THEME - How good is the well being of children and young people?**

### **What is the story for Central Bedfordshire?**

#### Where are we now? (Background)

As a new Children's Trust we have set up our new structures and are working together to provide a range of services and interventions to safeguard and promote the achievement and welfare of children and young people. Performance information is being closely analysed. We are managing key aspects of the transition to the new Local Authority and new partnership arrangements by engaging in a range of shared service agreements to provide continuity of service provision and maintain service standards.

In terms of our context, 49,200 of our children are under 16 (19.3% of the population); 26,800 (10.5%) are aged 16-24. By 2021 it is forecast that there will be about 2,000 more children aged under 16. 27% of children in Central Bedfordshire live in low income families and 12% live in workless families. We know that children from poorer backgrounds are doing less well.

The health of our children and young people compares well with the East of England, and to England as a whole. Children's social care performance is stable and effective, supported through the CAF, multi-agency panel arrangements and an underpinning commissioning structure. Achievement across the age range from Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 4 is above national averages. None of our schools is in an Ofsted category of concern. We are on track to have 100% of extended services in schools by 2010. The percentage of school leavers going onto higher education is above the regional and national average. NEET figures are positive at 5.9%. We have a high performing Youth Offending Service.

#### What are the Issues? (include LAA priorities)

We need to:

- address child poverty (Local Area Agreement target);
- reduce obesity among school aged children (Local Area Agreement target);
- improve the effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health services (Local Area Agreement target);
- reduce the proportion of young people frequently misusing substances (Local Area Agreement target)
- reduce teenage conceptions in hot spot wards;
- continue to protect children and young people from harm;
- improve early identification and intervention with vulnerable young people;
- implement a learning transformation agenda in our schools to ensure that achievement at the ages of 11, 16 and 19 compares favourably with that of similar councils.
- further develop locally based services to improve outcomes, including a further 8 Children's centres.
- improve level 2 and level 3 achievement at age 19.
- provide more opportunities for 8-13 year olds to engage in positive activities.
- develop the workforce so that all staff working with children are able to develop their skills and work together to support families.
- meet the challenge of commissioning education and training provision for 16-19 year-olds.

## **Plans to tackle priority issues**

### Where do we want to be? (Vision for the theme)

The Council's Vision is to improve the quality of life of all in Central Bedfordshire and enhance the unique character of our communities and our environment. Children are one of the council's top five corporate priorities. Children's Trust partners are working to create a vision for the new Children's Trust. It is already clear from early work with Trust partners that our shared focus is on educating, protecting, and providing opportunities for children and young people. We want every child to be safe, healthy and successful in education and employment and make a positive contribution to society. In particular, we will support children to be ambitious and have high aspirations.

### What are we doing to get there?

We will achieve our vision through partners and service users working closely together in an integrated multi-agency way within defined geographical areas. A key element is the development of our Children's Trust, which will be the means for all agencies to work together to deliver real and sustainable improvements in the quality of life for children and their families. This will involve pooling staff, expertise and resources to achieve the outcomes set out in our Children and Young People's Plan.

We are consulting with, listening to and acting on the views of children and young people and focusing our efforts on early identification and prevention. Central to achieving our vision is developing multi-agency provision in priority areas and increasing the range of services in school settings.

### How far have we got? (What have we achieved?)

- We have established our baseline and a clear direction.
- We have set up our new Children's Trust and we are completing our CYPP.
- We have high level management information in place based on key performance indicators to track our progress.
- We are in a formal sub-regional grouping for joint commissioning of further education provision.

### What still needs to be done?

We need to:

- complete our new Children and Young People's Plan with our partners;
- disaggregate the joint LSCB with Bedford Borough and establish an LSCB for Central Bedfordshire by April 2010;
- implement our action plan in response to the Laming review;
- produce a Strategy for Change as part of our transforming learning agenda;
- produce a child poverty strategy;
- develop a Children's workforce strategy;
- further develop strategic joint commissioning, procurement, quality assurance and contract performance;
- review and refocus our provision for pupils with special educational needs.

**COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP:  
AREA ASSESSMENT THEME – How safe is the area?**

**What is the story for Central Bedfordshire?**

Where are we now? (Background)

Central Bedfordshire (CB) is a safe place to live and work, although as is common in all areas, it does have pockets where crime and community safety issues are higher. Our crime figures are monitored via the Home Office through iQuanta, which measures CBs Community Safety Partnership geographical area, against other 'most similar groups' (MSG). CB most similar group is made up of low crime areas. Against all crime types, the area is performing slightly better than the average for the group with 14.811 crimes per 1000 residents (1/2/09 to 30/04/09) against the most similar group average of 15.462 for the same period. Against serious acquisitive crime performance is significantly above the group average at 3.939 crimes per 1000 residents when the group average is 2.626 per 1000. A key impact on this type of crime has been domestic burglary which is a problem in the area, and also vehicle crime.

The formation of Central Bedfordshire as a unitary authority has provided the opportunity to restructure the previous district Community Safety Partnerships into a single partnership using the national Hallmarks of Effective Practice to guide its development thus ensuring minimum standards are achieved, but also providing a robust platform through which to develop to recognised national best practice standards. The previous district Community Safety Partnerships through their statutory audits of crime and disorder across their areas, and more recently the changes to the Crime and Disorder Act requiring partnerships to undertake strategic assessments, have helped to identify the LAA priorities linked to how safe is our area.

Whilst overall Central Bedfordshire is a low crime area it has been designated as a 'priority' area by Government Office East for community safety issues, particularly in relation to crime and drugs. This status is as a result of South Beds previously being a priority area and the formation of the new unitary which needs to develop new partnerships and structures to support LAA targets. This will ensure there is effective and appropriate strategic responsibility for key community safety agendas such as crime, drugs, alcohol, reducing re-offending and Domestic Abuse. Priority status also ensures that the Community Safety Partnership for the area has access to additional support from GOE.

Central Bedfordshire has 3 priority areas (Parkside, Tithe Farm and Downside) based on socio-economic factors and IMD. Parkside and Tithe Farm have high rates of crime and ASB, and Arlesey/Stotfold also feature high crime spikes and ASB. Neighbourhood plans have been developed for these areas to tackle the problems, including community safety, and community safety colleagues are engaged in progressing the plans in conjunction with colleagues from a variety of other services and partners, thus bringing cross-cutting issues to the fore.

Alcohol is a bigger issue than drugs in the area in terms of the night time economy, public order, binge drinking and the levels of criminal damage & ASB. ASB is a priority in Central Bedfordshire and features highly as a priority in community consultation across both urban and rural areas.

Satisfaction with aspects of policing in the area is fairly high and the public feel that police in their local area were doing a good job and felt confident in Bedfordshire Police. Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams' in Central Bedfordshire provide effective community engagement to identify local policing priorities, and in addition there are a range of Community Safety fora and groups operating across the area many of which link into Town and Parish Councils. Surveys are undertaken by the Police Authority (Blue Light), local authority (Place Survey) in addition to various surveys at local level. As with many areas nationally fear of crime in Central

Bedfordshire is disproportionate to actual levels of crime, and reducing the fear of crime is a priority for the Community Safety Partnership and the local authority. Addressing public confidence is also a priority and the Community Safety Partnership is currently looking at developing joint work on this agenda.

Bedfordshire Drug and Alcohol Team provide a shared service across Central Bedfordshire (hosted by the Central Bedfordshire Council) and Bedford Borough Council and the Drug Intervention Programme services have improved significantly across the area and a single Drug Intervention Programme has been agreed across Bedfordshire. Domestic Abuse services for the area are also shared with Bedford Borough Council, again hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council. The Domestic Abuse Strategy and action plans are in place and key services such as MARAC and IDVA are working well.

Police and Probation leads are working with Community Safety and Local Criminal Justice Board partners to develop an approach to Integrated Offender Management across Bedfordshire to provide wrap-around services for offenders to support a reduction in re-offending.

CBs also has a number of cross-border issues in relation to bordering unitary areas, its proximity to M1 and other major transport links including train stations. In terms of the Preventing Violent Extremism agenda Central Bedfordshire has low level issues in comparison to Bedford and Luton.

Central Bedfordshire has a number of agencies, including voluntary sector, working proactively to provide diversionary activities for young people e.g. Integrated Youth Support Services, PUKE working with young people about alcohol, Junior Youth Inclusion Programme, operated by the Youth Offending Service in Parkside to divert young people on the cusp of offending, and the introduction of Street Pastors in Dunstable. The co-ordination of activities across partners needs further development and this is already being helped by extended schools workers.

#### What are the Issues? (include LAA priorities)

- The Central Bedfordshire Community Safety Partnership needs a comprehensive performance framework to monitor delivery of key strategic responsibilities for the area, thus ensuring clear and robust links to LAA targets, National Indicators and Assessment of Police and Community Safety
- Develop robust working arrangements with other Partnerships eg. LCJB
- Develop work on cross-cutting issues eg. Domestic Abuse, safe-guarding young people through the Children's Trust, and also similar links to adult safeguarding
- A need to develop action plans to implement the Community Safety Partnership Community Safety Plan, particularly around the priorities identified for the area eg. Alcohol Harm Reduction, ASB and Serious Acquisitive Crime
- Continue to develop methods of public engagement linking this to the further development of the police Safer Neighbourhood Team approach and the community cohesion agenda
- Ensure that the Drug Intervention Programme is operating consistently and continues to develop to support reductions in offending and drug use.
- Identifying the means by which to ensuring the longer term sustainability of key partnership posts that have historically received year-on-year funding e.g. IDVA's, ASB Officers
- Aligning and pooling budgets across partners to address cross-cutting issues in an efficient and effective manor thus providing value for money.
- Integrate work of Hate crime, Gay/transgender partnership and preventing extremism into the Community Safety Partnership
- Work on cross border links with key agencies



- Continue to develop the Community Safety Partnership structures in line with minimum standards Hallmarks including partnership tasking

### **Plans to tackle priority issues**

#### Where do we want to be? (Vision for the theme)

- Our vision is to reduce levels of crime and fear of crime, increase public confidence, reduce reoffending, reduce DV repeats and reduce and tackle ASB

#### What are we doing to get there?

- Developing new structures for information sharing and exchange of data and intelligence to develop the statutory Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment and other assessments which will lead to further improvements in identify cross-cutting themes and partnership working
- Working with key internal/external partners to develop and improve community consultation/engagement strategies and mechanisms
- Developing a robust and sustainable performance framework for the Community Safety Partnership on key strategic responsibilities which will inform performance reporting to the LSP.
- Developing a robust partnership Integrated Offender Management approach across CBs
- Embedding public accountability/consultation/engagement into new structures
- Developing a Central Bedfordshire partnership approach to ASB
- Police currently aligning command structures to reflect Central Bedfordshire's boundaries, working practices and resources
- Providing appropriate training in skills and competencies across partner agencies
- Encouraging a problem solving approach to local crime and community safety issues.

#### How far have we got? (What have we achieved?)

- A new Community Safety Partnership Plan is in place identifying the partnerships priorities for the area, which link to LAA targets, and how these priorities will be addressed
- Action plans are being developed with partners to support the Community Safety Plan.
- Police performance targets for Central Bedfordshire serious acquisitive crime have been disaggregated
- Service Level Agreements for shared services are in place
- The Domestic Abuse strategy and action plan in place
- The Community Safety Partnership Executive is acting as the thematic group for the Local Strategic Partnership
- An Integrated Offender Management group is in place and delivery plans are being developed
- Recruitment of a county wide Prolific and Priority Offender co-ordinator is underway. This post links to reductions in serious acquisitive crime and Integrated Offender Management
- Drug testing on arrest for offenders committing certain trigger crimes, which is linked to the Drug Intervention Programme, is now in place across the area. This was effective from 1 April 2009 and has significant links to reductions of serious acquisitive crime.
- A partnership Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy has been developed and a multi-agency action plan is being developed through the Community Safety Partnership. This links across a number of themes including family support and children and young people.
- Community Safety issues have been identified in the Neighbourhood Plans for priority estates and partners and colleagues are actively engaged in these areas.

### What still needs to be done?

- A Community Safety Partnership performance framework needs to be completed and monitoring arrangements confirmed.
- Develop and agree a partnership approach to increasing public confidence in line with the national target set for police and local authorities and ensure a reduction of fear of crime is integral within this work
- Identify funding streams and adopt a best value approach to commissioning community safety work across partners.
- Embed the arrangements and mechanisms to undertake a statutory strategic assessment on crime in the area and feed data and information from this into other assessment processes eg. Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Ensure partners understand their responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act, including section 17 of the act and ensure that partnerships have colleagues with the appropriate authority and skills/levels of competency to address issues
- Continue to integrate governance of shared services within the Community Safety Partnership structure, especially amalgamation of the strategic responsibilities of Bedfordshire Drug and Alcohol Team
- Develop work to ensure that vulnerable and hard to reach members of the community e.g. victims of crime and ASB, Domestic Abuse and drug receive services appropriate to their needs.
- Integration of all National Hallmarks into Community Safety Partnership working arrangements
- Work to empower communities to build capacity and engage in community safety processes to help reduce local crime and ASB
- Undertake discussions with neighbouring authorities and partners with regard to cross border working including preventing extremism and community cohesion issues
- Further improve the co-ordination of partners diversionary activities for young people across the area.

## **Environment and Economy Theme**

### **Where are we now (background)**

#### **Introduction**

Central Bedfordshire is a safe, green and clean place to live, work and enjoy. It is a place that many choose to live, but only half our residents work in. The expansion of our population is set to continue as the regional plans call for 90,000 houses to be built across Bedfordshire and Luton by 2031. There is an aspiration to match the planned housing growth with a similar level of new jobs and ensure the appropriate supporting infrastructure is place to sustain growth.

Much of the housing growth being delivered through planned sustainable urban extensions, focussed on the main settlements of Bedford in the north and Luton, Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Leighton Buzzard in the south. Two local delivery vehicles have been established in partnership with our neighbouring authorities and public and private partners to assist the delivery in each of the growth areas north and south (Renaissance Bedford and Luton Gateway).

The spatial positioning of the area requires positive and active collaboration across our administrative borders at local and regional levels to make sense in terms of the strategic and interconnected planning of the growth of communities, employment and the infrastructure to enable and manage the movement of people and goods across the area. This is reflected in the active role CB has in joint plans, committees, partnerships including an active role in the MKSM Growth Area partnerships collaborating across three regions and strengthening the relationship with Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire. The area also benefits from strong connections to London and the Greater South East by rail, road and access to London Luton Airport.

#### **The Economy**

Central Bedfordshire has a balanced and mature economic structure with no overdependence on any one industrial sector. The employment rate, at 83.9% in September 2008, is the highest in the region, and above the regional average of 77.6%. 15,900 people (or 10% of the working age population) are self-employed, slightly below the regional average of 10.6%. During 2006-07, 800 jobs were created, a 1% increase compared to a 0.2% decrease in the region overall.

In 2009 there were 10,045 VAT-registered companies in Central Bedfordshire; the business stock has consistently increased, even though the economy has struggled against the manufacturing downturn and strong growth in neighbouring economies, such as Milton Keynes. Examples of our larger local companies include Cranfield Management Development and Aviation Services, Nissan Research, Traffic Master, W Jordon (Cereals), Millbrook Proving Ground, an international asset in production car testing and innovation, Lockheed Martin, leading advanced aerospace and defence engineering, Amazon distribution, and the headquarters for Keir Group at Tempsford and RSPB at Sandy. However 81% of our business stock are micro- and small companies with fewer than five employees. This challenges the delivery of business support services and for promoting awareness of these services.

Average earnings are higher for those living in Central Bedfordshire than for those working in Central Bedfordshire, although both figures are above the regional average. This difference reflects the fact that many people commute outside the area for work in order to earn more. This demonstrates the need to increase the number of more and better paid local jobs. The priority industrial sectors for growth are tourism and hospitality, high tech manufacturing, tertiary education and R&D, creative and cultural industries, construction, business services, and logistics and transport.

However, these area statistics factors mask areas of deeper need, particularly in parts of Houghton Regis and Dunstable (known as priority neighbourhoods), where unemployment rates are double that of the rest of the area. None of the priority neighbourhoods are in the top 20% most deprived areas nationally and therefore do not benefit from the additional government funding to tackle such issues. However, some of them are in the top 10-20% nationally for individual aspects of deprivation, notably employment and income.

The ratio between working age residents and jobs is one of the lowest in the region, and the lack of a major employment centre leads to large numbers of people commuting out of the area.

## **Responding to the Recession**

The global recession has resulted in a sharp increase in the number of job seekers, and claimant count unemployment rates almost trebled between April 2008 and April 2009. However, our industrial profile is robust and the overall level of unemployment is still below both the regional and national levels. The levels of unemployment are deeper in the south than the north, although the ratio of job seekers to job centre vacancies is higher than the regional and national levels in both April and May 09 showing the tough competition for local jobs. Examples of the action being taken to address the changing needs in response to the recession include:

- Pro active Redundancy Support Group working in partnership with Job Centre Plus, LSC, and the Voluntary and Community sectors accessing the individuals at risk and assisting in retraining and support before employment ends.
- Healthy steps to employment programme led by the PCT continuing to add value to moving people off benefits and into work.
- Emphasis on youth enterprise and support for those not in Education and Employment through joint working enhanced by access to focussed ESF (European Social Funds) on the priority neighbourhoods and communities facing the highest disadvantage.
- Support for local businesses through a dedicated website for information, workshops and outreach into our main industrial estates to support and business to business networking.

- Establishing Executive Job Clubs to support professional level managers in the search for work.
- Promote use of our library resources to help in job search.
- Focus on tackling rogue traders and loan sharks operating in the area.
- Encouraging volunteering as an option during the transition into new paid employment.
- Supporting the flow of regional and national funding opportunities to both the Voluntary and Community sectors and local businesses.
- Actively monitoring and participating in passing intelligence to the region and national economic council to make sure new initiatives meets the needs and barriers are addressed.

### **Transport: Getting Around**

The road and transport systems in Central Bedfordshire are congested and often beyond capacity at key junctions. This leads to pressures when maintaining the heavily used infrastructure and effects the local economy confidence in being able to reliably offer service. The engagement of the highways team with Town and Parish Councils in responding and prioritising actions is an example of national best practice reflected in the satisfaction levels.

Demand for public transport is centred on routes between the major centres outside the area, such as Bedford and Hitchin or Luton. The commercial bus network in Central Bedfordshire is largely based on these strategic routes, with the most frequent services within the Luton/Dunstable conurbation. Other services connect the larger towns. The rural area is dependent upon supported and more infrequent services leading to higher car ownership and accessibility problems.

Central Bedfordshire benefits from a comprehensive network of rail services, with four different railway lines providing passenger services to London, the west and east coasts and a community service to Bedford and Bletchley. However there is no provision for rail freight in Central Bedfordshire, adding to the pressure on the road network from the logistics network.

While Central Bedfordshire is characterised by small urban centres that support local transport hubs it also crossed by three major trunk roads, the A5, A1 and M1 bringing traffic both through and into the area. Although this is beneficial in terms of access, it can also cause problems in terms of air quality issues.

### **Our Homes**

Most households in Central Bedfordshire (69%) were owner occupiers, with 16% socially rented and 15% privately rented. The current housing waiting lists in Central Bedfordshire is 2921 April 2009. In 2008/09 174 households were found to be homeless a reduction from 275 in the previous year. In June the Choice Based Letting scheme was launched supporting residents to access housing across the available provision.

At an average of £220,000 in 2007, houses in Central Bedfordshire are not very affordable, but still attractive to many who commute into London and its fringes from our area. In 2007 house prices were 7.3 times earnings in north Central Bedfordshire and 6.7 times earnings in the south. The target for affordable

housing, agreed sub-regionally through the two LDF processes, is 35%. In 2008/09 935 new housing units were completed; 35% were affordable in the south area and 28% in the northern growth area.

Another paragraph to add here on the social aspects of housing and the community.

### **Our Environment**

Environmentally the area is biologically diverse and rich reflected in the number of SSSI's and wildlife sites and English Heritage listed properties. The reuse of many of our redundant farm and historical buildings and estates playing successful new roles today (Fairfield Hospital (award winning housing conversion) Luton Hoo (5 star hotel), Wrest Park ( Commercial lettings and Tourist Attraction), Shuttleworth (Agricultural College). Central Bedfordshire is home to the 14<sup>th</sup>? Duke of Bedford at Woburn Abbey. Warren Wood owned by the Duke will be the location for the fifth national Center Parcs Village due to open in 2011. Woburn Safari Park and Whipsnade are two of the leading attractions in the area. Swiss Gardens, Shuttleworth air craft collection and Dunstable Downs and our many golf courses are further examples of what the area offers.

Our aspirations to strengthen this further continue with the continued development of our green infrastructure plans including the Marston Community Forest and the beginnings of the Bedford Milton Keynes Waterway seeking to link the Grand Union Canal to the Great Ouse. The Marston Vale is also the site for the NIRAH project an ambitious £600m scheme to develop a National Institute for Research in Aquatic Habitats, an international conservation trust, science park linked to a spectacular biotope and leisure facility four times the size of the Eden Project.

In terms of area management we have embarked in partnership on a strategic programme to manage our waste streams and continue to increase our recycling performance reducing land fill. An innovative food waste scheme has been operational in the north with good results. The BeAR project is underway in addressing the waste solution for the future in securing the site and funding for an energy from waste plant to serve the whole sub region.

Criminal damage and vandalism is a Community Safety Partnership priority, but the comparative levels with other areas in the region are low but needs to be actively managed. We have a broad range of active and engaged partners supporting this agenda across the social, economic and environmental aspects of managing our areas and proactively planning to enhance the local rural and urban areas.

### **Responding to Climate Change**

2 paragraphs to add here on our carbon reduction work and adaptation to climate change/Business Resilience work.

## **What are the issues?**

### **Economy**

- Economic growth is a high priority in all our Community Strategies seeking to grow and diversify the local economy by seeking to meet the needs for:
  - more and better paid local jobs
  - more inward investment
  - increased workforce skill levels at level 2 and 4+
  - helping people back into work, particularly in our priority areas
  - ensuring our town centres thrive
- Dependence upon surrounding areas for goods, services and employment leading to high levels of out commuting.

### **Transport**

- Maintenance of roads, pathways, built environment, verges and open spaces
- Levels of car and van ownership are above the national average, increasing traffic congestion.
  - Need to reduce congestion and the reliance on the car, leading to reduced carbon emissions and improved air quality
  - Increasing numbers of children being taken to schools by car leading to traffic congestion in the morning peak, increasing concerns of safety and concerns over health and fitness levels of young people.
- Problems of accessibility to services and facilities for those without access to a car in what is predominantly a rural authority.
- 30% of bus services are supported services as public demand/support is insufficient for them to be commercially viable, increasing problems for those without access to a car.

### **Housing**

- Ensuring that the provision of housing growth in the area is combined with appropriate social, economic and physical infrastructure
- Mitigating the impact of climate change in the provision of housing growth
- Planning and delivering housing growth and infrastructure, given current downturn in the housing market and reduced developer contributions being available.
- Housing provision for vulnerable groups, particularly the frail elderly, those needing adaptations, those in poor condition housing and limited resources, those suffering fuel poverty and those facing homelessness.
- Gypsy and traveller accommodation needs
- Financial sustainability of managing the council's housing stock, particularly in light of the forthcoming Government housing finance review.
- Need to find green belt land for development particularly in the south of Central Bedfordshire.

### **Environment**

- Protect and enhance our biodiversity and green spaces
- Continued support and deliver a range of green infrastructure environmental and access initiatives with the community and local organisations/trusts

- Problems of air quality, leading to the identification of two air quality action areas, in the Marston Vale due to the emissions from Stewartby brickworks and Dunstable town centre due to high levels of NO2 emissions from the congested A5 that dissects the town.
- Reduce waste and maximise opportunities for recycling
- Reduce antisocial behaviour
- Reduce fly tipping (the closeness to north London and the Luton has led to some fly tipping that requires cross border action to control.)

## **Plans to tackle priority issues**

### **Where do we want to be? (Vision for the theme)**

The vision for Central Bedfordshire is to provide people with homes they can afford and in places they want to live, work and enjoy.

The high level outcomes to support the council's vision are –

- To grow our local economy and raise prosperity of all
- Housing needs are met from the supply of Decent, affordable housing
- Our environment and green and built assets are protected and improved for the benefit of future generations
- Proactively respond to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change through strong community and partner engagement.
- Homes and estates are, safe, well managed and priority neighbourhood needs addressed, instilling Neighbourhood pride and a thriving community spirit
- Homelessness is prevented; and crisis situations are avoided and uncommon
- Vulnerable people are living independently in suitable accommodation

### **What are we doing to get there? (what plans do we have to tackle the issues?)**

#### **Economy**

- Increasing the number and range of local job opportunities, particularly increasing the participation of those with most needs at this time of recession;
- reducing out commuting by providing more local jobs;
- raising the profile to attract inward investment
- increasing the skills of local residents to be able to access more and better paid jobs;
- providing the right infrastructure for economic growth;



- providing appropriate land and premises for business use and support people working from home
- providing advice and support to encourage business to start up, diversify and grow;
- developing a culture of entrepreneurship in schools, colleges and the wider community;
- developing thriving town centres in Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Leighton Buzzard/Linslade, Flitwick, Biggleswade and Ampthill
- developing of tourism sector, promoting the existing attractions and encouraging major new hotels and conference centres to Central Bedfordshire; and
- encouraging low carbon growth and environmental business management, promoting renewables and new ultra low carbon technologies;
- encouraging local procurement of food and drink and other services and supplies;
- supporting the 2012 Olympics to improve skills and volunteering opportunities;
- enhancing adult learning opportunities for those that have benefited least from access to training;

## **Transport**

- Maintaining roads and pathways to top quartile performance levels
- Develop a new approach to transport provision and delivery in the next generation Local Transport Plan(LTP3), one which truly reflects the area's dependence upon our neighbours rather than being area specific with tight boundaries.
- Development of travel plans for schools, workplaces and new developments that promote sustainable transport options providing local residents with real travel choice. School travel initiatives to include investment in highway infrastructure to improve routes to schools.
- Ensure that all new developments are within 30 minutes travel time by public transport from any district centre.
- Promote new transport infrastructure that relieves congestion, improves accessibility and improves air quality in Central Bedfordshire, such as the Dunstable northern bypass and the Woodside connection.
- Jointly work with the Highways Agency to further develop the strategic transport infrastructure, including a new junction at 11a and the A5 – M1 link road and the dualling of the A42/M1 Junction 13 to Milton Keynes.
- Develop and implement a strategic cycle network for Central Bedfordshire.
- Leighton Linslade National Cycling Town Initiative.
- Joint working with Luton to deliver a guided busway in the Luton and Dunstable area.
- Work in partnership with the bus operators providing service support in rural areas, enhancements to bus infrastructure to facilitate access and improved quality of services.
- Supporting services on the Marston Vale line through the Marston Vale Community Rail partnership, which is working with Network Rail to improve the cleanliness and facilities along the line and promote its use.

## **Housing**

- Working to build a strong evidence base and understand the key issues and policy is developed.
- Respond pro actively to opportunities to assist the stalled housing market.
- Building community capacity to address the problems on the priority estates, developing multi partner collaboration for holistic intervention.
- Developing the southern area joint Local Development Framework Core strategy to take on board the strategic housing market assessment findings.
- Reviewing the criteria the Council uses to provide direct financial support to affordable housing, based upon the needs of the new Housing Strategy.
- Addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups and produce a revised Gypsy and Traveller site allocations policy.
- Review the position of the HRA business plan and Asset management plan.
- Develop a Supporting People strategy, linked to the agendas of Personalisation and Transforming Social Care.

## **Environment**

- Implementing the Strategic Green Infrastructure Plan through the green infrastructure consortium, to ensure that green infrastructure is an integral component of our aspirations for sustainable communities.
- Include measures in the planning process that mitigate environmental issues including green infrastructure, energy and sustainability.
- We are aiming to):
  - Deliver a year on year reduction to Central Bedfordshire's carbon footprint and making our area better prepared for the impacts of a changing climate, through a robust climate change strategy and action plans.
  - Achieve a 10.7% reduction in per capita CO2 emissions by 2011 (to 5.62 tonnes per person per.
- Employ contractors that embrace low carbon/energy efficient ways of working.
- Restoring a defunct landfill site to create a new public amenity area.
- Divert 45% of waste, including food waste, from landfill by recycling.
- Negating the need for landfill sites by creating a new Waste Management Strategy based on an integrated waste treatment facility to be built within Central Bedfordshire.
- Maintaining street cleanliness levels to top quartile performance levels.
- Tackling ASB and fly tipping through a dedicated ASB team of officers and proactive action against fly tipping, fly posters and littering and managing behaviour on buses

## **How far have we got? (what have we achieved?)**

### **General**

- Public Satisfaction levels – relevant place survey results for theme ?

## **Economy**

Statistics to add for LAA 171,172, 152, 163 and 165

- Domestic tourism is thriving and with the opening of the new Centre Parcs at Warren Wood in 2011 and we continue to champion NIRAH to make Central Bedfordshire an international destination for tourism and environmental conservation.
- Supported the establishment of Creative Bedfordshire and the Cranfield C4D (Centre of Excellence for Design) to help our manufacturing sector innovate and strengthen
- Launched additional investment supporting innovation and enterprise, with particular emphasis on youth enterprise
- Secured a £3m European Leader bid as part of the Rural Development Programme to support enterprise development in rural areas
- Support for both Universities to grow and assist local businesses
- Town Centre masterplanning in Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Biggleswade
- Houghton Regis, new Bedford Square opens in July 2009.
- New Prologis Park and Gateway Centre in Dunstable,
- Cranfield Technology Park, Lockheed Martin and Nissan have all grown

## **Transport**

To add here

- New A421 connection to junction 13 of the M1 underway
- Lobbied for the A5- M1link road to be advanced and a local connection at junction11a to be provided to connect to the M1.
- Completed the Ridgmont Bypass and realignment of the A6 serving the Wixams.
- Road Maintenance targets in top quartile performance levels
- Parish and Town Council Bedfordshire Highways satisfaction levels for Central Bedfordshire
- Car use for the journey to school is 25.59%, 92% of mainstream schools have travel plans.
- Appointment of highways contractor committed to environmentally sustainable working practices (Amey infrastructure).
- 99% of new developments within 30 minutes of a local centre in Bedfordshire.
- Increasing number of passengers on the Marston Vale line.
- Acquisition of green infrastructure in Leighton Buzzard (Linslade Wood).
- A planning obligations strategy that promotes sustainable transport, the development of travel plans for instance.

## **Housing**

Between 2001 and 2009 we have delivered XX new homes, of which YY are affordable.

- Launched the Choice Based Letting Scheme.

- Worked with developers and RSLs on stalled sites offering support and have responded sympathetically on specific site issues. We are also working towards a bid for HCA money on a particular scheme.
- We have promoted and achieved extra affordable housing from the Homes and Communities Agency.
- Despite market conditions, we have achieved good housing delivery numbers in 2008/9 for both market and affordable housing.

## **Environment**

- Attracted almost £10m for green infrastructure delivery across the growth areas since 2004 through partnership.
- *Community Safety priority highlights to add here*
- Introduced policies to combat climate change through the development of both Local Development Frameworks. Study on sustainable development and climate change completed as part of the joint working in the southern growth area.
- Bedfordshire and Luton local resilience forum monitors and prepares plans for weather related events such as heat wave and flooding.
- The development of a sustainability check list as part of planning applications.
- Held a conference to engage with public sector partners, businesses, and voluntary, community and special interest groups to capture current activity and develop ideas for new actions to reduce our carbon and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Worked with partners on domestic energy efficiency and affordable warmth projects reducing domestic CO2 emissions by than 3,000 tonnes in 2008/09.
- Through GBN, supported local business to be more resource efficient and reduce carbon.
- Deliver the energy from waste project at Stewartby (BEAR).

## **What still needs to be done?**

### **General issues**

- Building a robust and appropriate evidence base for Central Bedfordshire informed and shared by our partners and residents
- Increase cross border collaboration and joint working to tackle priority issues
- Make progress in embedding the principles of adapting to climate change into how the Council, and our strategic partners operate.

### **Economy**

- Continue to champion job growth and seek to grow our businesses at a greater rate than the rest of the region (NI 172). The emphasis is to work in close partnership with the rest of the sub region to respond to the current downturn and to make sure the right infrastructure is in place to prepare for growth.

- Investment will also continue to prepare our residents for employment, increase skill levels (NI163 & NI165) and stimulate an entrepreneurial culture by facilitating innovation to drive new enterprises (NI 171). The emphasis is to ensure young people who are seeking to enter employment at this time are encouraged into work through promoting apprenticeships and work placements and not disadvantaged (NI 161).
- We will also continue to support economic participation in those priority areas that are facing the most challenge in accessing training and employment opportunities and getting off benefits and into work (NI152).

### **Transport**

- Implement sustainable travel schemes
- Further work to monitor the impacts of congestion relieving measures and the impact of travel plans.
- Further work to develop community led strategies focussing on transport needs through LTP3 through sustainable transport solutions.

### **Housing**

- Ensure the new Sustainable Community Strategy incorporates the Housing strategy high level issues informed by the new strategic housing market assessment.
- Ensuring the southern area Core strategy incorporates appropriate affordable housing policies and the northern area is deemed 'suitable' following the local inspection.
- Continue to review the position of the HRA Business plan and impact on the sustainability of managing stock, in the light of any Government policy changes.
- Review the management and delivery of housing allocations and homeless services, given CB has both an in house service and a contracted out service.
- Plans need to be developed to bring existing and new Gypsy and Traveller sites up to modern acceptable standards allied to effective and sustainable management and support.
- Complete the Gypsy and Traveller site allocations work for the northern area and the general housing site allocations for both the north and southern areas.

### **Environment**

- Manage growth effectively ensuring opportunities that investment bring invest in new and existing open and green spaces through Local Development Frameworks and Integrated Delivery Plans and other delivery planning processes
- Manage and protect our wildlife sites implementing the Biodiversity Action Plan
- Further work to capture and build on existing carbon reduction activity in our area.
- Develop and support more local level community groups to take action in their area to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

- Strengthen and enhance opportunities for partnership and neighbourhood engagement in street and environmental cleanliness and general maintenance of local areas.
- Jointly promote and support local campaigns to improve local areas
- Reduce the perceived fear of crime in our communities

## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES & OLDER PEOPLE

### AREA ASSESSMENT THEME – How healthy and well supported are people?

#### **What is the story for Central Bedfordshire?**

##### Where are we now? (Background)

- Overall, the health of people in Central Bedfordshire is generally similar to or significantly better than the England average. Over the last ten years, death rates from all causes, and of early deaths from heart disease, stroke and cancer in the south of Central Bedfordshire have been similar to the England average. In most of Central Bedfordshire, the rates of death from all causes have decreased in both men and women.
- In north Central Bedfordshire, over 1 adult in 5 smoke and smoking kills around 170 local people per year. In south Central Bedfordshire, the rate is 1 adult in 4 and smoking kills around 180 local people per year. In north Central Bedfordshire, almost a third of adults eat healthily, almost 1 adult in 8 is physically active and almost 1 in 4 adults is classed as obese. In south Central Bedfordshire, although 1 adult in 4 eat healthily, only 1 in 8 is physically active and 1 in 4 are classed as obese.
- There are some health inequalities by location, gender, income and ethnicity in parts of Parkside and Tithe Farm wards in South Bedfordshire, and pockets of similar inequalities in parts of Biggleswade Ivel, Sandy Pinnacle, and Flitwick East wards. Men living in the most deprived areas die, on average, 3 years earlier than those in the least deprived.
- A Healthier Communities and Older People Partnership Board which will provide the vision and strategic leadership for adult social care, health and wellbeing has been established. The Board will oversee strategic resource allocation to achieve key priorities and the health improvement agenda.
- A strategic review of social care performance has been completed and we are working with our partners to reconfigure partnership arrangements to better fit the needs of our population. We are working with other thematic partners to ensure cross cutting issues are addressed and that services are provided seamlessly. We are engaged in a number of shared service agreements to provide continuity of service provision and maintain service standards.

##### What are the Issues? (include LAA priorities)

- There are significant differences in health outcomes in Central Bedfordshire that are related to deprivation.
- There are complex reasons why some people become marginalised. Communities in Central Bedfordshire where there is evidence inequalities impact to a greater extent include:
  - People with mental health problems
  - People with disabilities
  - Ageing population
  - Dementia
- Excess deaths from cancer, cardiovascular diseases (heart disease and stroke) and respiratory disease are the main factors driving lower life expectancy in disadvantaged areas. Increase life expectancy and reduce health inequalities and achieve our LAA target NI 120
- Communities at greater risk of experiencing inequalities in health have lower uptake of screening programmes e.g. breast screening and a lower uptake of lifestyle programmes e.g. stop smoking. Continue to increase the number of those quitting smoking (NI 123 LAA target )
- Ensure support for vulnerable people and their carers. NI 135 is a local target for Central Bedfordshire and NI 141 and NI 142 allow us to monitor the percentage of vulnerable people who are supported to achieve and maintain

## **Plans to tackle priority issues**

### Where do we want to be? (Vision for the theme)

- Improve the health and wellbeing of our population and local communities in a fair and transparent way.
- Reduce health inequalities and engender freedom from discrimination.
- Ensure a better health experience and improved quality of life for our population
- Ensure that the people of Central Bedfordshire have more choice and access to high quality, safe, and cost effective local health and social care services.
- Promote opportunities for economic wellbeing.

### What are we doing to get there?

In 2009, the Central Bedfordshire Local Strategic Partnership agreed health targets on the reduction of smoking, improving life expectancy, reducing health inequalities and increasing the number of drug users engaged with treatment.

Working in partnership with NHS Bedfordshire and other stakeholders to tackle the main causes of premature death i.e. cancer, Coronary Heart Disease/stroke, accidents, suicide and liver disease:

- Reduce the number of people who smoke.
  - Working with partners to implement an Alcohol Strategy to reduce alcohol related harm.
  - Tackle obesity across the community, through the implementation of weight management programmes.
  - Targeted smoking cessation work on the 20% most deprived wards and GP.
  - Work with service users and carers to ensure that mental health is managed in primary care, and ensure that suitable housing and supported accommodation is provided
  - Practices promoting the uptake of CVD prevention in the most deprived wards.
  - Implementation of the Health Trainer programme, working with deprived/vulnerable populations to address their priority health issues.
  - Continue to work closely with partners to identify baselines, targets and effective interventions for current and future LAA achievement.
  - Development of Staying Healthy in the Workplace.
- We have produced an Air Quality Management strategy primarily in respect of air pollution from traffic, particularly in our town centre areas. This work supports the development of action plans to reduce pollutants that impact on health – respiratory illnesses and allergies.
  - We have a range of other prevention strategies developed in partnership which contribute towards our health and wellbeing agenda. These include work with Tobacco Alliance, an Alcohol Strategy and also an Under-age Sales Plan which include sale of alcohol;, tobacco and aerosols

### How far have we got? (What have we achieved?)

- The Healthier Communities and Older People thematic (HCOP) Partnership Board, will oversee the implementation and delivery of Adult Health and Wellbeing LAA priorities and ensure the strategic direction, commitment and joint working with partners to achieve health improvements, and a reduction in health inequalities. The HCOP will be supported by the following partnership subgroups: Older People; Strategic Housing; Learning Disability; Health Improvement; Long term Condition; Mental Health; Physical Disabilities; Carers. There are also shared service agreements in place for Supporting People and the Drug and Alcohol Team.
- The completed performance assessment provides a baseline from which the new unitary council will work with its partners and we will continue to monitor our progress through the thematic partnerships and constituent subgroups.



- Several of our environmental strategies also contribute to the health and wellbeing agenda.
- The Health Trainer programme is now being implemented across Central Bedfordshire. Through working with deprived and vulnerable groups in Central Bedfordshire to address their priority health issues, this will reduce health inequalities.
- The three year LAA1 target to increase the number of 4-week smoking quitters from areas of high deprivation has exceeded the 1037 target.
- The LAA targets around falls prevention, and obesity are expected to achieve their targets.
- A Central Bedfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is now available and will influence future commissioning of services.
- We are refreshing our Homelessness Strategy and an Older People's Strategy is being developed. These will reinforce our commitment to supporting vulnerable people and also our key priority to support and care for an ageing population.
- Supporting people on incapacity benefit to understand and manage their health condition so that they can successfully return to work, via the Healthier Steps to Employment project established between NHS Bedfordshire, Job Centre Plus, Central Bedfordshire and voluntary sector organisations. The health and wellbeing programme includes opportunities for referral to pain management sessions, support for mental health conditions and physical activity sessions.

#### What still needs to be done?

- Roll out of NHS Health Checks programme in Central Bedfordshire in the top 20% most deprived wards in each Practice Based Commissioning group, for everyone between the ages of 40 and 74, to identify risk of Cardiovascular disease (CVD).
- Development of the principles of "Putting People First" to enable people in Central Bedfordshire to exercise choice and control through personalisation.
- Offer more choice and convenience, by commissioning quality services closer to home, based on personal needs and preferences.
- Create effective support in local communities to reduce reliance on hospital care, including at times of urgent need by providing health and social care services outside a hospital setting, closer to people's homes and also review our reablement and care management process
- Increase investment in prevention, not just catch people when they fall ill, by:
  - Supporting people to stop smoking, particularly in areas of deprivation
  - Reduce obesity by targeted weight management programmes.
  - Identify people at risk from heart disease and provide advice and treatment to reduce their risk.
  - Help people to book early when they know they are pregnant so they can access the full range of advice and support.

## **AREA ASSESSMENT THEME – How well is adult social care meeting people’s needs**

### **What is the story for Central Bedfordshire?**

#### Where are we now? (Background)

People receiving social care support in Central Bedfordshire currently have a mixed experience in the range and quality of services available. We know that we have ahead a challenging agenda of improving standards and the range of services through integrated approaches with our partners. Safeguarding of adults and the delivery of mental health services have been identified as areas of focus for us.

We have a high number of self funders and are not currently engaging as effectively as we need to. With our partners, we are aware of the changing nature of our population, such as, growing numbers of older people with likely health issues resulting in social care needs and increasing numbers of ageing adults with learning disabilities / complex needs. We have inherited a limited implementation of the social care transformation through personalisation programme. Apart from raising awareness, no progress was made so there is currently no one with a personal budget. Although the number of people on Direct Payments increased, the target of 15% for our LAA priority NI 130 – People Receiving Self Directed Support – was not met. The actual performance was 9.58%.

Whilst Direct Payments give some choice and control in terms of transformation, Central Bedfordshire has the opportunity to shape its own transformation programme. We have dedicated resources led by the AD, Commissioning and will be making best possible use of the Social Care Reform Grant. We have made useful links with regional work and a neighbouring Council so will we build on the experience of others and adapt this to our local environment.

#### What are the Issues? (include LAA priorities)

We are not currently meeting the NI 130 LAA target. This reward target was selected by the County Council but is very relevant to the priorities of the new Unitary Council. We need to move from the legacy of 9.58% (628 people) receiving self directed support to 18% (1,355 people) by March 2010 and at least 30% (2,258 people) by March 2011. We would wish to outperform this target but accept this is very challenging. There is an over reliance on the use of care homes and overall we need to drive up standards of care whilst developing a range of options for people. Improving the quality of service, strengthening safeguarding and develop the capacity of the workforce whilst also embarking on an accelerated programme of transformation will be challenging. We need to ensure that our approach to self funders is robust as we move through the transformation agenda and take account of their views/needs as the market is reshaped.

Delivery of mental health services through Partnership Trust is currently under review.

There isn't a coherent approach to the delivery of services to adults with learning disability that brings together campus closure and the wider needs of people with a learning disability.

### **Plans to tackle priority issues**

#### Where do we want to be? (Vision for the theme)

We are embarked on a process of securing an ambitious approach to the transformation of care agenda which involves key partners in Health, Housing, the Third Sector and the wider Council. We will be embedding the principles of 'Putting People First' – universal service,

prevention, social capital and choice and control. In other words, a broad strategic approach is essential for the achievement of the vision of citizens being able to exercise choice and control.

Our SAS statement includes the following priorities:-

'The Council and its partners are ambitious in our longer term plans for increasing choice and control. In the shorter term we are committed to making substantial progress to ensure people are able to exercise choice and control.

We will:

- Adopt the Central Bedfordshire Transformation Strategy and Action plan to deliver personalised outcomes for people including agreeing the RAS, Self Assessment Questionnaire
- Improve the options for self directed support for individuals - Direct Payments and Individual Budgets
- Improve access to advocacy services across the client groups, ensuring its effectiveness in promoting the safeguarding of individuals.
- Increase the range of services and support available locally
- Improve the quality and accessibility of information for our customers (including self funders) and the wider community
- Implement the Choice Based Lettings approach within our wider housing options environment.
- Review our customer feedback mechanisms - complaints, care plan reviews'

#### What are we doing to get there?

Central Bedfordshire has adopted priorities that underpins its commitment to adult social care

- To support and care for its ageing population
- To promote healthier lifestyles
- To promote safer communities

We are reshaping the Healthy Communities and Older People thematic partnership within the LSP framework to more effectively drive forward the social care, housing and health improvements required. We will use our partnership arrangements to engender a coherent approach to the delivery of services to adults with learning disability and mental health services.

Within the Council a strategic review of adult social care performance and diagnostic work through CSED will lead to the new administration in July/August being able to sign off the Council's adult social care improvement journey. Our approach is based on partnership with all stakeholders in developing our vision and then a comprehensive project plan is being managed in an inclusive way and recognises the importance of engagement with users, carers and an array of stakeholders, supported by effective communication and change management programmes.

Central to the work will be addressing equality and diversity in assessment and support planning and the development of local markets. Working with other Council Services such as those supporting young people in transition, asylum seekers and people without recourse to public funds, will be strengthened. Users and carers will be actively involved in shaping our programme.

#### How far have we got? (What have we achieved?)

Strategic review of adult social care performance has been completed.

The reshaping of the LSP thematic partnership is underway. The Healthier Communities and

Older People Partnership Board will provide the vision and strategic leadership for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing which will be driven by key partnership subgroups.

An interim Transformation Project Board has been established with a draft project plan. A report with recommendations is being prepared for the Healthy Communities and Older People Partnership, Council's Corporate Management Board and Executive.

Diagnostic work is being undertaken with CSED around reablement and the care management process.

What still needs to be done?

Other parts of the Council will increasingly support the development of universal / preventive services and social capital – for example more accessible transport for older and vulnerable people and their carers and initiatives to increase the proportion of economically active people and implement the workforce strategy which has been commissioned. This should reduce the number of people requiring adult social care service.

Whilst we plan for ambitious transformation, we still need to improve standards of care and the experience of people being supported through social care. The initial phase of transformation through personalisation is a three year national programme and we are at the beginning of year two. An ambitious programme of change is being embarked upon and is a top priority for the new Council.

Close working is being established with NHS Bedfordshire (the Council is involved in its Staying in Control pilot for people who have had strokes). Strong partnership working is being developed as this is crucial to the success of this programme of improving health and well being through greater choice and control.

Increasing the range of services and support across health and social care in learning disabilities. This will mean joint and integrated approaches with partners. Reshaping the Learning Disability Strategy and Action Plan to meet the needs of the people with learning disability.

Improving outcomes for users of mental health services.

Continued improvement and ensuring that adults are adequately safeguarded including diagnostic work around practice and process.

## AREA ASSESSMENT THEME – How good is the well-being of older people

### What is the story for Central Bedfordshire?

#### Where are we now? (Background)

- Central Bedfordshire has four priorities relevant to the health and well being of older people:
  1. to support and care for an ageing population
  2. to manage growth effectively
  3. to create safer communities
  4. to promote healthier lifestyles
- The 65+ population in Central Bedfordshire in 2008, representing 15% of the total population of 255,000, is set to increase from 37,000 to 55,000 by 2021, an increase of 49%. Also the number of people aged 70 to 84 is set to increase by 53%, and people over 85 by 86%.
- Income deprivation (IDAOPI) affects 12.99% of older people in Central Bedfordshire aged 60+ compared to 13.84% for Bedfordshire and 15.05% for the East of England
- There are 3,938 people acting as unpaid carers and their numbers are predicted to increase by 65% by 2025.
- Over 75% of older people are owner occupiers.
- There are 12,697 older people living alone, and their numbers are expected to rise by 63% by 2025.
- There are 888 residents aged 65+ living in care home in Central Bedfordshire, and this number is predicted to increase to 1,647 in 2025.
- Half the population is located within 7 towns with the rest living in smaller towns and rural villages which bring their own challenges such as transport, accessibility and isolation. 23% of pensioners do not have access to transport.
- About 6% of people are from a black or ethnic minority community.
- The increasing ageing population in Central Bedfordshire will result in rising numbers of older people with:
  - Mobility problems – increasing from 5,520 to 6,864 by 2015. A 24% increase. Currently 70.8% are aged 75+.
  - Stroke – a predicted increase from 925 to 1594 by 2025. A 58% increase.
  - Obesity – Currently 24.3% of older people aged 65-79 and 23% aged 80 + have a BMI above 30. This is predicted to increase to 37.2% and 41.4% respectively by 2025.
  - Limiting Long Term Illness (LLTI) – currently 15,624 people aged 65+ are predicted to have a LLTI. This is expected to rise by 65% (25,853) in 2025.
  - Accident and Emergency – In 2008 2,193 (5.9%) of the 65+ population will attend A+E as the result of a fall, rising to 3,734 by 2025.<sup>1</sup>
  - Learning Disability – There are 103 older people with moderate to severe learning disability, rising to 162 by 2025. With increasing life expectancy for older people with learning disabilities, this forecast increase will make demands on services not previously anticipated.
  - Dementia – as the population ages there will be substantial increases in this area. This is projected to increase by 45% between 2008 and 2018, and by 100% between 2008 and 2028. Central Bedfordshire's rates of increase are projected to exceed the East of England and the England rates.

#### What are the Issues? (include LAA priorities)

- By 2021 the old age dependency ratio is predicted to rise to 31.2%

<sup>1</sup> Figures are taken from Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2001 Census, Standard Tables, Table S016 Sex and age by general health and limiting long-term illness. The most recent census information is for year 2001 (the next census will be conducted in 2011).

- The north of Central Bedfordshire is expected to experience the largest growth of older people over the next 10-20 years.
- Social isolation can lead to deterioration in health. There is evidence that older people often want to continue working. This can reduce depression and feelings of isolation and increase physical and mental health.
- Early recognition of dementia and depression in primary care can improve treatment outcomes. Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) programmes are available to older people, but this service does not provide 'home visits'.
- The number of people aged 75+ being admitted to hospital with hip fractures is expected to increase from 629 in 2010 to 1085 by 2025.
- NHS Bedfordshire - Five Year Strategic Plan – *A Healthier Bedfordshire* is currently out to public consultation. The three strategic priorities are to invest more in prevention, reduce the reliance on hospital care by having better services and support in local communities, and to offer more choice and convenience. Again these will improve services for older people, but are not older people specific, and there is no strategic theme for older people.

To plan for these demographic changes with our partners and across all council directorates we will

- consolidate existing user engagement mechanisms to ensure that older people and their carers are an integral part of all aspects of commissioning and actively involved in partnership arrangements;
- review existing health and local authority services to ensure that they are age-proofed, accessible and being used and enjoyed by older people;
- deliver services that promote independence and choice;
- deliver good quality health and social care reducing health inequalities.

## **Plans to tackle priority issues**

### Where do we want to be? (Vision for the theme)

To enable older people to remain at home if that is their wish, feeling valued and involved as citizens within their communities, with choice and independence, feeling safe and in good health, with support for their carers. Providing good quality information, advice and advocacy and care for those who need it both at home and in other settings. This strategic vision is also supported by NHS Bedfordshire, which is pledged to optimise resources, in the context of a growing and ageing population to deliver the following goals:

- To improve the health and wellbeing of the population in Bedfordshire and its local communities in a fair and transparent way.
- To reduce unfairness in health and reduce health inequalities.
- To ensure a better healthcare experience for the population of Bedfordshire.
- To ensure that the people of Bedfordshire have more choice and access to high quality, safe, clinically and cost effective local health services.

### What are we doing to get there? How far have we got? (What have we achieved?)

- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has now been disaggregated, and includes a specific section for older people
- LAA priorities have now been disaggregated and the Local Strategic Partnership established. LAA1, completed in March 2009, has seen the target for reducing the number of falls related emergency admissions, and work on falls prevention will continue outside the LAA
- Central Bedfordshire's Social Care, Health and Housing Directorate will deliver priorities for older people together with key partners such as NHS Bedfordshire.
- A Healthier Communities and Older People Thematic Partnership has now been established and will ensure that the needs of older people are considered across the Health and Wellbeing agenda.

- Reporting into this governance structure are various themed groups including older people, who will be actively engaged developing priorities into an action plan.
- We have reviewed sheltered housing stock and are retendering our care homes with a view to modernise and future proof existing provision to be able to offer a greater level of specialist support such as dementia care and also to provide more extra care options.
- We have commissioned a generic advocacy service for all adults and have a well respected specialist advocacy service for older people.
- We are expanding preventative services such as Village Care Schemes, Home Help, gardening and support services delivered by Age Concern, Carer's Centres, Alzheimer's Society support groups and Meals on Wheels.
- We have an active Third Sector offering many opportunities for employment and volunteering for older people.
- We have no cold calling zones across CBC and a 'bogus callers' helpline which have reduced the fear of crime.
- To tackle poorer health outcomes for our most vulnerable people we are working jointly with health to deliver health trainers who will focus on priority areas of deprivation and groups including older people. They will give advice and information on a wide range of well being issues and facilitate access to existing health promotion projects and therapies in order to reduce existing health inequalities.

#### What still needs to be done?

- Establish Central Bedfordshire Older People's Partnership Group and underpinning support structures.
- Ensure Older People's issues are raised and within NHS Bedfordshire's strategic project groups.
- All partnership working will be strongly supported and shaped by older people and their carers, including the development of the Older People's Strategy for Central Bedfordshire.
- Decrease the reliance of older people on traditional care homes, where it is appropriate to do so, and modernise existing provision to offer specialist support for dementia care, and provision of extra care settings.
- Develop the personalisation agenda through self assessment and personal budgets to increase choice and control for older people.
- Promoting control and independence and improving health and wellbeing for older people, including joining up services with leisure, libraries; health improvement by encouraging healthy eating, increasing physical activity; increasing falls prevention training and working with community safety to tackle fear of crime.
- Increase the range of information and advice for all citizens whether they use services or not and ensure that existing customers of all directorates receive information and advice about health and well being and other services that will promote independence and economic security.
- Agree with NHS Bedfordshire the model for Home Improvement Agency where prevention and early intervention underpins all activity.
- Further develop our enablement teams to maximise independence.
- Increase the take up of assistive technology and telecare with our partners.
- Ensure clear pathways between social care and health delivered services such as Intermediate Care and Rapid Response teams to reduce the need for hospital and Care Home admissions and ensure timely hospital discharge.

## **STRONGER COMMUNITIES:**

**AREA ASSESSMENT THEME** – How strong and cohesive are local communities

### **What is the story for Central Bedfordshire?**

#### Where are we now? (Background)

Central Bedfordshire came into being on 1st April 2009. The new area has a population of 255,000 made up of 108,000 households. Roughly 54% of people are classified as living in rural areas, including market towns (15%), smaller towns and villages (36%), and more dispersed areas (3%). The other 46% live in urban areas, mainly Leighton Linlade, Dunstable, and Houghton Regis.

Both rural and urban communities face challenges in terms of inclusion and cohesion. The urban areas have greater concentrations of multiple deprivation, showing a high level of correlation between income deprivation and other domains such as health, employment, education, housing, and crime. Three urban neighbourhoods, within the estates of Downside and Parkside, are amongst the 10% most deprived in the East of England; most of the Tithe Farm estate falls within the 20% most deprived. Other neighbouring areas, however, can be relatively prosperous.

In rural areas, deprivation is more dispersed, and is often experienced as exclusion from mainstream services, employment, and community and civic life. This is particularly prevalent amongst elderly people; ethnic minority groups such as gypsies and travellers; migrant workers; unpaid carers; and those without their own transport.

There is a marked housing shortage in urban and rural areas, particularly in terms of affordable housing, with many people priced out of the housing market. This forces some people to live in overcrowded conditions, or to move away from their families. This shortage is due to be addressed through plans for considerable housing growth up to 2031, particularly in the context of the MKSM strategy, although the economic downturn has slowed this considerably for the time being, as well as restricting the availability of mortgage finance for those wanting to get on the housing ladder. Housing growth will bring its own challenges in terms of developing the necessary 'social infrastructure' and ensuring that new residents are assimilated within communities.

#### What are the Issues? (include LAA priorities)

- Only 24% of respondents to the 2008 Place survey felt that they could influence decisions affecting their local area – this is comparatively low. Greater community engagement will be vital for creating vibrant local communities as well as to ensure that service delivery is needs-led.
- As a newly formed local authority area, Central Bedfordshire is faced with the challenge of shaping a sense of place. Involving a greater range of people in civic roles is a key part of this, however the 2008 Place Survey showed that civic participation in the local area was very low, at 12.7%.
- There is compelling evidence that resources need to be focused on tackling cross-cutting issues in areas of high deprivation. Tackling family poverty is key to addressing the issue of child poverty.
- Participation in sporting activities is important in the context of both health improvement and the creation of vibrant communities. The challenge is to raise participation levels from 21.9%
- The same pertains to participation in the arts. Participation (at 41.8%) is lower than the East of England average of 46.6% and the national average of 45.2%. Central Bedfordshire is relatively lacking in arts infrastructure at present.
- Central Bedfordshire must seek to provide an environment in which the voluntary and



community sector can thrive. The sector relies on individuals donating their time as volunteers: it is important that this is recognised, encouraged and supported. Enabling the sector to recruit and manage an increasing number of volunteers (due to the economic downturn) is a real challenge.

- In Central Bedfordshire, by far the biggest influx of migrant workers since 2006/7 has been from Poland, as shown by national Insurance registration figures (Bedfordshire Multi-Agency Forum). It is important that their role and position in the community is acknowledged and that they receive the necessary support.
- While communities in Central Bedfordshire are relatively cohesive, it is affected by its proximity to larger urban centres, particularly Luton, which are in receipt of government funding to develop community cohesion
- It will be important to ensure that growth is managed in such a way that it supports the development of strong and vibrant communities.

## **Plans to tackle priority issues**

### Where do we want to be? (Vision for the theme)

We want to build strong, cohesive and sustainable communities that are vibrant, and where people feel a sense of identity and belonging, are actively involved in place shaping and the social, cultural and environmental life of the community, and where public services are responsive and accessible to all.

### What are we doing to get there?

We are aiming to:

- Reduce the number of children living in poverty
- Increase residents' participation in local civic roles
- Enable people to influence decisions in their locality
- Increase participation in regular volunteering
- Promote and develop a thriving third sector
- Increase adult participation in sport
- Increase engagement in the arts
- Ensure diversity is valued

### How far have we got? (What have we achieved?)

We have:

- Launched a county-wide Child Poverty Network; begun work on a draft strategy to tackle child poverty for Central Beds; begun discussion about a film to raise awareness of the issue
- Worked with local residents to develop Neighbourhood Improvement Plans for Parkside, Tithe Farm and Downside estates, based on multi-agency delivery which have been adopted by the shadow LSP
- Begun work on the development of a Comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy for Central Beds; held a conference for Town and Parish Councils; held workshops for stakeholders and ward councillors
- Developed a robust action plan for improving the environment for a thriving third sector; ensured that Central Bedfordshire LSP formally adopted the Compact.
- Encouraged 840 people to take part in 43 activities through the Get Back Into campaign
- Begun work on a Cultural Strategy for Central Bedfordshire; consulted communities on ideas for participation in the Cultural Olympiad
- Actively encouraged equality/diversity impact assessments across the LAA themes

### What still needs to be done?

- Carry out in-depth analytical work on understanding community needs, particularly at neighbourhood level
- Ensure that the importance of community engagement is recognised by the LSP and **all** key partners, and that a co-ordinated approach is developed through a Comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy
- Address cross-cutting issues across the Partnership, particularly child poverty in collaboration with the Children's Trust
- Produce an Advice Strategy
- Ensure that the priority actions identified, including those in the NI Delivery Plans, are well-resourced, whilst maximising scarce resources
- Carry out rural-proofing and further work on equalities impact assessment of the LAA
- Ensure that adequate investment is made in developing the social infrastructure needed to enable people and organisations to create, run and sustain the voluntary and community groups, volunteering programmes, social networks and cultural activities required for new and existing communities