



# Electoral Review

Submission on Council Size



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Vision

- 1.1 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.*
- 1.2 The vision for Central Bedfordshire Council was created by councillors, staff, partners and stakeholders and was arrived at after considering the geography, demography and future growth of the area and views of the residents.
- 1.3 The Council's developing Community Engagement Strategy, builds on the commitments made in the bid for unitary status to place communities at the forefront of the Council's work – to ensure the Council and its key partners listen to, discuss and act on issues that are of utmost importance to the people in Central Bedfordshire. The aim is to build on the current engagement with the community, putting councillors at the heart of community and to move the Council towards higher levels of community empowerment.
- 1.4 Councillors will be placed at the heart of this engagement strategy to ensure the Council maximises opportunities to engage with and positively respond to all of Central Bedfordshire's communities. This will mean that councillors are:
  - fully supported to communicate and engage with their communities in a variety of ways;
  - supported to efficiently resolve community-based issues in their wards;
  - kept informed of key Council activities in their wards;
  - able to contribute to localised spending decisions; and
  - supported in attending key community events in their wards.

### Area

- 1.5 Central Bedfordshire is the gateway to the Midlands and East Anglia and is served by the M1, A1, A5 and A6 roads together with three different rail networks traversing the district giving rise to the influx of commuters specifically around the towns that support the rail links.
- 1.6 The Central Bedfordshire area currently has a population of around 250,000 and it is planned to grow rapidly, to an estimated population of over 300,000 by 2021, through the development of some 50,000 new homes. Moreover, the population is predicted to continue to grow quickly between 2022 and 2031 through further in-migration.

- 1.7 Central Bedfordshire covers an area of some 716 square kilometres and has a diverse mix of urban and rural communities. Dunstable and Leighton Buzzard, as market towns, represent the largest urban areas and collectively account for some 29% of the population. The other 6 towns are geographically spread across the area of the authority and collectively they account for a further 31% of the population. The remaining 40% of the population extend across some substantially sized villages to the very small hamlets each with its own individual character
- 1.8 This profile places considerable difficulties on the councillors, in the way that they represent and serve their respective communities. Specifically when taking into account the diversity of the socio economic groups across the Authority.
- 1.9 Central Bedfordshire is fully parished with 71 Town and Parish Councils.

### **Council**

- 1.10 Central Bedfordshire is a Unitary Council and was formed in April 2009 based on the combined area of the former Mid and South Bedfordshire districts.
- 1.11 Elections held in June 2009 returned a Council comprising 54 Conservative councillors, 11 Liberal Democrat councillors and 1 independent councillor. The councillors have been appointed for a two year term of office expiring in May 2011.
- 1.12 The Council employs 2560 staff plus a further 10,824 in education services. The gross budget amounts to £497.05m with a net controllable budget of £170.6m.

### **Our Case**

- 1.13 Our proposals are made against a background of national and local policy drivers and of seeking to deliver the commitments set out in the submission to the Secretary of State to create an excellent authority, providing strong, effective and accountable leadership for the communities of Central Bedfordshire.
- 1.14 **This submission presents the case for the size of Central Bedfordshire Council. The proposal is that the Council has 66 elected Members thus affording the new unitary council with the opportunity to continue to develop and sustain a better quality of life for the people living in our area.**

## 2. OUR APPROACH TO DETERMINING COUNCIL SIZE

- 2.1 We have been mindful of the Boundary Committee's guidance on factors to consider when making a proposal on Council size including:-
- The governance model in operation in the Council, working practices and the impact on the workload of councillors;
  - The existence of town and parish councils in the area;
  - The enhanced representational role of the councillor driven by the requirements in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, including the new "Councillor Call for Action", which has attracted cross party support; and
  - The need for electoral equality.
- 2.2 Against this background we have reviewed the various roles which councillors in Central Bedfordshire perform and the resultant workloads and have analysed this information to guide our recommendation on Council size.
- 2.3 In addition to the factors listed by the Boundary Committee, regard has been given to the following considerations:
- The significant demands placed on a councillor of a single tier council, particularly in their representational role;
  - The overall reduction in elected representation in Central Bedfordshire following the abolition of the County and District Councils;
  - The many demands placed upon councillors over and above committee meeting attendance and casework, most notably the need to work effectively with partner organisations such as the police and fire authorities, health authorities and the voluntary sector;
  - The requirement to ensure that the authority is able to be effectively represented on various local, regional and national bodies including the East of England Regional Assembly and the County Councils' Network; and
  - The need to ensure sufficient capacity to respond to the many new Government initiatives which will impact upon the workload of councillors, including:-

- the duty to promote democracy, the duty to involve, petitions and engaging with and empowering citizens; and
  - the emerging localism agenda which will lead to greater influence by the public sector and will impact upon Central Bedfordshire's community leadership role.
- 2.4 To ensure that we can deliver our vision, the Council requires strong leadership and full participation politically. This submission sets out our case for 66 members in Central Bedfordshire. This will ensure that all roles at the political level can be carried out effectively, that members have the capacity fully to undertake their role as community leaders and will enable us to achieve our commitment to becoming an excellent authority. The rationale and evidence leading to our conclusion is set out below.

### 3. THE CASE

- 3.1 The combined area of the Mid and South Beds authorities had 103 district councillors and 33 county councillors (a total of 136 councillors). The bid for unitary status for Central Bedfordshire significantly reduced that number to 66 members to give residents clearer local representation. The figure was derived from the existing county divisions resulting in 28 wards, 5 of which return 4 councillors with the remainder returning 2 councillors each. A comparison was made with South Gloucestershire unitary council, which was deemed to have a similar settlement pattern and where a council size of 70 members gives an almost exactly similar elector ratio (2900:1). Whilst an outline governance structure was set out in the bid to the Secretary of State, the Shadow Council spent some 8 months reviewing and developing the proposed structure and the revised political management structure was approved by the Shadow Council in February 2009.
- 3.2 The opportunity has been presented by the electoral review to test the extent to which 66 is the appropriate number of councillors for Central Bedfordshire and its new governance structure.
- 3.3 In determining the number of councillors required to meet the delivery of our vision we have ensured that the collective decision making process and the scrutiny workload are appropriately shared. Moreover, that the number of constituents that each member represents does not make their case work unrealistic or unmanageable.

#### **Political Management**

##### **Council**

- 3.4 Full Council meets at least 6 times a year and is responsible for providing the overall strategic direction for the Council principally through the adoption of the budget and the policy framework.

## The Executive

- 3.5 In accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 the Council has adopted “executive arrangements”.
- 3.6 The Council has adopted the ‘Strong Leader’ Executive model. The Leader is responsible for appointing members to the Executive, for allocating portfolio responsibilities and for approving Executive delegations. The Leader has been appointed for a two year term of office until the next election of councillors in 2011.
- 3.7 The Executive must be made up of the Leader and at least two but no more than nine councillors including the Deputy Leader appointed by the Leader. Currently the Executive consists of 10 members and makes decisions which are in line with the Council’s budget and policy framework. The membership of the Executive and their respective portfolios are shown below:
- Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Executive
  - Deputy Leader of the Council, Vice Chairman of the Executive and Portfolio holder for Business Transformation
  - Portfolio holder for Corporate Resources
  - Portfolio holder for Economic Growth and Regeneration
  - Portfolio holder for Safer and Stronger Communities
  - Portfolio holder for Sustainable Development
  - Portfolio holder for Children’s Services
  - Portfolio holder for Culture and Skills
  - Portfolio holder for Social Care and Health
  - Portfolio holder for Housing
- 3.8 The Executive meets formally every month and is responsible for carrying out all of the Authority’s functions which are not the responsibility of any other part of the Authority, either by law (The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities (England) Regulations 2000) or by the Council’s Constitution.
- 3.9 The Executive also meets informally every month with officers of the Council (primarily the Corporate Management Team). These meetings are held in advance of the Executive and in conjunction with the ‘Chairman’s briefing’ thus enabling the Executive to be briefed on forthcoming business.
- 3.10 Members of the Executive are expected to attend the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and indeed every Task and Finish Group consistent with their portfolio responsibilities. Unless specifically ‘called’ to give evidence an Executive member’s presence is to provide specialist information and advice to the committee or feedback on performance issues. Additionally, an Executive member will also contribute to the in depth analysis of any policy issues within their own areas of responsibility.

- 3.11 In order to provide further capacity to the Executive, there are four assistants to portfolio holders whose roles are to provide direct support to the appropriate portfolio holder (s) as follows:-
- Assistant to Corporate Resources Portfolio holder
  - Assistant to Safer and Stronger Communities Portfolio holder
  - Assistant to the Children’s Services and Culture and Skills Portfolio holders
  - Assistant to the Social Care, Health and Housing Portfolio holders
- 3.12 Whilst the four assistants can represent the Executive member in consultation with officers and other members, they cannot substitute in any decision making capacity. The system is also seen as a mechanism for increasing the number of members with experience of Executive procedures and functions and contributing to the development of individual members. The Council’s Constitution precludes assistants to the portfolio holders from sitting on the corresponding overview and scrutiny committee.
- 3.13 In addition to the many formal meetings attended by Executive members, their role demands regular meetings with those Chief and Senior officers who support their portfolio area. Executive members, review performance, develop proposals and receive briefings to enable them effectively to meet their responsibilities. Executive members are also frequently required to meet with representatives of partner organisations and other authorities to discuss issues relevant to their portfolio area. This informal member-level activity is difficult to quantify but nonetheless represents an essential role in the administration of the Council and impacts on the office holders and overall capacity of the Council at political level.

## **Overview and Scrutiny**

- 3.14 The Council has appointed five overview and scrutiny committees aligned to the Council’s organisational structure, whose role is to support the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole. However, the role of the overview and scrutiny committees is not limited to ‘holding the Executive to account’ but also has a strong focus on policy development (a particularly demanding role as the new unitary authority has to determine all its policies and strategies), extending to carrying out work in a number of areas, including:

- Assisting the Council and the Executive in the development of the budget and policy framework through in-depth analysis of policy issues and proposed projects.
- Conducting research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues or proposed projects and other options
- The implementation of mechanisms to encourage and enhance



community participation in the development of policy or project options.

- Liaison with other external organisations operating in the area, to ensure that the interests of the community are enhanced by collaborative working.

3.15 The overview and scrutiny committees and their principal responsibilities are:

- Business Transformation (including communications, customer services, community engagements and corporate planning)
- Children, Families and Learning (including leisure, culture, libraries and adult and community learning)
- Corporate Resources (including financial services, procurement, human resources and organisational development, ICT, legal and democratic services and property and asset management)
- Social Care, Health and Housing (including landlord services, homelessness and private sector housing)
- Sustainable Communities (including planning, transportation, economic growth, highways and parking, waste and recycling and community safety)

3.16 Whilst acknowledging that the five themed standing committees play the lead role in policy development and review, they are supported by time-limited task and finish groups with defined scopes and remit. These task and finish groups are playing a critical role in the in-depth examination and development of policies and strategies in the new unitary authority. Task and finish groups have already been established to review the following:-

- Community Engagement
- Customer Services
- Business Transformation
- Procurement Strategy
- Long term accommodation strategy
- Cultural Strategy

3.17 Additionally a standing task group has been set up to review the Local Development Framework.

3.18 Members of task and finish groups are selected according to their interest and expertise in the topic under review.

3.19 The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the overview and scrutiny committees meet informally as the “Overview and Scrutiny Management Panel” to co-ordinate the work of the five overview and

scrutiny committees, particularly where topics for scrutiny or review cut across the terms of reference of two or more committees. These meetings are held at least quarterly but are currently held on a more frequent basis as the new overview and scrutiny arrangements bed in.

### **Development Management**

3.20 The Development Management Committee currently meets twice monthly to determine the planning applications. Additionally, site visits are held every fortnight in support of the more complicated and contentious applications. Traditionally, meetings can be quite lengthy (an average length of 3 hours per meeting in the period April to July 2009) due to the volume of applications and the Council's extensive scheme for public participation. Collectively therefore, Members of the committee are likely to spend a considerable amount of time dealing with planning issues and are therefore unlikely to be able to take up positions on more than one other committee within the Council.

### **Licensing and Regulation**

3.21 In accordance with its statutory obligations the Council has appointed a Licensing Committee and a Regulation Committee. Whilst the membership of both committees is the same, they have distinct functions. The Licensing Committee is responsible for all aspects under the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005 whereas the Regulation Committee deals with other licensing functions including hackney carriage, private hire vehicles and street trading. There is also a Licensing Sub Committee to deal with liquor licensing and gambling applications, which is held as and when necessary. As meetings are held frequently, all members of the parent Licensing Committee are appointed as substitutes on the sub committee and therefore are likely to be required to participate in a substantial number of the hearings conducted by the sub committee.

### **Audit**

3.22 The Audit Committee advises the Council and the Executive on audit and governance issues. It provides an independent assurance on the adequacy of the Council's risk management framework and associated control environment, together with a scrutiny of the Authority's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk.

### **Standards**

3.23 The Standards Committee has, in addition to its responsibility for overseeing standards of conduct amongst members of Central Bedfordshire Council (including the assessment, review and investigation of complaints), responsibility for the conduct of co-opted members and the 703 members of the 71 town and parish councils

within Central Bedfordshire. The committee has three sub-committees which deal with; the initial assessment of any complaint made; the review of decisions; and the conduct of hearings.

- 3.24 Experience of the local assessment regime at Central Bedfordshire since April 2009 has demonstrated that this large number of town and parish councillors has the potential to result in a heavy workload for the Monitoring Officer and the various standards sub-committees. Some 7 cases have already been dealt with or are in the “pipeline” for review by the sub committees. Research by the Standards Board for England suggests that, on average, most councils will process 8 standards cases in a 12 month period. The current workload is reflective of the national trend that complaints relate to members of town and parish councils to a greater extent than to members of principal authorities. As a new authority, however this current level of complaints may not be indicative of future workload. The Monitoring Officer and the Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee have taken a proactive approach to promoting good ethical governance across Central Bedfordshire and have held a number of awareness events and workshops throughout the area over the first few months of the life of the new Council. These events have received excellent levels of attendance and participation from our town and parish colleagues.

### **Other Committees**

- 3.25 The Council has appointed a number of other committees to assist with the discharge of its functions. The cycles of the meetings vary but generally they are programmed to meet between 4 and 6 times per year. Additionally, it is anticipated that a number of committees may meet more frequently than this, or indeed find it necessary to set up working groups to deal with specific projects. The committees and their primary function are:

- General Purposes Committee (To determine strategic employee policies and terms and conditions of employment. To carry out all functions relating to elections, electoral registration and governance arrangements).
- Appointments Sub Committee (To appoint or recommend the appointment of chief officers).
- Appeals Committee (To consider representations or appeals against decisions made on or behalf of the Council including staffing appeals and grievances).
- Wixams Joint Development Control Committee (To exercise the development control powers of Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils in relation to The Wixams new settlement).
- Luton and South Bedfordshire Joint Committee (To exercise the functions of Central Bedfordshire and Luton Borough Councils in respect of the Luton and South Bedfordshire Growth Area).

- Joint Consultative & Negotiating for Primary and Secondary Education Committee (A forum for negotiation on conditions of service for teachers and staff)
- Employee Partnership Committee (To promote effective joint working between the Council and its recognised trade unions).
- Constitution Advisory Group (To monitor and review the operation of the Council's Constitution and make recommendations to the Council in respect of any proposed amendments).
- Fostering Panel (For the approval of prospective fosters carers).
- Joint Adoption Panel (Making adoption plans for children).
- Fostering Permanence Panel (To consider permanence for foster carers)
- Corporate Parenting Panel (To ensure that the Council discharges its role as corporate parent of looked after children).
- Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) (To ensure that Religious Education is taught in all schools).
- Houghton Regis Town Centre Management Committee (To set the broad direction of the town centre initiative).
- Dunstable Town Centre Management Committee (To serve as a partnership forum for all those involved in town centre initiatives).
- Leighton Linlade Town Centre Management Committee (To serve as a partnership forum for all those involved in town centre initiatives).

## 4. POLITICAL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

### 4.1 Membership of the Council's committees together with the annual cycle is as shown below.

	Scheduled meetings per annum	Councillor membership	Membership conditions (if any)
Council	6		
Executive	12	10  (4 assistants support the work of the portfolio holders but are not members of Executive)	
Overview and Scrutiny Committees:			No members of Executive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business Transformation</li> </ul>	12	9	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children, Families and Learning</li> </ul>	12	10	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Resources</li> </ul>	12	9	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Care, Health and Housing</li> </ul>	12	9	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable Communities</li> </ul>	12	9	
Development Management Committee	24	18	
Licensing Committee	4	12	Membership of Licensing & Regulation Committees to be the same
Regulation Committee	4	N/A	As above
Licensing Sub Committee	As required	3	
Audit Committee	4	7	No Executive members and no member of Corporate Resources OSC
General Purposes Committee	4	7	At least 1 Executive member
Appointments Sub Committee	As required	3	At least 1 Executive member

Appeals Committee	As required	Minimum of 5	
Standards Committee	4	5	5
Wixams Joint Development Control Committee	As required	9	9
Luton & South Bedfordshire Joint Committee – Section 29	6 average	6	4 Executive members
Luton & South Bedfordshire Joint Committee – Section 101	As required	3	3 Executive members
Joint Consultative & Negotiating Committee for Primary and Secondary Education	4	7	At least 1 Executive member
Employee Partnership Committee	4	7	At least 1 Executive member
Constitution Advisory Group	As required	6	
Member Development Champions	As required	7	
Fostering Panel	As required	1	
Joint Adoption Panel	As required	1	
Fostering Permanence Panel	As required	1	
Corporate Parenting Panel	12	8	
SACRE	Once a term	5	
Houghton Regis Town Centre Management Committee	4	4	Must comprise either Executive members or members for ward
Dunstable Town Centre Management Committee	4	5	As above
Leighton Linlade Town Centre Management Committee	4	5	As above
Standards Assessment Sub Committee	As required	1	3 members are appointed by the Monitoring Officer from a panel comprising all members of the Standards Committee
Standards Review Sub Committee	As required	1	As above

Standards Hearings Sub Committee	As required	1	As above
Totals		194	Excluding membership of the Council

- 4.2 Excluding the 10 Executive seats and the 11 committee memberships that are required to be held by members of the Executive, there are 173 committee seats remaining.
- 4.3 It is considered that members of the Executive have the equivalent of a full-time job, for that reason, it is not considered to be reasonable to add to the already heavy workload of these members by allocating additional committee positions. *This means that 10 members are discounted for the purpose of allocation of the remaining seats referred to paragraph 4.2.* The “Portfolio Holder” Role Profile is shown at Appendix A.
- 4.4 The Chairman of Council fulfils an extremely important role on civic, ceremonial and representational functions. The Chairman promotes the Council in the community, to the public, businesses and voluntary bodies and encourages civic awareness and pride. This role is particularly relevant for a new authority such as Central Bedfordshire as it begins to build its reputation in the community. The Council therefore takes the view that the extent of the Chairman’s duties means that he/she could not commit to any other committee role. *This increases the number of members discounted for purposes of seat allocation to 11.* The Role Profile for the “Chairman of the Council” is shown at Appendix B.
- 4.5 As indicated in paragraph 3.20, given the frequency of meetings and workload associated with the Development Management Committee, it is considered that members of that committee cannot reasonably be expected to assume more than one additional committee per member. *This increases the number of members discounted for the purpose of seat allocation to 29.*
- 4.6 Assuming that each member of the Development Control Committee is allocated 2 committee seats (i.e.: seat on Development Management Committee plus one other committee place), this would reduce the number of non-executive seats to be filled to 137 (i.e.: 18 members x 2 committee seats = 36. 173 – 36 = 137)
- 4.7 The National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2008 indicates that across all authorities, members hold on average 3.7 committee or sub-committee seats. Using this standard, each member sitting on an average of 3.7 committees indicates that 37 councillors would be required to fill the remaining non-executive seats.

- 4.8 The principles above indicated that 29 Members (10 Executive members, the Chairman of the Council and the 18 members of Development Management Committee) should not be expected to assume the average number of committees, given their existing workloads and responsibilities. Adding back the 37 members referred to above suggests that a Council of 66 members would be an appropriate for Central Bedfordshire.
- 4.9 For ease of reference the details set out in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.8 are set out in tabular form below:-

Table 1

<b><i>No of Members discounted for purposes of seat allocation</i></b>	
Executive members	10
Chairman of the Council	1
Development Mgt Committee Members	18
Total	29

Table 2

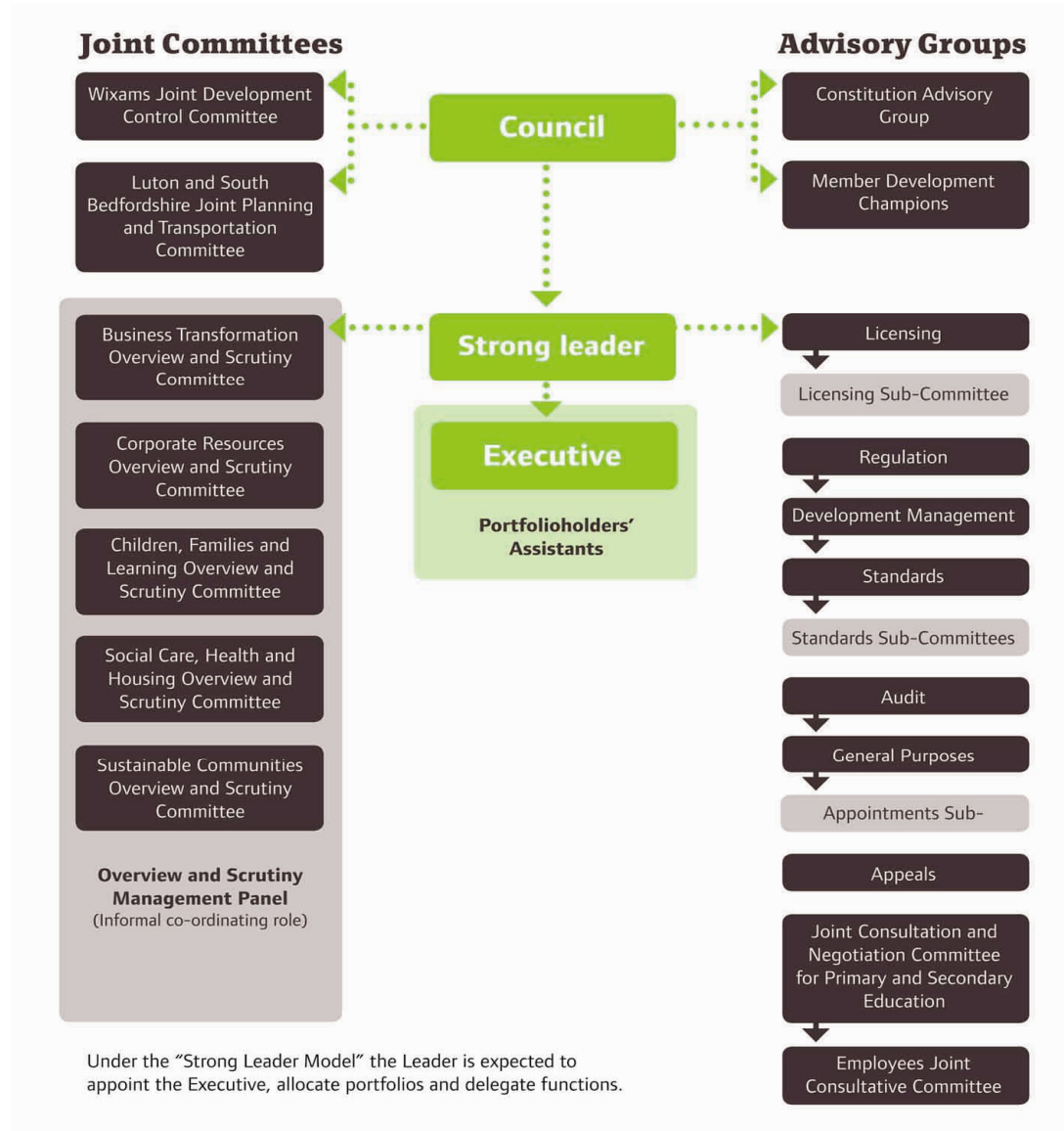
<b><i>Allocation of Committee seats</i></b>	
Total no of seats	194
Minus seats to be allocated to Executive members	21
Sub total	173
Minus seats to be allocated to Development Management members	36
Sub total	137
Divided by IDeA average 3.7 to indicate no of ward councillors needed to fill remaining seats	37.02

Table 3

<b><i>No of Members required for Central Bedfordshire</i></b>	
Ward members	37
Plus members shown in table 1 above who were discounted for seat allocation purposes	29
Total	66



## 5. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



## 6. MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 The role of the Unitary Councillor is both extensive and varied and it is recognised that members may need to move away from the detail that they would have experienced from within a district authority and take a more strategic approach in an authority responsible for combined services, whilst at the same time not losing sight of their role as advocates for the community and its residents.

### Community Role

6.2 The Council's Constitution clearly defines the expectations of members in their community engagement role. Specifically by:

- Representing the communities of their ward, bringing their views into the Council's decision-making process and representing the Council to those communities – i.e. to become an advocate of and for, their communities.
- Responding to constituents' enquiries and representations fairly and impartially, dealing with individual casework and otherwise effectively representing the interests of their ward and of individual constituents.
- Balancing the different interests identified within the ward, representing the ward as a whole and acting as a point of mediation between the Council and the communities of their ward.

### Corporate Role

6.3 The corporate role of the members' contribution to the decision making process, is achieved by;

- Participating in the Council's committees whilst acknowledging the principles of democracy and collective responsibility in decision making.
- Understanding and engaging in Overview and Scrutiny.
- Working with officers and other Members to ensure that local needs are understood and accounted for.

### Partnership Role

6.4 The partnership role of the members involves working with external organisations, by:

- Representing the Authority on local outside bodies.

- Representing the Authority on local partnership bodies, promoting common interest and co-operation for mutual gain.
- Representing and being an advocate for the Council on national bodies and at national events.

## **Political Role**

6.5 Whilst acknowledging that some members may not necessarily align themselves with a political party it is generally accepted by the public that elected representatives are seen as politicians. Consequently, members need to understand how to work in a political environment by:

- Engaging in cross-party working where necessary for the public good.
- Engaging in responsible leadership or constructive opposition.
- Building an understanding of political working among officers.

## **7. TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS**

7.1 Central Bedfordshire is fully parished with 71 town and parish councils. The attendance of elected members at meetings of town and parish councils is an essential element of their representational role – listening to and acting as an advocate for their local towns and parishes. This responsibility is increased in a single tier area, since the unitary councillor is the only principal authority member representing the parish.

7.2 The Council considers that attendance at town and parish council meetings is both a significant and vital element of the councillor's workload and whilst some members have only a single town council within their ward, more than half of the Central Bedfordshire councillors, being those representing rural wards, have at least 3 parish councils within their ward and in extreme cases up to 10 parish councils.

7.3 Additionally, in some parts of the Council's area it has been the practice that members would be invited to attend resident associations and community led forums and initiatives.

## **8. OUTSIDE BODIES AND SCHOOL GOVERNORS**

### **Appointments to Outside Bodies**

8.1 The Council appoints approximately 165 elected members as representatives on 85 outside bodies, some members serving on several different bodies. These include national and regional local authority associations; strategic joint partnership bodies covering

priorities such as health, housing, sustainable growth, community safety, sport and recreation, transport, accessibility, environmental protection, conservation and flood safety; as well as local voluntary/community groups and grant-making charities.

- 8.2 Appointment to an outside body represents a personal responsibility for the councillor concerned requiring regular attendance at the meetings of the organisation, preparing for meetings and bringing feedback from the organisation back into the Council. In some cases councillors are appointed as trustees or a director which carries a further degree of personal responsibility and accountability.
- 8.3 The Council sees this representation as forming an integral part of both its strategic policy planning and its community engagement agenda. The Monitoring Officer has recently issued advice and guidance to Members on their role on outside bodies and a policy on the Council's engagement with outside bodies is currently in the course of preparation.
- 8.4 On average each member serves on 2½ outside bodies. The Council therefore regards it as critical that there is sufficient capacity for the Council to participate fully in the work of these outside bodies having regard to the wider impact these organisations have on the communities within Central Bedfordshire.

### **Local Authority School and College Governors**

- 8.5 The Council is required by the instruments of government of the 139 nursery, lower, middle and upper schools across Central Bedfordshire to appoint 318 local authority governors to the schools' governing bodies. Nearly half of these positions are taken by elected councillors, the Council have taken the line that each councillor should ideally sit on at least two school governing bodies. The role of a school governor is vital to the governance and improvement of standards in all our schools and the Council expects those appointed to continue to develop our engagement with the communities by making a regular and active contribution to the work of their governing body, contributing towards the Council's strategic priorities to transform teaching and learning and raise achievement for all learners, particularly underachieving groups and children in vulnerable circumstances.
- 8.6 As these bodies will meet at least termly and the majority will appoint sub committees which meet more frequently, the average Central Bedfordshire councillor serving on two governing bodies would need to make time for in the region of 12 meetings a year.

## **9. THE ROLE OF THE WARD COUNCILLOR**

- 9.1 The Council recognises that the role of the non-executive member has changed considerably following the introduction of the

executive/scrutiny model for local authorities. However, it welcomes this change which has presented members with the opportunity to develop their role as both community advocates and problem-solvers for their respective neighbourhoods, as well as being community leaders, galvanizing engagement at grass roots level and initiating local action. Councillor Calls for Action, coupled with opportunities for locally-devolved budgets, wider scrutiny powers and more flexible member conduct rules on representing ward interests (most notably in relation to planning and licensing matters) all strengthen councillors' ability to influence policy and decision making by all public sector providers in their locality and to help improve the well-being of their community and locality.

- 9.2 The ward councillor needs to assess the scope for harnessing and sharing local talents and skills from within the town and parish councils, the residents' and tenants' association, the local community and voluntary groups by establishing local networks that can identify and resolve local issues.
- 9.3 We see the ward councillor as a conduit to the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny committees, bringing the necessary evidence to their attention and affording them the opportunity to take the appropriate action.
- 9.4 The "Joint Proposal for Unitary Local government in Central Bedfordshire" submitted to the Secretary of State, recognised that the development of efficient and effective ward councillors was critical to the Council providing strong, effective and accountable strategic leadership to its communities.
- 9.5 The joint proposal also recognised the need for excellent member support to assist councillors in their ward role. A small Members' services team provides advice and guidance to members and assists with arrangements and publicity for surgeries. Dedicated administrative support is also available to the Executive. IT equipment is provided for Councillors' use at home.

## 10. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT

- 10.1 It is recognised that no Council can be successful without dedicated and skilled members and officers working in partnership. The Council is committed to providing excellent support, training and briefing for all of the members in order that they can play an active and meaningful part in the work of the Authority. There is a clear correlation between excellent/high performing Councils and well trained/developed members.
- 10.2 Our first Member Development Strategy acknowledges the contribution that elected members can make to create the culture for

the new Unitary Council and the achievement of its ambition to become an “Excellent” Authority by 2012.

- 10.3 The Council is striving to be a learning organisation, championing the continuing development of its councillors and staff and will be committing to achieve the Regional Charter for Elected Member Development and the National Investors in People (IIP) Charter Mark at the earliest opportunity.
- 10.4 A joint Member/Officer group called the “Member Development Champions” has undertaken the planning of the Councillor Induction Programme and the on-going Member Development Programme. The Group is cross-party, comprising the Leader, the Deputy Leader, the Corporate Services Portfolio holder together with other senior councillors, as appropriate. Meetings of the group take place every 6 - 8 weeks.
- 10.5 The Council implemented a comprehensive induction programme following the June elections with on average 2 half day events on key topics being held a week.
- 10.6 An on-going Member Development Programme has also been arranged which will begin in the Autumn of 2009.
- 10.7 1:1 sessions are to be held with councillors so that their individual development needs can be assessed and a personal development plan put in place.
- 10.8 Members are also encouraged to pursue personal development opportunities and the Council has worked with the IDeA to organise peer mentoring and attendance by members at the IDeA Leadership Academy.

## 11. COUNCILLOR WORKLOADS

- 11.1 The change from two-tiers of local government to a unitary authority has significant implications for member workloads, even for experienced councillors. The formation of the unitary authority has brought together the functions of Bedfordshire County Council and the two former districts of Mid and South Bedfordshire. Clearly, members will need to develop their knowledge and skills to incorporate these extended roles. Moreover, it is considered essential that members have a clear understanding of:

- The demographic, economic, political and social profile of the area.
- The Council’s key corporate challenges and values.
- The role and function of key partners.
- Knowledge of the relevant protocols and legislation governing the

highest standards of probity in public office and the operations of the Authority.

- The roles of senior officers and operational remit.
- Financial and performance data.

- 11.2 Members' higher profiles within the community will generate significantly greater workloads, particularly through engaging with the electorate. Additionally, their active participation with the town and parish councils, outside bodies, the police and fire authorities and their positions as school governors referred to earlier in our submission is further evidence of the need to ensure that sufficient numbers of Councillors are available to meet the demands placed upon them. Moreover, it is essential that a pragmatic councillor/elector ratio is also achieved.
- 11.3 A recent survey of members has indicated that, although the Authority is less than 6 months old, they spend approximately 9 hours per week on case work and a further 8 hours per week on simply dealing with Council and client case correspondence. The role profile for an "Elected Member" is set out at Appendix C.

## 12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The analysis in respect of Council size has been undertaken with due regard as to what might reasonably be expected of a member elected from any sector of the community.
- 12.2 In addition to the time that members spend on engaging with their constituents (17 hours), an analysis of the figures shown on the political management structure table indicates that on average a Central Bedfordshire member will attend up to one formal Committee meeting per week. The majority of meetings can involve an attendance of up to two hours, plus a similar amount of time or more for preparation. The above figure represents just the formal governance structure. In addition to the standing committees and sub-committees there are a myriad of task and finish groups, Panels, working groups, site visits, briefings and meetings with officers. Moreover, given the geography of the area some members can add a further hour's travelling time for each meeting they attend.
- 12.3 External representation on outside bodies (average two and a half bodies per member) together with attendance at school governor meetings (average two per member) would account for a further 2 hours per week. Also a further nine members, as representatives on the police and fire authorities, will attend up to at least 6 programmed meetings per year on each respective authority. Additionally, both of the respective authorities have a considerable number of committees and the Council's representatives are required to serve on at least two



decision making committees which increases the time commitment to approximately 40 days per year.

- 12.4 Member development activities are estimated to be at least 2 hours per week with a further 2 hours per week being taken up on attendance at town and parish meetings or community based forums.
- 12.5 Collectively therefore, all of the aforementioned council/community activities amount to some 27 hours (not including travelling time) on average per week for each member. This is higher than national average of 22 hours per week but commensurate with the national average for a metropolitan council as shown in the 2008 National Census. This commitment further supports the proposal for a Council of 66 members and will ensure that the community is provided with the correct level of political representation.
- 12.6 The recommended number of councillors for Central Bedfordshire is therefore determined as 66 which would give a ratio of 1: 2923 on the current electorate of 192,915 and a ratio of 1: 3,151 on a forecast electorate of 207,986 by 2014.
- 12.7 It is acknowledged that there is no prescribed electoral ratio in an electoral review; however, the table below shows the comparators within our Audit Commission family group and immediate neighbouring authorities which does indicate some similar ratios.

<b>Council</b>	<b>Number of Councillors</b>	<b>2009 Electorate</b>	<b>Electors per Member</b>
Bedford Borough	36 + Mayor	115,000	3194
Bury	51	141,378	2772
Kirklees	69	302,017	4377
Luton	48	138,328	2881
Milton Keynes	51	170,000	3333
Solihull	51	155,775	3054
South Gloucestershire	70	200,000	2857
Stockport	63	217,709	3455
Swindon	59	153,009	2593
Telford & Wrekin	54	121,221	2244
Thurrock	49	112,000	2285



Trafford	63	167,427	2657
Warrington	57	147,000	2578
West Berkshire	52	116,195	2234
York	47	150,928	3211

12.8 Central Bedfordshire aims to become an excellent authority, to deliver high quality democratically driven services and to provide strong, effective and accountable community leadership with an enhanced role for ward councillors. It is against this background that this submission is made. The Council currently has 66 members. The electoral review has allowed us to test whether that number is both appropriate for the new governance structure we now have in place and will provide the capacity to deliver the community leadership role to which we aspire. We have concluded that a Council of 66 will sustain effective governance and decision-making, will provide Executive members with the capacity they need to concentrate on their strategic and leadership roles, will allow all ward councillors to be engaged in policy development, review and scrutiny through overview and scrutiny and will provide capacity for ward councillors to effectively carry out their role as representatives of, and advocates for, their local communities. The Council commends its recommendation to the Boundary Committee.

<b>Portfolio Holder Role Profile – Central Bedfordshire Council</b>
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**1. Accountabilities**

- To the Leader
- To the Executive (through collective responsibility)
- To Full Council
- Appropriate Committees of the Council (e.g. Audit, Overview and Scrutiny)
- To officers (Team working approach)

**2. Role Purpose and Activity**

- **Portfolio leadership**
  - To lead and develop policies and strategies within the portfolio
  - To decide the executive action to be taken in implementing those matters of Council policy relevant to the portfolio – seeking advice from the Leader, Deputy Leader, Senior Management Team and Heads of Service as appropriate
  - Be accountable for choices and performance in the portfolio
  - Work closely with members in overview and scrutiny to promote policy development within the portfolio remit and encourage robust and constructive challenge
  - Engender strong working relationships with the Leader and Deputy Leader and relevant senior officers within the portfolio area
- **Contribute to the setting of the strategic agenda and work programme for the portfolio**
  - Work with officers to formulate policy documents both strategic and statutory
  - Provide updates to Council and relevant committees on progress in the above areas
  - Carry out (and enable) consultations with key partners to facilitate policy development
  - Provide support to officers in the implementation of the portfolio programme
- **Provide representation for the portfolio**
  - Represent the Council on outside bodies.
  - Provide portfolio leadership on a wider strategic scale e.g. to represent and champion the Council on national and regional bodies ensuring that the challenges, successes and contribution of Central Bedfordshire are recognised

- **Reporting and accounting**
  - Report as appropriate to the Leader, Full Council, Executive, appropriate chairman of scrutiny, regulatory bodies and the media in consultation – or as directed by the leader
  - Lead consultation in (and facilitate) the drawing up of the revenue and capital budgets
  - Take decisions on resources and priorities to deliver the strategies and budget approved by full council
  
- **Leading partnerships and community leadership**
  - Provide leadership to local strategic partnerships and other key partners in the pursuit of common aims and priorities
  - Negotiate and enable solutions in the event of differing priorities and disagreement
  - Act as a leader of the local community by showing vision and foresight
  - Fulfil other ward duties as appropriate to the role description of a ward councillor
  
- **Internal governance, ethical standards and relationships**
  - Promote and support good governance of the Council and its affairs
  - Provide community leadership and promote active citizenship
  - Maintain a special interest to promote and support open and transparent government within the portfolio remit
  - Support, and adhere to respectful, appropriate and effective relationships with employees of the Council
  - Adhere to the Member's Code of Conduct, Member/Officer Protocol and the highest standards of behaviour in public office

### **3. Values**

- To be committed to and demonstrate the following values in public office:
  - Openness and transparency
  - Honesty and integrity
  - Tolerance and respect
  - Equality and fairness
  - Appreciation of cultural difference and diversity
  - Sustainability
  - Inclusive leadership
  - Consensus building

#### **4 Skills, knowledge, qualities and personal development**

- To participate in opportunities for continuous professional development provided by the authority and participate in periodic personal development reviews. To work towards development of the key skills, knowledge and standards of professionalism required of this role. Skills, knowledge and qualities required for the various aspect of the role include:
  - **Skills relevant to:**
    - **The provision of Portfolio leadership and**
    - **Contribute to the setting of the strategic agenda and work programme for the portfolio**
    - **Reporting and accounting**
  - Wide knowledge of the strategies, policies, operations and challenges relevant to the portfolio
  - Knowledge of relevant performance measures, challenges and benchmarks
  - Knowledge of community strengths, areas of improvement and key issues
  - Understanding of the relationship between national and local politics and portfolio related policies
  - Good strategic awareness of issues facing Central Bedfordshire and an ability to promote continuous service improvement
  - An understanding of Central Bedfordshire's strategy, policies, operations and resources
  - Provide political leadership and maintain group consensus
  - Provide a role model for members regarding the values and behaviours associated with portfolio management
  - Participation in advanced leadership development opportunities as appropriate to the portfolio
  - Knowledge of effective methods to undertake and promote elected member development to ensure widespread expertise in the portfolio remit
  - Entrepreneurial skills to lead initiatives to attract new resources to Central Bedfordshire to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area
- **Provide representation for the portfolio**
  - Articulating challenges and decisions using high level communication skills including
  - Public speaking skills
  - Presentation skills
  - Chairing and reporting skills
  - Medial liaison

- **Reporting and accounting**
  - Ability to plan and prioritise the business of Council, Cabinet and its committees having regard to the terms of reference and the key challenges facing the Council
  - Participation in advanced Chairing skills development opportunities as appropriate to encourage participation from all members
  - Ability to constructively challenge decisions and suggest alternatives
  - Knowledge and understanding of local and national policy objectives and the aspirations of other relevant organisations
  - Knowledge and understanding of budget making processes
  - Knowledge and financial and performance monitoring and ability to use such information to inform decision-making
  - Knowledge and skills to work closely with members in overview and scrutiny to promote policy development and robust and constructive challenge
  - Knowledge of best practice in local authority service delivery and commitment to supporting the authority to provide leading edge service and gain recognition for excellence
  
- **Leading partnerships and the local community**
  - Leadership and partnership development skills
  - Community engagement to represent all areas of the ward
  - Efficient case –work management and use of technology to report and monitor case progress
  - Interpersonal skills to manage sensitive case issues
  - Integrity, ability to act impartially and work within the codes of conduct and protocols of the Council
  - Ability to chair and manage the work of local meetings and committees
  - Knowledge and understanding of meetings law, rules and conventions
  - Ability to represent local views to the Council (e.g. in the Chamber or to officers individually) using appropriate professional protocols
  
- **Internal governance, ethical standards and relationships**
  - An understanding of the roles of officers, members and different agencies
  - Respect for and desire to work with different groups and individuals
  - Knowledge and understanding of Code of Conduct and Member/Officer Protocol
  - Knowledge and commitment to the values of Central Bedfordshire Council

## DEVELOPING YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN THE ROLE

Use this section to:

- (a) 'Self assess' your knowledge and skills
- (b) Plan your own development and request support with the role
- (c) Discuss development opportunities at your personal development planning meeting

An effective portfolio holder **KNOWS:**

- The **requirements of this role profile** and has discussed it with a senior officer/ specialist HR practitioner to clarify potential knowledge deficits and set action plans
- The broad **demographic, economic, political and social profile** of Central Bedfordshire and key statistics relevant to the portfolio
- The Council's **key corporate challenges and values**
- The **strengths and development challenges** of his or her self and colleagues within the Group
- How to promote **continuous professional development amongst** colleagues
- The role and function of **key partners** and details of the key influencers within the each partnership relevant to the portfolio
- The relevant **protocols and legislation** governing the highest standards of probity in public office and the operations of the authority
- Details of all **senior officers and their operational remit with the Portfolio**
- How to read and interpret **financial and performance data**
- Party political** policies and stances relevant to the key challenges of the authority

An effective Portfolio holder **PRACTICES**

- The highest levels of **ethical conduct and probity** in public life
- Provide political leadership and accountability** relevant to the determination of policies, approaches, and financial priorities in the portfolio remit
- A variety of 'Leadership styles'** which demonstrates that he or she can both 'lead from the front' and enable others to lead where appropriate (e.g. in delegated or Portfolio areas)
- Strategies to produce a **vision and strategic ambitions** for the Council and the communities of Central Bedfordshire which is shared by others
- Community leadership skills:** e.g. producing strategies to work inclusively and equally with all sections of the community
- Equality and Diversity:** respecting and managing differences in society and understanding key legislation

- Practical **time management skills** to (a) prioritise work load (b) maintain work-life balance (c) delegate (d) develop partnerships to further aims (d) employ stress reduction strategies
- **Confident and effective communication** with a variety of individuals, groups and audiences. In particular, he or she demonstrates
- Excellence in **presentations** to colleagues, officers and outside bodies
- Excellent media liaison and presentation skills (e.g. TV, Radio, Press, Internet) to support the management of the Councils reputation
- **Effective reporting** to Council at meetings and in the Chamber
- **Effective Chairing skills** e.g. preparation strategy, meetings management, facilitating involvement, follow up strategies
- **Partnership development strategies** to produce win/win outcomes for the authority and its associated **external** partners
- **Partnership development strategies** to enable Overview and Scrutiny to provide an improvement planning and constructive challenge role within the remit of the portfolio
- **Ambassadorial skills** to welcome, recognise and foster the interest and contribution of individuals, groups, businesses etc. in Central Bedfordshire
- **Professional listening and questioning skills** to (a) build rapport with colleagues (b) gather evidence and (c) inform decision-making
- **Community leadership skills** to maintain the balance between his/her corporate responsibilities and ward based/ electoral duties
- **Up to date ICT skills to work remotely and efficiently and** is able to use **modern technology** to carry out **independent personal research**
- **Entrepreneurial skills** to work with the Chief Executive and others to attract new resources to Central Bedfordshire to promote the economic, environmental and social well-being of the area
- **Mentoring skills** to develop the skills and capabilities of other portfolio holders
- **Promote succession planning in the portfolio** to enable a smooth transition where applicable

## METHODS OF ACQUISITION (KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS)

Group Training or 1:1 mentoring is available in a range of areas relevant to this role i.e.

- Gaining an in-depth understanding of your **Role Profile** and
- Producing a **Personal Development Plan** to address your training needs

**Training is available in the following areas (as appropriate to your needs)**

- Central Bedfordshire Council:** Corporate Plan, Values, Structure, remit of each Dept and the portfolio, principal officers, budgets and challenges
- Key legislation** – what every portfolio holder should know about their remit
- Trends** in local government – key challenges in the months & years ahead
- A tour of the portfolio:** an induction programme for you to meet the people involved in delivering the service and find out about the resources and challenges facing the service
- Reading and using Key Performance data** – to monitor and improve performance in your Portfolio area
- Local Government Finance for the portfolio holder**
- Reading and using key financial data** to monitor and improve performance in your area
- Producing a budget:** options, challenges, protocols and considerations, matching the needs of your portfolio remit to the wider needs of the authority
- Developing Leadership skills** via the leadership academy
- Questioning and Listening Skills**
- Member/Officer relationships:** protocols and partnership working
- Using a **personal computer** (beginner and advanced)
- Using PowerPoint to enhance **presentation skills**
- Speech writing** – some of the classic techniques relevant to the modern audience
- Public speaking** in a **community environment**
- Public speaking** in the **Chamber**
- Press interviews**
- Radio interviews**
- TV Interviews**
- Internet interviews**
- Time management skills**
- Speed reading**
- Unlocking the potential of Overview and Scrutiny** to provide an improvement planning function for the Authority



- **Managing a 'Call in'**
- **Negotiating Skills** to provide win/win solutions with partners
- **High Performance team working** to get the most from working with other portfolio holders, other elected members, officers and partners
- **Benchmarking strategies** to learn from others about best practice in your portfolio area and avoid 're-inventing the wheel'
- **Stress reduction strategies** to avoid burn out promote a healthier lifestyle
- **Recognising your contribution:** opportunities to work towards a formal qualification which recognises your high level responsibilities and achievements
- **Chairing (internal) Council meetings:** subject includes the role of the Chair, meeting protocols, managing group behaviour, building consensus and dealing with difficult people
- **Chairing community meetings:** subject includes the role of the Chair, Opening the meeting, meetings protocols and outcomes, managing public contributions and hot topics, dealing with difficult people and building consensus
- **Elected member development strategies** to unlock the potential of your Councillor colleagues
- **Establishing a tracking system** to manage your case-work and committee agenda challenges
- **Assertiveness skills**

**Peer Mentoring and coaching** is also available to help the you to acquire knowledge and skills and involves focused support provided in defined areas from a former (or serving) portfolio holder in your own authority or another

**Chairman of the Council Role Profile – Central Bedfordshire Council****1. Accountabilities**

- To Full Council

**2. Role Purpose and Activity**

- **Ceremonial**

- To be the Ceremonial Head of Central Bedfordshire Council
- To represent the Council in the District and elsewhere on occasions where a civic representative is required
- To receive civic guests, delegations and visitors and host civic occasions
- To initiate activities designed to recognise and encourage civic awareness, action and pride
- To liaise proactively with the media and other bodies within and outside of Central Bedfordshire to raise awareness of individual, community and corporate contributions to community pride and well-being

- **Chairing**

- To attend and Chair briefings for Council meetings and be proactive in making proposals for the efficient and effective conduct of meetings
- To Chair Council meetings ensuring
  - Professional conduct and contributions by elected members in the Chamber
  - Fairness and equity in member contributions subject to the relevant standing orders and constitution
  - The application of the constitution and provide interpretation where necessary
  - Mutual respect for the members and officers in line with the Code of Conduct and appropriate protocols
  - That meetings are properly constituted and are a focus for debate on issues of concern to the communities of Central Bedfordshire

- **Managerial**

- To oversee the organisation of civic events (subject to budget availability) which will normally include an annual Civic Service and Civic Reception
- To ensure that the Civic budget is spent prudently and to the best advantage of Central Bedfordshire
- To ensure that Vice Chairman of the Council is kept informed of (and involved in) opportunities to support the role of Chair

- **Internal governance, ethical standards and relationships**

- To promote and support good governance of the Council and its affairs
- To provide community leadership and promote active citizenship
- To promote and support open and transparent government
- To support, and adhere to respectful, appropriate and effective relationships with employees of the Council
- To adhere to the Member's Code of Conduct, Member/Officer Protocol and the highest standards of behaviour in public office
- To ensure effective liaison, communication and excellent working relationships with the Leader, Deputy Leader, Opposition Leader, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive

### **3. Values**

- To be committed to and demonstrate the following values in public office:
  - Openness and transparency
  - Honesty and integrity
  - Tolerance and respect
  - Equality and fairness
  - Appreciation of cultural difference and diversity
  - Sustainability
  - Inclusive leadership
  - Consensus building

### **4. Skills, knowledge, qualities and personal development**

- To participate in opportunities for continuous professional development provided by the authority and participate in periodic personal development reviews. To work towards development of the key skills, knowledge and standards of professionalism required of this role. Skills, knowledge and qualities required for the various aspect of the role include:

- **Ceremonial**

- Knowledge of the protocols, rules and cultural sensitivities involved in hosting and attending civic occasions
- Preparation strategies to ensure that events, delegations (etc.) are managed appropriately
- Excellent public speaking skills
- Excellent media liaison skills
- Ability to shape and manage a programme to promote civic awareness, action and pride

- **Chairing**

- Detailed knowledge of the Council Constitution and
- In depth knowledge of Standing orders relevant to Council meetings
- Advanced Chairing skills to (a) conduct meetings effectively with (b) the ability to endorse, apply and interpret standing orders (c) manage contributions from elected members, officers and members of the public

- **Internal governance, ethical standards and relationships**

- Ability to demonstrate the application of the highest ethical standards to the civic governance of Central Bedfordshire
- An understanding of the roles of officers, members and different agencies
- Respect for and desire to work with different groups and individuals
- Knowledge and understanding of Code of Conduct and Member/Officer Protocol
- Knowledge and commitment to the values of Central Bedfordshire Council

## DEVELOPING YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN THE ROLE

Use this section to:

- (a) 'Self assess' your knowledge and skills
- (b) Plan your own development and request support with the role
- (c) Discuss development opportunities at your personal development planning meeting

An effective Chairman of the Council **KNOWS:**

- The **requirements of this role profile** and has discussed it with a senior officer/ specialist HR practitioner to clarify potential knowledge deficits and set action plans
- The broad **demographic, economic, political and social profile** of Central Bedfordshire and key statistics
- The Council's **key corporate challenges and values**
- The role and function of **key partners** and details of the key influencers within the each partnership
- The relevant **protocols and legislation** governing the highest standards of probity in public office and the operations of the authority
- The **correct civic protocols** to use in a variety of occasions

An effective Chairman of the Council **PRACTICES**

- The highest levels of **ethical conduct and probity** in public life
- Excellent ambassadorial skills** to welcome, recognise and foster the interest and contribution of individuals, groups, businesses, charitable initiatives etc. in Central Bedfordshire
- Provide civic leadership and accountability** relevant to the promotion of Central Bedfordshire and the achievements and aspirations of its citizens and the authority
- Community leadership skills:** e.g. producing strategies to work inclusively and equally with all sections of the community
- Equality and Diversity:** respecting and managing differences in society and understanding key legislation
- Practical **time and project management skills** to (a) prioritise work load (b) maintain work-life balance (c) delegate (d) develop partnerships to further aims (d) employ stress reduction strategies
- Confident and effective communication** with a variety of individuals, groups and audiences. In particular, he or she demonstrates
- Excellence in **presentations** to colleagues, officers and outside bodies
- Excellent media liaison and presentation skills (e.g. TV, Radio, Press, Internet) to support the management of the Councils reputation

- **Effective Chairing skills at full Council and other occasions** e.g. preparation strategy, meetings management, welcoming and managing contributions, resolving conflict, building consensus
- **Professional listening and questioning skills** to (a) build rapport with colleagues (b) gather evidence and (c) inform decision-making
- **Community leadership skills** to maintain the balance between his/her corporate responsibilities and ward based/ electoral duties
- **Up to date ICT skills to work remotely and efficiently and** is able to use **modern technology** to carry out **independent personal research**
- **Support to the development of skills for the successor to the role**

## METHODS OF ACQUISITION (KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS)

Group Training or 1:1 mentoring is available in a range of areas relevant to this role i.e.

- Gaining an in-depth understanding of your **Role Profile** and
- Producing a **Personal Development Plan** to address your training needs

**Training is available in the following areas (as appropriate to your needs)**

- Central Bedfordshire Council:** Corporate Plan, Values, Structure, remit of each Dept, principal officers, budgets and challenges
- Key legislation and updates** – what every Chairman should know
- Trends** in local government – key challenges in the months & years ahead
- A tour of the Civic function:** an induction programme for you to meet the people involved in delivering the service and find out about the resources available
- Member/Officer relationships:** protocols and partnership working
- Using a **personal computer** (beginner and advanced)
- Using PowerPoint to enhance **presentation skills**
- Speech writing** – some of the classic techniques relevant to the modern audience
- Public speaking** in a **community environment**
- Public speaking and making announcements** in the **Chamber**
- Press interviews**
- Radio interviews**
- TV Interviews**
- Internet interviews**
- Time management skills**
- Speed reading**
- Stress reduction strategies** to avoid burn out promote a healthier lifestyle
- Recognising your contribution:** opportunities to work towards a formal qualification which recognises your high level responsibilities and achievements
- Chairing Council meetings:** subject includes the role of the Chair, Meetings protocols, preparation and tracking strategies with Committee staff, managing group behaviour, building consensus and dealing with difficult people
- Meeting and greeting civic guests:** address protocols, gifts, building and maintaining relationships
- Establishing a tracking system** to manage your case-work and Civic responsibilities
- Project Management skills for Charity and Community events**

**Peer Mentoring and coaching** is also available to help the you to acquire knowledge and skills and involves focused support provided in defined areas from a former (or serving) Chairman of the Council in your own authority or another



## ELECTED MEMBER ROLE PROFILE

The following detailed profile has been prepared to demonstrate the extensive and varied roles undertaken by Councillors elected to Central Bedfordshire Council.

### 1. Accountabilities

- To Full Council
- To the electorate of their ward
- The wider public
- External bodies

### 2. Role Purpose and Activity

#### Representing and supporting communities

- Lead, champion and represent ward interests
- Be an advocate for the Council in the ward and communities they serve
- Be a channel of communication to the community on council strategies, policies, services and procedures
- Represent individual constituents and local organisations, undertaking casework on their behalf and serving all fairly and equally
- Liaise with executive members, other council members, council officers and partner organisations to ensure that the needs of the local communities are identified, understood and supported
- Promote tolerance and cohesion in local communities

#### Making decisions and overseeing council performance

- Participate in Full Council meetings, reaching and making informed and balanced decisions, and overseeing performance
- Participate in informed and balanced decision making on committees and panels to which they might be appointed
- Adhere to the principles of democracy and collective responsibility in decision making
- Promote and ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of council and other public services

#### Representing the Council (subject to appointment)

- Represent the Council on local outside bodies as an appointee of the Council
- Represent the Council on local partnership bodies, promoting common interest and co-operation for mutual gain
- Represent and be an advocate for the Council on national bodies and at national events

### **Internal governance, ethical standards and relationships**

- Promote and support good governance of the Council and its affairs
- Provide community leadership and promote active citizenship
- Promote and support open and transparent government
- Support, and adhere to respectful, appropriate and effective relationships with employees of the Council
- Adhere to the Member's Code of Conduct, the Member/Officer Protocol and the highest standards of behaviour in public office

### **3. Values**

To be committed to the values of the Council and the following values in public office:

- Openness and transparency
- Honesty and integrity
- Tolerance and respect
- Equality and fairness
- Appreciation of cultural difference and diversity
- Sustainability

### **4. Skills, knowledge, qualities and personal development**

- To participate in opportunities for continuous professional development provided for members by the authority and participate in periodic personal development reviews. To work towards development of the key skills, knowledge and standards of professionalism required of this role.

### **5. Representing and supporting communities**

- Community engagement to represent all areas of the ward
- Efficient case-work management and use of technology to report and monitor case progress
- Interpersonal skills to manage sensitive case issues
- Integrity, ability to act impartially and work within the codes of conduct and protocols of the Council
- Ability to chair and manage the work of local meetings and committees
- Knowledge and understanding of meetings law, rules and conventions
- Ability to represent local views to the Council (e.g. in the Chamber or to officers individually) using appropriate professional protocols

## 6. Making decisions and overseeing council performance

- Knowledge and understanding of meetings law, rules and conventions
- Participation in opportunities to develop Council policy (e.g. through overview and scrutiny) and
- Provide effective and constructive to challenge and ideas to further the development of the authority
- Knowledge and application of negotiating skills and consensus building strategies
- Ability to interpret information and data from a range of sources
- Ability to act objectively on the basis of evidence

## 7. Representing the Council

- Good public speaking skills
- Good presentation skills
- Acting as an ambassador of the Council to outside bodies
- Effective media liaison whilst being able to identify when additional support from public relations specialists is required to ensure that the Council is represented positively and fairly

## 8. Internal governance, ethical standards and relationships

- An understanding of the roles of officers, members and different agencies
- Have knowledge and understanding of the Code of Conduct and Member/Officer relations
- A knowledge and commitment to the values of Central Bedfordshire Council

### Developing Knowledge and Skills in the Role:

Once elected even experienced Councillors will want to develop their knowledge and skills in the role. Councillors need to be able to self-assess their knowledge and skills by using the Elected Member Role Profile set out in this guide, by planning their own development and discussing the opportunities available at a personal development planning meeting.

#### Being an Effective Councillor

To be an effective Councillor there is a need for involvement in the process of looking at the role profile to clarify potential knowledge deficits and agree an individual action plan based on areas of strengths and development challenges.

For all Members there needs to be a clear understanding of the following areas;

- **demographic, economic, political and social profiles**

- the Council's **key corporate challenges and values**
- the role and function of **key partners**
- knowledge of relevant **protocols and legislation** governing the highest standards of probity in public office and the operations of the authority.
- understanding the roles of **senior officers and their operational remit**
- how to read and make sense of **financial and performance data**.

Effective Leadership requires the practicing of :

- the highest levels of **ethical conduct and probity** in public life
- **contributing to new policies, approaches, and financial priorities**
- leading within the community and on the Council
- produce a **vision and strategic ambitions** for the Council
- practical **time management skills**
- **developing partnerships**
- **confident and effective communication** with all audiences.
- **media liaison and presentation skills** to support the management of the Council's reputation
- **effective contributions** to Council meetings
- **partnership development strategies**
- **ambassadorial skills**
- **professional listening and questioning skills**
- **community leadership skills**
- **community engagement skills**
- **up to date ICT skills**

**Methods of Acquisition of Knowledge and Skills include;**

- Establishing your **Personal Development Plan**
- **Group Training**
- **1:1 mentoring** to address your training needs
- **Peer Mentoring and Coaching** involving focused support from a former (or serving) Councillor

**Development may be available in the following areas (dependant on demand and individual and corporate need):**

- **Central Bedfordshire Council:** Corporate Plan, Values, Structure, remit of each Dept, principal officers, budgets and challenges
- **Key legislation**
- **Trends in local government**
- **Reading and using Key Performance data**
- **Local Government Finance for the Councillor**
- **Reading and using key financial data**
- **Producing a budget**
- **Developing Leadership skills**

- **Community leadership skills**
- **Equality and Diversity**
- **Questioning and Listening Skills**
- **Member/Officer relationships**
- **ICT Training**
- **Presentation skills**
- **Speech writing**
- **Public speaking in the community**
- **Public speaking in the Chamber**
- **Press interviews**
- **Radio interviews**
- **TV Interviews**
- **Internet interviews**
- **Chairing community meetings**
- **Time management skills**
- **Speed reading**
- **The role of Overview and Scrutiny**
- **The role of 'Call in' and the Councillor Call for Action**
- **Negotiating Skills**
- **High Performance team working**
- **Benchmarking strategies**
- **Stress reduction strategies**
- **Recognising your contribution: working towards a formal qualification**
- **Establishing a tracking system**
- **Assertiveness skills**