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Foreword

*By Councillor Turner,
Chair of Central Bedfordshire Together*

I am proud to introduce this, our first Sustainable Community Strategy for Central Bedfordshire.

Since the creation of Central Bedfordshire on 1st April 2009, we have been on a very challenging but also very exciting journey. We have the opportunity to establish Central Bedfordshire as a vibrant, forward thinking, innovative and desirable place to live, work, visit and invest in. This challenge is being met with drive, passion and commitment by all involved.



This strategy sets out our ambition for Central Bedfordshire, which is described in our vision statement:

“Central Bedfordshire: delivering sustainable growth to ensure a green, prosperous and ambitious place for the benefit of all”

OR

“Globally connected at the heart of England; a green and ambitious place investing in quality for all to prosper”

Our vision is one of greater economic prosperity based on sustainable growth. We need to ensure that Central Bedfordshire fulfils its economic potential, and that there are more local jobs for local people. We will experience considerable population growth over the next 20 years and we need to make sure that we have the houses and facilities needed to support this growth, so that Central Bedfordshire remains a desirable place to live and work.

Importantly, our vision also reflects the views of local people, communities and stakeholders and responds to their aspirations for Central Bedfordshire.

We know that the only way we can achieve this vision is by ensuring that we continue to listen and respond to what our residents, businesses and communities are telling us. It is only by all of us working together that we can shape Central Bedfordshire to be the place we want it to be, both now and in the future.

This document sets out the actions we will take to improve local services and to ensure we manage growth and build sustainable communities. It states our priorities for tackling local issues which are rooted in a clear analysis of local needs. It provides an overarching single strategy for Central Bedfordshire, and each of the partners has developed their own plans and strategies that give the detail on the contribution they are making towards it.

[Add residents most important issues from KA's report?](#)

What is a sustainable community?

‘Sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good service for all.’

(Definition from the Department for Communities and Local Government)

Why do we have a Sustainable Community Strategy?

All councils have a duty to work with partners to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy. These strategies are all about contributing to sustainable development in the UK, and improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area and the people who live there. In order to make a real difference, the strategy must focus on what’s *really* important to local communities. It must help focus and shape the existing and future activity of the key partners working in the area, to deliver sustainable communities.

Our Sustainable Community Strategy is based on a shared long term shared vision for Central Bedfordshire. It has been developed from detailed evidence that crucially includes views from our residents and communities about issues that are important to them, about things that really matter; and about the things that would help to make a real difference to their lives.

Senior representatives from Central Bedfordshire Council, Police, Fire, Health, Education, Business, Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary and community sector collectively make up Central Bedfordshire Together, which is the name for Central Bedfordshire’s Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

The Board of Central Bedfordshire Together is responsible for developing this Sustainable Community Strategy, and ensuring we work together to achieve it. It ensures that the priorities identified in it reflect all of those key issues our residents told us about, whilst drawing on its shared understanding and agreement of the key things we need to do to make Central Bedfordshire a ‘green, prosperous and ambitious place for the benefit of all’.

*(***may change***)*

Central Bedfordshire Together is made up of five Statutory and Thematic Partnerships that work to develop and implement action plans for each of our priorities. These Partnerships are:

- Children’s Trust;
- Healthier Communities and Older People Partnership Board
- Community Safety Partnership,
- Stronger Communities Thematic Partnership; and
- Environment & Economy Thematic Partnership.



What it's like to live in Central Bedfordshire

- Central Bedfordshire is a mainly rural location and is considered to be a highly desirable place to both live and work. Much of the area has either a suburban or rural feel, with picturesque villages, beautiful hamlets and historic market towns.
- Some 255,000 people live in Central Bedfordshire, with just over half of the population living in rural areas. The largest towns are Leighton Buzzard and Linslade, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Biggleswade, Flitwick, Sandy and Ampthill.

“Strong market towns with individual identities”

“Special and historic landscape that has survived and is valued”

- [Move map here?](#)

- 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 also more than 30 sites of special scientific interest, as well as national and local nature reserves. Transport links include good regional and national rail lines and nearby Luton and Stansted airports, together with cycle routes of national and regional importance.

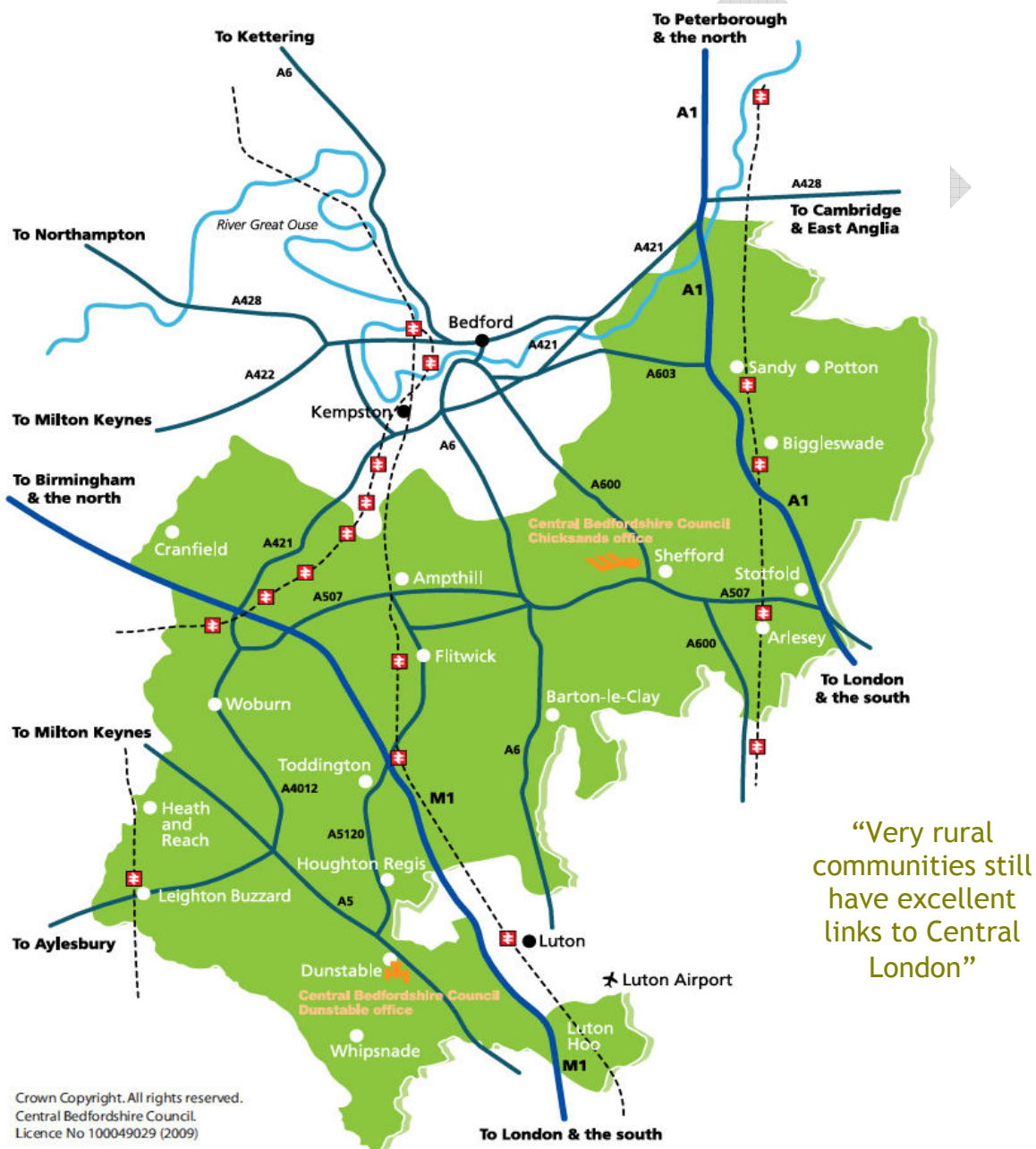
- The area is one of the most rapidly growing in England, and is planning for substantial additional development as part of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area.
- This planned housing growth means that the population is expected to increase to over 320,000 people by 2031. Affordable housing is therefore an important local issue, as house prices are generally above average compared to other areas both within the East of England and nationally.



- In the near future, we will have a major new visitor attraction in the Center Parcs Holiday Village near Flitwick which is due to open in 2013, complementing the already well known and popular Woburn Safari Park & Abbey, Whipsnade Zoo and Dunstable Downs.
- Central Bedfordshire is home to world leading companies such as B/E Aerospace, Lockheed Martin, Nissan Technical Centre Europe and Jordans Cereals. The area also has high quality educational institutions including Cranfield University and the University of Bedfordshire
- More than 60 different languages are spoken at home by children in Central Bedfordshire schools. Around 7% of people living in the area are estimated to be from black and minority ethnic communities: the largest of these minority groups was Indian. ([checking this](#))

- Three quarters of people in Central Bedfordshire say they are Christians. Of the remainder, two thirds said they had no religious affiliation, and one third belonged to other religions.
- Overall health in Central Bedfordshire is better than the UK norm. However, there are significant health inequalities by location, gender, income and ethnicity in some parts of the area.
- In overall terms, none of our communities have high levels of deprivation, particularly when compared to other areas nationally. However, for some of the individual aspects of deprivation (such as education and crime) a small proportion of our communities do fall into the worst 10% nationally. The most deprived areas in Central Bedfordshire are in parts of Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Leighton-Linslade, Flitwick and Sandy.

Central Bedfordshire





Our vision

“Central Bedfordshire: delivering sustainable growth to ensure a green, prosperous and ambitious place for the benefit of all”

OR

“Globally connected at the heart of England; a green and ambitious place investing in quality for all to prosper”

By 2031, this will mean that:

- Central Bedfordshire is a highly attractive, well connected prime location for businesses to thrive in a global economy – generating numerous, wide ranging and sustainable job opportunities – with the area being renowned for innovative, high-tech, knowledge based industries.
- This business sector and a strong, diverse jobs market is supported by a strong and sustainable platform of education and access to a well skilled workforce, driving a culture of enterprise and success and motivating people to look forward to a positive future.
- Every child has the best possible start in life, and by the age of 19, has the knowledge, skills and qualifications to give them the best chance of success
- Investment to deliver the highest standards of design and planning has been made and our population has increased to over 320,000.
- 54,000 new homes have been built and we have improved our town centres, community facilities, roads and countryside.
- A choice of transport is available to take people to employment, education, healthcare, shops and other services, with less reliance on the car.
- People can easily access high quality leisure and cultural facilities, which are enjoyed by all.
- Our residents feel a real sense of belonging to their local community, and are actively involved in community life.
- People feel that Central Bedfordshire is a safe place.
- Our people are supported to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and there are fewer inequalities between communities
- Central Bedfordshire has earned a reputation as a great place to live, work and visit

Our themes and priorities

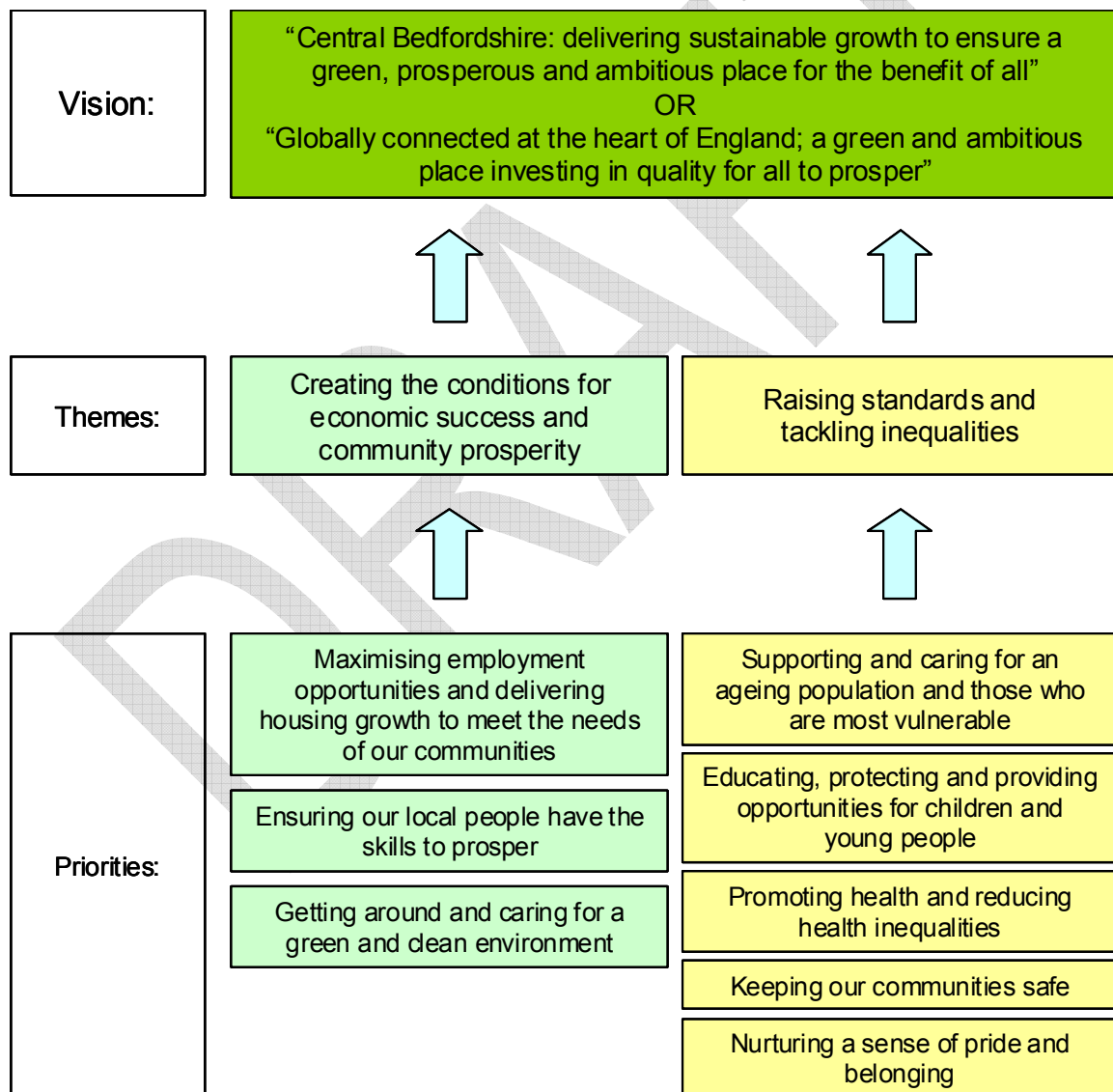
Our Sustainable Community Strategy has two key themes that underpin and support all of our priorities. These are:

- Creating the conditions for economic success and community prosperity
- Raising standards and tackling inequalities.

These will help us to deliver improvements to the places and people of Central Bedfordshire.

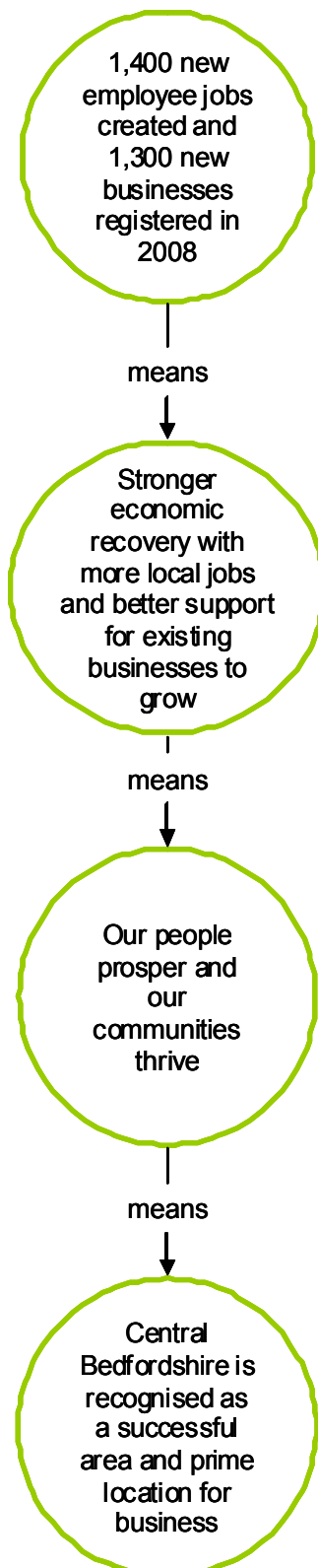
These support the eight priorities that are shown in detail on the following pages.

Note: The diagram below shows how the vision, themes and priorities are linked. We are developing a more visual version of this for the final strategy, which will show the themes supporting the priorities to achieve the vision (as a tree).



Maximising employment opportunities and delivering housing growth to meet the needs of our communities

Outcome: Central Bedfordshire is a highly attractive, well connected prime location for businesses to thrive in a global economy. More families are choosing Central Bedfordshire as a place to live in high quality housing, to work and enjoy.



Why it's important:

- Our population is going to continue to grow and we need to ensure we match this by attracting more employment opportunities into the area
- Our residents feel that job opportunities in Central Bedfordshire are limited, and that they can get higher salaries by working outside the area.
- Unemployment is still comparatively low in Central Bedfordshire, but the recession has hit some areas and people more than others. It is notably higher in Houghton Regis and Dunstable, and is also generally higher among young people.
- 54,000 more houses are planned across Central Bedfordshire between 2001 and 2031 to meet the housing needs of our growing population.
- Our town and villages centres are at the heart of our communities and support to help them grow and thrive is critical to delivering economic success and great places to live.

How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will:

- Deliver an economic vision and strategy to attract investment and deliver strong local employment growth.
- Actively promote Central Bedfordshire as 'Open for Business' through new marketing and branding material, securing investor interest.
- Listen to local businesses to identify their needs and develop a new Central Bedfordshire Business Engagement Plan to secure private sector leadership.
- Tackle youth unemployment by creating at least 90 new local jobs for young people targeted at unemployment hotspots in the area, and to work with partners to help people on out of work benefits into jobs.
- Support volunteering and social enterprises to flourish
- Complete town centre master-planning activities, setting out a framework to guide and encourage investment in our high streets; access to public services and better public spaces to meet, go shopping and enjoy.
- Help people to own their own home, by ensuring that at least 35% of our new homes are affordable.

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will:

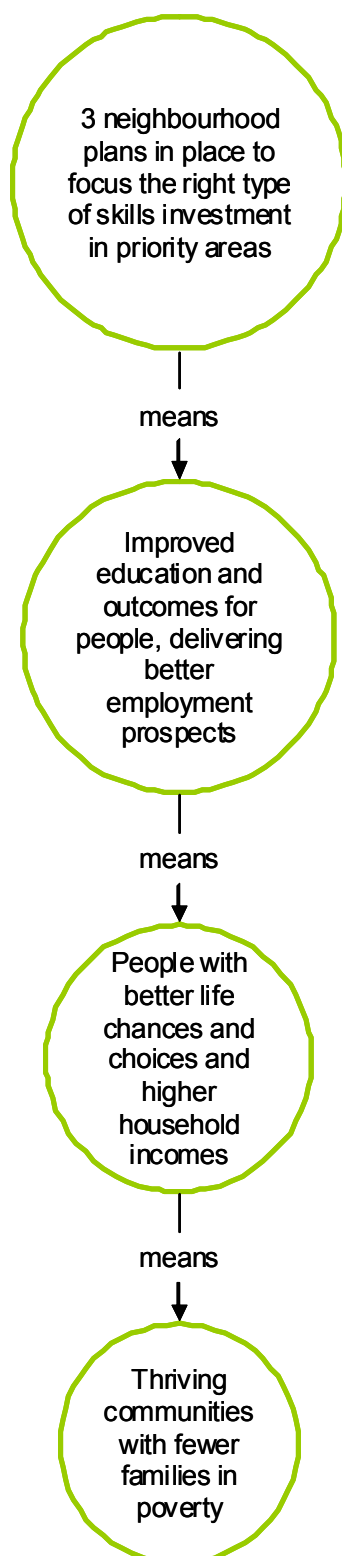
- Support higher rates of business start ups, through collaboration with local universities, business support partners and promoting self employment.
- Release more employment sites, providing thousands of jobs in a range of sectors
- Deliver improvements to Central Bedfordshire's existing market towns to meet the needs of our growing population.
- Encourage knowledge based, innovative companies to establish in our area in partnership with our universities.
- Ensure that all new homes meet new sustainable home standards

In the long term (10+ years) we will:

- Develop new industries and new jobs in response to the need for a low carbon economy, and help them to flourish.
- Deliver more than 23,000 new jobs by 2031
- Ensure that Central Bedfordshire is recognised as a high performing area and is meeting its full potential as a high skilled economy.
- Nurture vibrant and attractive town centres and villages with a strong sense of place and local character
- Promote Central Bedfordshire as a setting for businesses to start up and grow locally
- Encourage existing homes to fit adaptations to reduce our use of natural resources
- Encourage new industries to establish and develop in renewable and green technologies
- Better long term balance of higher paid jobs are available locally

Ensuring our local people have the skills to prosper

Outcome: Local people are skilled and have access to new employment opportunities in a diverse and prosperous local economy. The local workforce has a strong, diverse skills base and has been developed in line with the growth agenda



Why it's important:

- By investing in our people and their skills development we will build successful, sustainable communities.
- People in Central Bedfordshire are generally well educated; more than a quarter have degree-level qualifications. But still, around 11,000 people from the area have no qualifications at all.
- Not all of our school leavers are realising their potential. In parts of Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Biggleswade and Sandy, young people are much less likely to go on to Higher Education.
- We need to ensure that local people have the right skills to access the increased number of job opportunities, and that they continue to develop their skills to keep pace with new technological developments.
- Our businesses need to access a stream of appropriately skilled workers to adapt and grow.

How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will:

- Develop a new Employment and Skills Board delivering a Skills Strategy for people of all ages and deliver better outcomes for local people to access local jobs.
- Encourage more young people from our priority areas to continue in Further and Higher Education.
- Motivate and support all adults to gain their first qualification and to develop an appetite to gain more
- Establish what skills our businesses need, and shape our support to meet this need
- Improve the employment prospects and life chances for those not in employment, particularly in our priority neighbourhoods

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will:

- Ensure graduates staying or returning to Central Bedfordshire have the opportunity to work in high value knowledge based businesses.
- Further develop a culture of enterprise both through the education system and in our local communities.
- Take opportunities to extend our schools and colleges for the benefit of the whole community.
- Prioritise skills and training funding on providing routes to employment

In the long term (10+ years) we will:

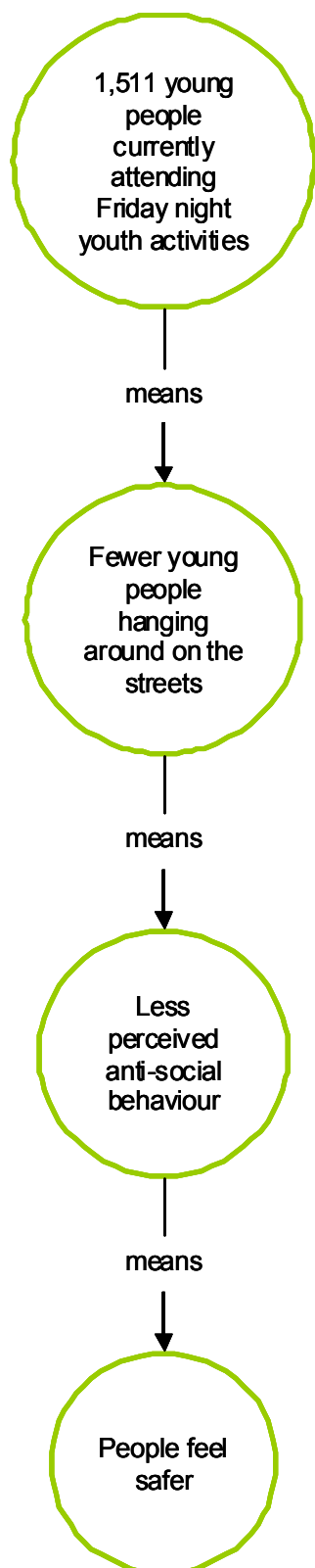
- Motivate our residents who have been out of employment in the long term to gain the skills to help them into the workplace.
- Increase the number of skilled people in Central Bedfordshire to

exceed the average for the greater South East area.

- Ensure that the local labour market meets the needs of local businesses
- Support local business resilience, growth and enterprise, including access to training
- Improve access to learning via Apprenticeships, Further Education and Higher Education
- Encourage higher level skills and new industries generating local jobs for all, in a well performing economy.

Keeping our communities safe

Outcome: Levels of crime and disorder and antisocial behaviour are reduced, along with the harm caused by the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances. People are less afraid of crime and have increased confidence in the safety of their communities.



Why it's important:

- In general, crime in Central Bedfordshire area is lower than the national/regional (?) average. ([Checking this statement.](#)) However, despite a decrease in serious acquisitive crime (this relates to domestic burglary, robbery and vehicle crime) over the past year, it is still higher than in other similar areas.
- Nine in ten people in Central Bedfordshire feel safe outside in their local area during the day, but this drops to just over half after dark.
- Anti-social behaviour is not perceived to be a big problem. However, when asked our residents say that their biggest issues are teenagers hanging around the streets; and vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles.
- In 2009, seven people were killed on Central Bedfordshire's roads, with a further 851 people injured, including 128 seriously.
- It is estimated that 10% of offenders are responsible for 50% of all crime. A key issue is to identify and deal with our persistent and other priority offenders.
- Substance misuse is an issue across our area, in terms of the night time economy, public order, binge drinking and the levels of criminal damage and anti social behaviour.
- Domestic violence accounts for around a quarter of all violent crimes reported to the police, with more than 2,000 incidents reported in Central Bedfordshire, and a high proportion of repeat incidents.
- As with many areas nationally, fear of crime is disproportionate to actual crime levels and activities in place, and increasing the public confidence in how local agencies are working together to improve the area is a priority for Central Bedfordshire.

“Crime rate is low compared to some places - people feel safe”

How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will:

- Implement the Integrated Offender Management Programme within the area, to assist our work with persistent and other priority offenders
- Provide support for offenders, alongside training for accommodation providers, to help secure suitable housing and reduce the likelihood of tenancy agreements being breached.
- Carry out visits to licensed premises across Central Bedfordshire combining the resources of various agencies to check, monitor and review licensees, particularly in relation to the sale of age restricted products.

- Set up more intervention and treatment programmes to help those adults and young people who are addicted to drugs and alcohol
- Continue to support No Cold Calling Zones, ensuring our most vulnerable communities are kept safe.
- Review the Domestic Abuse Strategy and the Domestic Abuse Action Plan to ensure they drive essential activity in this area ([Reviewing this wording](#))
- Promote and provide activities and information for all children and young people and their families, ensuring that the hard to reach and those with disabilities can take part in mainstream activities.
- Continue to reduce road accidents at known accident hot spots and among vulnerable road user groups.

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will:

- Use the findings of the Place Survey to respond to issues identified by our communities
- Support offenders by working with accommodation providers to secure a greater range of properties for those released from prison and moving on from Probation approved premises, ensuring faster access to suitable housing located closer to the relevant support services.
- Design new estates to reduce the likelihood of crime and anti-social behaviour, and to encourage safe routes to cycle and walk

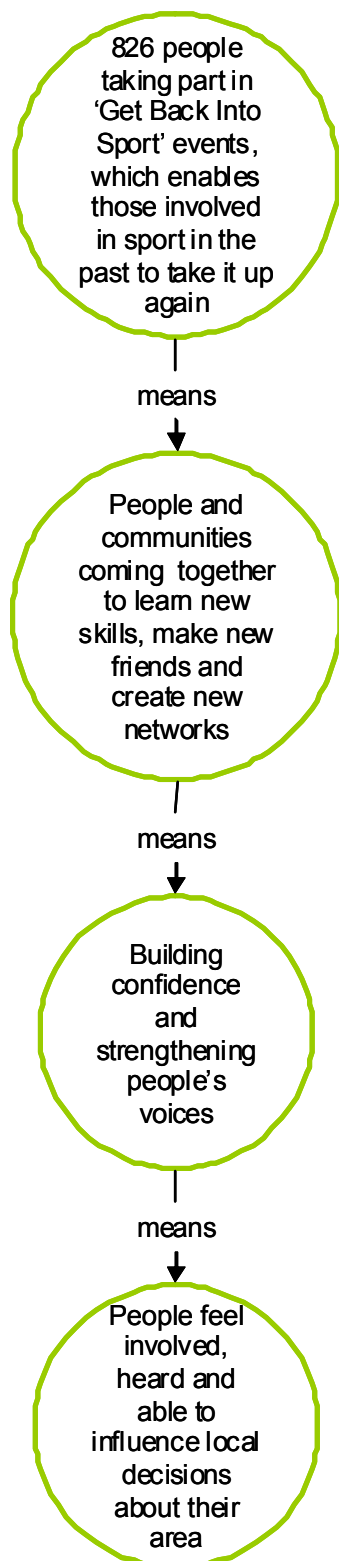
In the long term (10+ years) we will:

- Reduce re-offending, with a particular focus on the small number of offenders who commit most crime in our communities
- Reduce offending and the harm caused in our communities through substance misuse, including drugs and alcohol
- Reduce crime, particularly serious acquisitive crime, which includes burglary, vehicle crime and robbery
- Reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour by co-ordinating a multi-agency approach with partners
- Reduce repeat incidents of domestic abuse by providing advisory and professional support services for all those affected by, or at risk of domestic abuse
- Make our roads safer through engineering, education and enforcement to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads.



Nurturing a sense of pride and belonging

Outcome: Vibrant, strong, cohesive and sustainable communities 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.



Why it's important:

- Many Central Bedfordshire residents do feel a strong sense of belonging and that they can influence local decisions, yet almost a quarter said they would like to be more involved in local decision making. One in five of our residents volunteers on a regular basis.
- We need to break the poverty cycle. People living in lower income families face significant difficulties that impact on their health, wellbeing, relationships and life opportunities. Just over a quarter of children in Central Bedfordshire live in low income families, rising to almost half in parts of Houghton Regis and Dunstable. A child born into a low income family is more likely to die from an accident in childhood, have low educational achievement, turn to crime, and as an adult live and raise their own children in poverty.
- A quarter of adults in Central Bedfordshire achieve the recommended levels of physical activity, higher than the average for England. Around half of all adults in the area use a public library and a similar number visit a museum or gallery.

How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will:

- Enrich people's lives by encouraging participation in regular volunteering; sport and physical activity; engagement in the arts and cultural activities
- Promote active community engagement by providing opportunities for everyone to take part in community life; promoting and developing a thriving voluntary and community sector; enabling more people to influence decisions in their locality if they wish, and empowering and supporting people to manage their local community facilities.

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will:

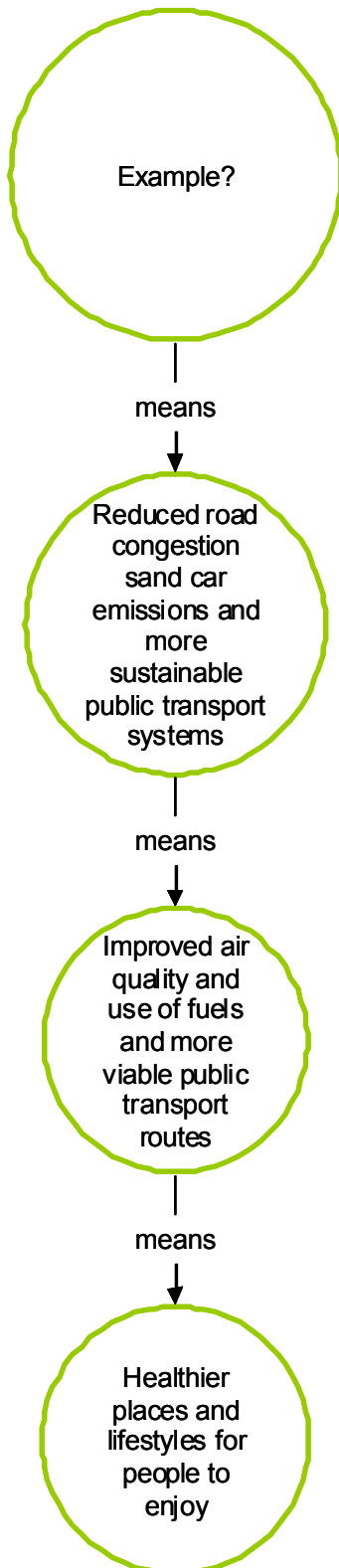
- Lessen inequality by reducing the number of people living in poverty; providing easily accessible, high quality welfare advice and information services and encouraging creativity and lifelong learning.

In the long term (10+ years) we will:

- Ensure that housing and economic growth is accompanied by adequate social infrastructure and supports the development of strong and vibrant communities.

Getting around and caring for a green and clean environment

Outcome: Central Bedfordshire is recognised as a well connected location where people have a good choice of different ways they can travel. Our natural environment and green spaces are an important part of our local character; people are supported to live sustainably and to make the most of their local area.



Why it's important:

- Our residents are particularly proud of our rural communities and open spaces, and consider them to be one of the key benefits of living in Central Bedfordshire. We need to protect, care and improve our green environment, heritage, arts and culture.
- Central Bedfordshire has a large number of listed building and sites of historical interest. (How many / examples?)
- Our residents say we need to improve our roads, and businesses need a reliable road network. Accessibility in the area is generally good, although some rural areas do have problems of poor access, and at peak times our roads are congested.
- Air quality is poor in some areas, particularly in some of our town centres and alongside our major road corridors.
- The impacts of climate change in the area will include increased pressure on water resources and increased risk of subsidence. We need to ensure that growth in the area responds to these impacts, particularly where natural resources are limited.
- Central Bedfordshire's carbon footprint is lower than the UK average, but still four times that of developing countries.
- Almost half of all waste produced in Central Bedfordshire is recycled or composted, but the remainder still goes to landfill.
- Investment is needed to improve our transport system, community facilities and green and public spaces.

How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will:

- Reduce the amount of waste we produce, and maximise opportunities to reuse, recycle and recover energy from our waste
- Provide additional leisure and educational opportunities in Central Bedfordshire
- Complete and see benefits from improvements to our road networks, including:
 - A421 dual carriageway to the M1 junction 13.
 - M1 motorway junction 10 to 13 widening scheme.
 - Junction 11a development and the A5 trunk road to M1 motorway link road.
- Begin initial works on the Luton Dunstable Guided Bus Way and promote a wide range of schemes across the area to encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport.

- Deliver a road to rail freight interchange ([reviewing this wording](#))
- Increase access to our countryside and recreation activities and extend green spaces alongside our sites of housing growth
- Find new viable uses for our listed buildings and sites of historical interest to keep our heritage and culture alive
- Encourage people and businesses to buy and supply locally

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will:

- Deliver an energy from waste solution
- Ensure that accessibility is considered at all stages of the development and planning process, and that new developments have good access to a range of services
- Support our residents to reduce their household energy costs and live more sustainable and active lifestyles.
- Develop a comprehensive cycling network across Central Bedfordshire connecting our communities to local facilities and to national and regional cycle routes.
- Complete the Woodside road connection in Houghton Regis and detrunk the A5 in Dunstable
- Strong evidence of reducing our carbon footprint

In the long term (10+ years) we will:

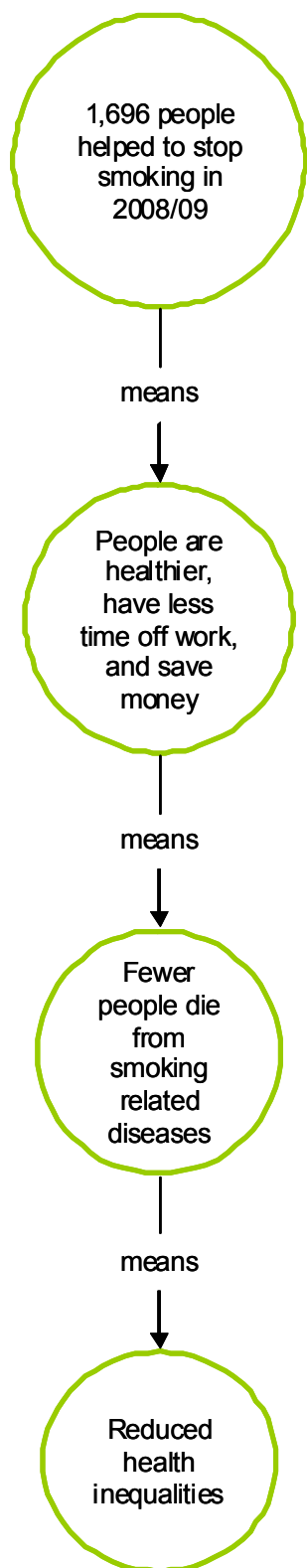
- Protect and enhance our biodiversity, landscape, historical environment, green spaces and paths
- Ensure that all housing developments are of a high standard, are energy efficient, and consider the effects of climate change
- Enable people to get about easily with minimum impact on our environment.
- Support action to create a healthy environment, with reduced air pollution and contamination;
- Adapt to the effects and limit the causes of climate change and extreme weather conditions
- Reduce levels of congestion and air pollution due to the increases in traffic levels.
- Deliver the north Luton bypass linking the A6 to the A505.
- Design and build new neighbourhoods with the necessary local facilities, designed to encourage sustainable methods of transport with less reliance on the car.

[Consider adding in from LAA:](#)

- [School transport](#)
- [Biodiversity sites](#)

Promoting health and reducing health inequalities

Outcome: Overall health and well-being is good; there are fewer health inequalities across our communities and people are supported to have healthier lifestyles. Patients have more choice and access to high quality services based on their needs and preferences.



Why it's important:

- Overall health in people in Central Bedfordshire is good. The main causes of early deaths (for people aged under 75) are cancer (43%) and circulatory diseases, including heart disease and stroke (23%). This is in line with the national picture.
- Although generally affluent, Central Bedfordshire does have differences in health outcomes. Men living in the most deprived areas can expect to live five years less than men in the least deprived areas.
- These differences in our health are most likely to be seen in areas of high deprivation and also among vulnerable groups of people, such as homeless people, the prison population, looked after children, people with disabilities, people with mental health conditions, ethnic minorities and gypsies and travellers.

How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will:

- Ensure a healthy start to life by increasing access to high quality antenatal and postnatal care
- Support more people to stop smoking
- Deliver NHS Health Checks to people aged between 40 and 74
- Increase the uptake of breast, cervical and bowel cancer screening
- Support more people to be more active and eat healthily

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will:

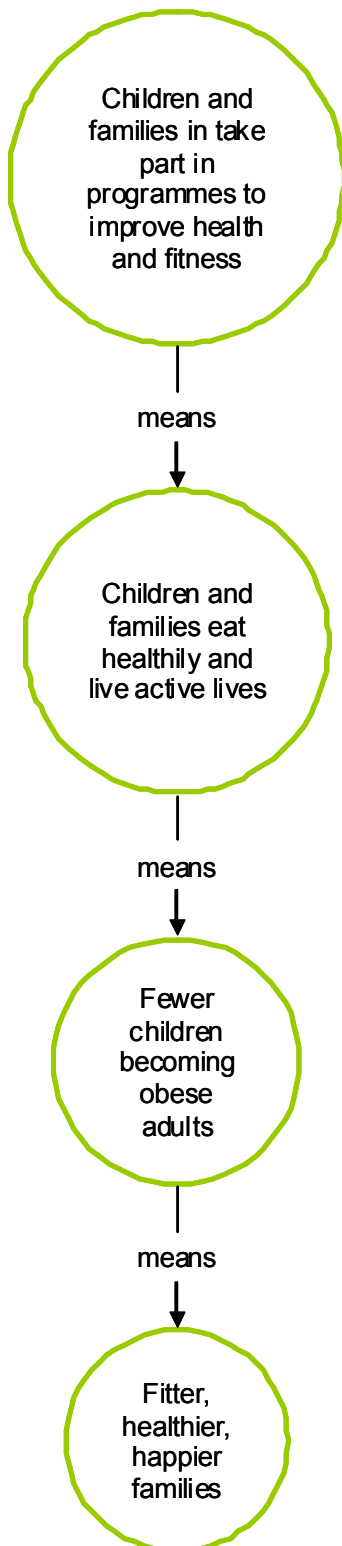
- Reduce the number of those admitted to hospital through alcohol related illness
- Further strengthen Primary Care services to ensure care closer to home
- Improve prevention and early detection for people at risk of cardiovascular disease (heart disease / stroke / diabetes), cancer and mental illness including dementia, and ensure high quality treatment once diagnosed.

In the long term (10+ years) we will:

- Reduce differences in our health by focusing on people in areas and communities with the poorest health

Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people

Outcome: Every child in Central Bedfordshire enjoys their childhood and has the best possible start in life. Every child does well at school, makes friends and builds strong relationships. By the age of 19, every young person has the knowledge, skills and qualifications that will give them the best chance of success, so that they are prepared to take their full place in society as a happy, healthy, contributing and confident citizen.



Why it's important:

- In 2009 GCSE results for Central Bedfordshire pupils were the same as the average for schools in England. Compared to our statistical neighbours performance is relatively low at GCSE level and results have not risen at the same rate as other schools nationally.
- A quarter of 10-11 year olds in Central Bedfordshire are overweight, including one in seven who are obese. Research shows that obesity in children leads to obesity in adulthood and is a significant in the development of conditions such as diabetes and heart disease in later life.
- The percentage of young people aged 16-18 who are not in education, employment or training is around 6% in Central Bedfordshire. Non-participation in education, employment or training after compulsory education is a major predictor of later unemployment, low income, depression, involvement in crime and poor mental health.

How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will:

- Focus on delivering this outcome by strengthening the Children's Trust, a partnership made up of all the key local agencies
- Bring together teams in local areas made up of staff from the NHS, the Council, the Police, the voluntary sector and other partner organisations so that they can provide easy access to support that children and families need.

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will:

- Ensure that schools develop and implement plans for children and young people to move smoothly between schools and to develop the skills, qualities, competencies and capabilities necessary for a 21st century society and economy.
- Offer a wide variety of services for children and young people in local communities. Health, education and social care services will be set up as multi-agency teams using seamless systems and supporting families.

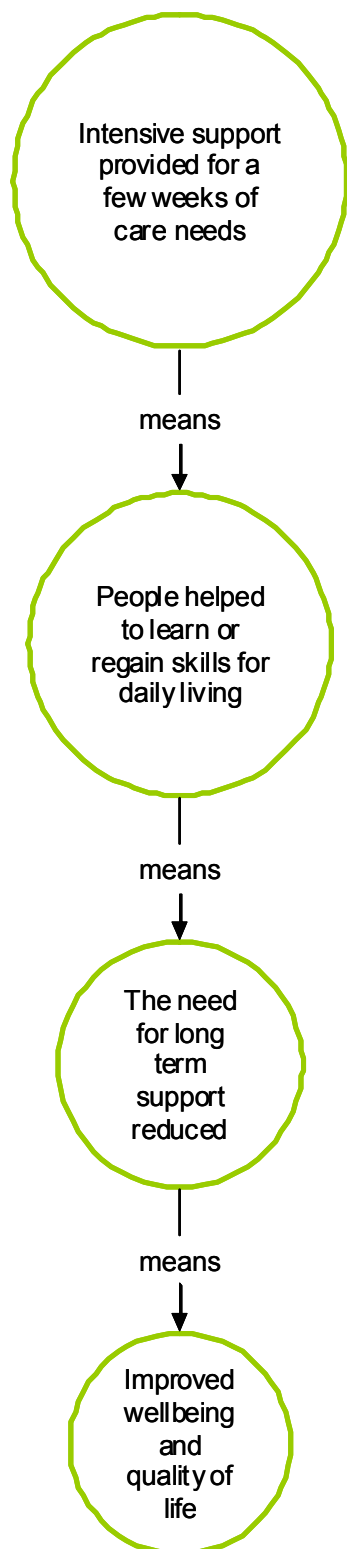
In the long term (10+ years) we will:

- Support children and young people to lead healthy lifestyles, have good mental and emotional health and be able to make responsible decisions in relation to drugs, alcohol and sexual health

- Protect children and young people from harm by providing a coordinated and effective safeguarding process
- Transform teaching and learning and strengthen leadership to ensure that every school and early years' setting is at least good
- Work with employers, 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 them with integrated support

Supporting and caring for an ageing population and those who are most vulnerable

Outcome: Older people, carers and those who are vulnerable feel valued as citizens within their communities, are safe and in good health with choice and independence and have equal and timely access to high quality, health and social care services.



Why it's important:

- We have an ageing population that is expected to increase significantly, with more people needing care and support. The number of people aged over 65 is projected to increase by over 50% by the year 2021, from 35,900 to 55,000. An even higher rate of increase of almost 65%, is projected for those aged over 75.
- With an ageing population, the number of people with dementia is also expected to increase significantly, as dementia predominantly affects people aged over 65. There are currently around 2,400 people with dementia in Central Bedfordshire and this is projected to double by 2028.
- Three quarters of people in Central Bedfordshire own their own homes. A significant proportion of these are households with people of pensionable age, who are likely to need care and support as they get older and wish to remain in their own homes.
- The number of people acting as unpaid carers is expected to increase as the population ages, by 55% in 2025 from an estimated 3,900 unpaid carers in 2008. [\(Add numerical comparison\)](#)
- Poverty among older people is a particular issue in some parts of Central Bedfordshire, affecting almost a third of older people in parts of Sandy, Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Flitwick. Some households also suffer from fuel poverty.
- The number of people with a mental health condition in Central Bedfordshire is predicted to rise, with about 1 in 6 adults experiencing a depressive or anxiety related illness. This is primarily as a result of our changing population structure, with greater numbers of older people.

How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will:

- Focus on prevention and early intervention, ensuring that good information, through signposting, advice and advocacy is provided to promote independence
- Ensure people with care needs are safeguarded from abuse
- Introduce an Enabling Homecare Service so that people are helped to remain independent and have a better quality of life.
- Promote the development of care packages that are tailored to people's needs and preferences.
- Provide integrated care and support to people with dementia and their carers, including raising awareness and understanding of dementia.

- Enable greater access to [telecare](#), which allows support to be provided
- Ensure people who are funding their own care are not disadvantaged and are supported to access appropriate and timely services

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will:

- Ensure a seamless approach to care services through [integrated intermediate care services](#).
- Develop and enable access to services which support people who own and live in their own homes.
- Ensure carers feel valued and supported and able to continue to provide care even during complex [difficult?](#) times.
- Support the voluntary sector to develop a wider range of preventative services
- Increase access to ~~reablement~~ [the services that](#) to help people regain the skills necessary for daily living
- [Develop a shared vision for mental health services that enables us to work with our partners to support people with mental health conditions.](#)
- Support people with learning disabilities to get paid employment and access to meaningful training to support this, particularly for people aged 14 and over to prepare for adult life.
- Work closely with service users and carers to develop services which are tailored to their needs.
- Work with our partners to ensure disabled people get access to work to help them maintain independent living.

In the long term (10+ years) we will:

- Ensure a range of personalised support packages are in place to enable people with care needs to stay in their own homes for as long as possible
- Develop options for supported housing for older people including extra-care housing
- Put people more in control of their own health and care and improve options for self directed care
- Drive up standards of care whilst providing people with more choice over how their care needs are met
- Support vulnerable people to achieve and maintain independent living, including access to work and employment.
- Work with the voluntary and community sector to build capacity for support networks in communities.
- Support and develop services offered through service user groups, self help groups and the voluntary and community sector.
- Develop a broader range of supported housing options for older people and vulnerable groups.

How we will report on progress and delivery

Central Bedfordshire Together has agreed on the shared vision and priorities set out in this strategy. All of the partners are committed to working together to provide the best possible outcomes for our residents.

This strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be refreshed every three years.

Our five Statutory and Thematic Partnerships will develop action plans to set out how they will achieve each of the priorities. These action plans will be monitored on a quarterly basis through the Central Bedfordshire Together Board. We will also produce an annual statement to local communities reporting our performance against our priorities.

