

# Central Bedfordshire Council

Executive

5 February 2019

## Developing a Vision for Central Bedfordshire

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**Report of:** Cllr James Jamieson, Leader of Council  
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**Responsible Director(s):** Richard Carr, Chief Executive  
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**This report relates to a decision that is Key**

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### Purpose of this report

The report sets out the intention to develop a long-term (20+ years) Vision for Central Bedfordshire as a place which will, in turn inform the Council's next 5-year plan and, also provide a framework for future decision-making.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

- 1. endorse the development of a long-term (20+ years) Vision for Central Bedfordshire as a place which will inform the Council's next strategic 5-year plan and provide a framework for future decision making.**

### Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

1. This report has not been discussed at Overview & Scrutiny Committee at this stage. However, it is envisaged that Overview & Scrutiny will be engaged as the proposed Vision is developed throughout 2019.

### Issues

2. Now is an opportune time to shape the long-term future of Central Bedfordshire; to think about what we want for the place and the communities that live and work within it.

The Vision for the area would seek to build on the core strengths that Central Bedfordshire has, what makes it attractive and what can be done to make it more attractive, how communities can be built, opportunities that we can foresee and how Central Bedfordshire is positioned to benefit from future trends such as technology and demography – both those we can anticipate, and those we cannot.

3. Central Bedfordshire's strategic location at the heart of the Oxford – Cambridge Growth corridor will see not only new homes and population growth, but a significantly changing demography and way of living. It is therefore critical to understand the challenges and opportunities this creates.
4. The growth in homes, people and jobs will need to be underpinned by investment, and a long-term (20+ years) Vision will be critical in capturing our ambitions and aspirations for the area and making the case for that investment. That is investment for tomorrow, not for the past.
5. Central Bedfordshire Council is proposing to adopt a fresh approach to developing a Vision, that challenges current thinking, considers future societal, lifestyle and technical changes to name a few. The development of the Vision is proposed to be led by Central Bedfordshire Council as the "Place Lead" but seeks to work with key stakeholders and partners from the outset and throughout the process using a variety of different approaches to engage residents, building on existing activities where possible and staff.
6. A recent Local Government Association (LGA) peer review of Central Bedfordshire Council confirmed the development of the Vision as a critical short-term corporate priority. It is anticipated the 20+ year Vision will inform future decision-making for the area as well as the Council's next five-year strategic plan.
7. Public services are under significant pressure with increasing demand and significant resource constraints. Councils and public services of the future need to shift towards a more place-based, outcome driven model of working together with residents to improve outcomes, manage demand more effectively, deliver infrastructure and generate new income sources. The future cannot be about more publically delivered services, but about delivering better lives for residents by reducing need, increasing opportunity and self resilience.
8. Intervening earlier and preventing problems before they escalate will become increasingly important in both responding to resource pressures but also to enable local communities to fulfill their potential.
9. It is proposed that the Vision, whilst long-term and aspirational, and by necessity flexible, will also inform the next iteration of the Council's 5-year strategic plan. To build on the Vision and achieving its objectives will need a strategy that covers the three key themes of place, people and the economy and will provide a strategic decision-making framework to prioritise finite resources to deliver a shared ambition with our partners for the area.
10. The development of a future Vision will build on existing data, intelligence and insight as well as existing strategies.

11. The aim and benefits of a Vision are:

- To create a shared Vision that is a statement of our aspirations for our place, people and the economy, which improves the lives of all our residents, communities and businesses.
- To unite stakeholders through a shared sense of direction.
- To guide future strategy and policy developments and investment decisions by the Council and partners to enable more effective delivery of integrated interventions that better serve the current and future needs of residents, communities and businesses.

### **Options for consideration**

12. **Do nothing** - Doing nothing would mean that Central Bedfordshire Council would not have a clear and comprehensive view of future opportunities and challenges, and future planning would be more reactive than proactive. It would also mean that the Council has chosen to disregard one of the key recommendations of its recent Peer Review.
13. **Develop a Central Bedfordshire wide strategic Vision** - As the “Place Lead” Central Bedfordshire Council has a significant opportunity to work with partners to outline future priorities. This approach would ensure Central Bedfordshire Council has a clear and comprehensive view of the future and can utilise the process in parallel to informing the next iteration of the 5-year strategic plan, influence government, secure external investment and be used to inform future decision-making.

### **Reason/s for decision**

14. The development of a Vision for Central Bedfordshire is deemed critical to shaping our future ambitions for the area and responds directly to the recommendations made through the Peer Challenge.

### **Council Priorities**

15. The development of a Central Bedfordshire wide Vision will help inform future Council priorities.

### **Corporate Implications**

### **Legal Implications**

16. There are no direct legal implications at this stage.

## Financial and Risk Implications

17. The anticipated costs of creating the proposed Vision will be contained within existing budgets.

## Equalities Implications

18. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
19. Good planning and effective regeneration can improve environments and opportunities for communities experiencing disadvantage. Planning which does not adequately engage with, or consider the needs of local communities is unlikely to improve their life chances and may further entrench area-based disadvantage.
20. Consideration will be given in the development of the shared Vision to the requirements of equality legislation as part of local authorities' practices.

## Conclusion and next Steps

21. The Executive is asked to consider the recommendation of developing a shared Vision for Central Bedfordshire described in Option 2 (detailed in paragraph 13).
22. The next steps will be to further develop the work programme and commission external support as appropriate.
23. Stakeholder engagement will take place from June to September 2019 with a final draft Vision envisaged for Executive approval by December 2019.

## Appendices

None

## Background Papers

None

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