

DRAFT

*Creating Central Bedfordshire
Implementation Strategy*

1 April 2008

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1 Context

- 1.01 On 6 March 2008 the Secretary of State announced that the structure of local government in Bedfordshire would be replaced with two new unitary councils with effect from 1 April 2009. This Implementation Strategy is primarily concerned with Central Bedfordshire but is also focused on the successful creation of both new authorities.
- 1.02 The review period naturally saw different opinions about the best way forward in Bedfordshire. Now that the decision has been made we need to get on with the considerable task of implementation. A protocol for future joint working is at Annex A.
- 1.03 The December 2007 proposals for Central Bedfordshire set out the way in which Central Bedfordshire council could operate and how it was proposed to go about creating the new authority. This Implementation Strategy sets out in greater detail how we will achieve a seamless transition to the new structure of local government in our area.
- 1.04 The area to be covered by the new council will be coterminous with the current boundaries of Mid and South Beds. The services provided by the new council will be those currently provided by the two district councils and those of Bedfordshire County Council relevant to the geographical area. On the establishment of Central Bedfordshire, the two districts and the County Council will cease to exist. There will be a separate unitary council for the area of Bedford Borough. A key feature of the proposals for these two new unitary councils is that they will be complementary.
- 1.05 Central Bedfordshire will serve a population of 250,000 growing rapidly to 300,000 due to in-migration. We have asked that the Boundary Committee for England should carry out an electoral review in the area, but pending that review Central Bedfordshire will have 66 Members based on existing County electoral divisions.
- 1.06 Elections to both new unitary councils will take place in 2009. The contemporaneous nature of the elections is vital in order to ensure a seamless transition from the current two-tier system of local government across the county area.

2 What Will Success Look Like?

- 2.01 The LGR process nationally makes clear the Secretary of State's requirement that **new** councils are created. In Central Bedfordshire's case we have not only this expectation but also our own vision to create something fresh and exciting.
- 2.02 Our key implementation objective is to manage the transition so that any disruption to service delivery is minimised.

- 2.03 Success will be demonstrated if, on vesting day in April 2009, all staff arrive for work in the new authority knowing what is expected of them and are equipped to deliver services to our customers. That means, for example, that customer enquiries are answered correctly and promptly, IT systems work, contractors deliver their services and the right support is in place for vulnerable people. For our employees that deliver these services we will make sure that they understand what the new authority expects of them and that they are properly trained and equipped.

3 Key Principles

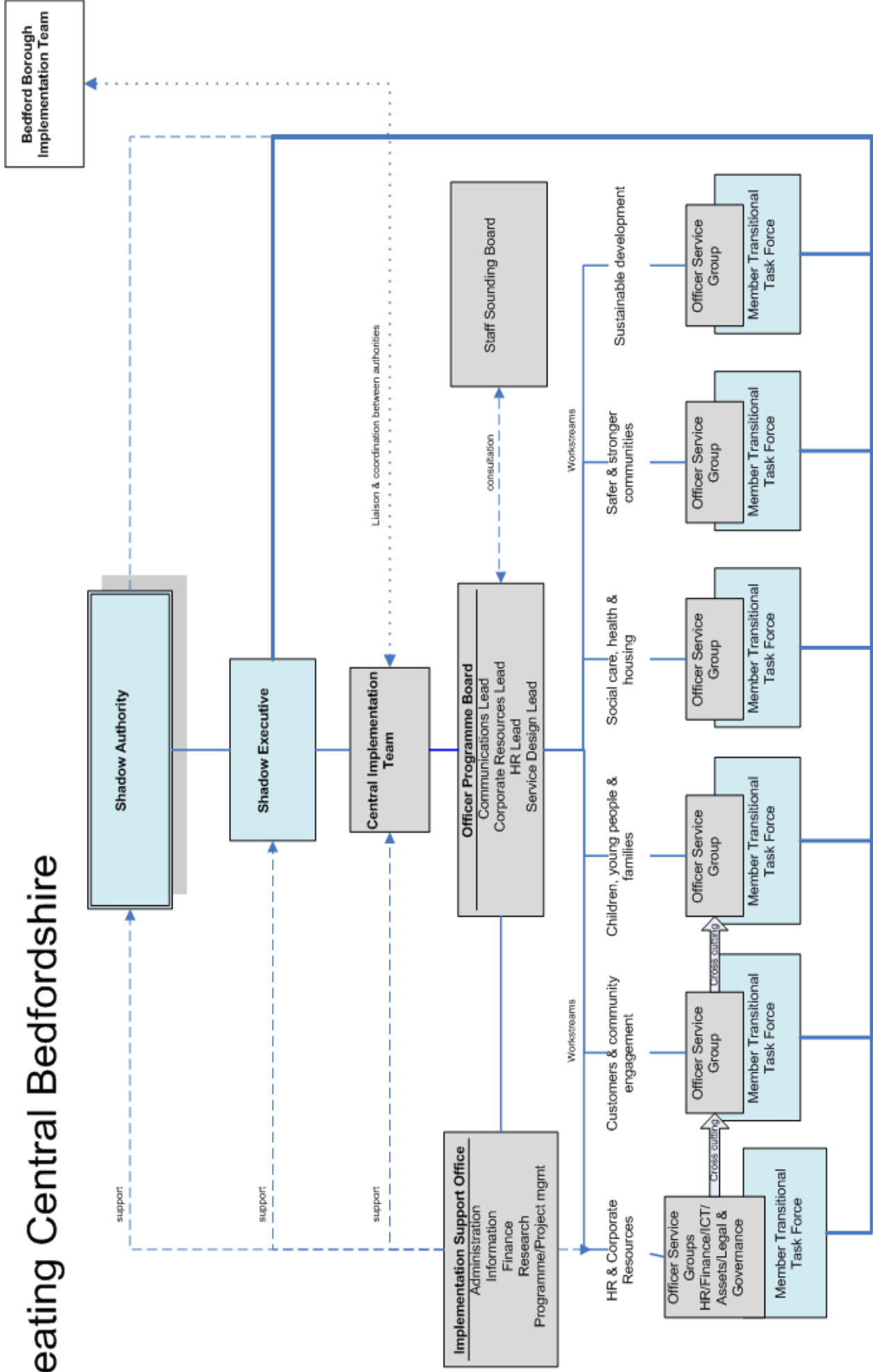
- 3.01 Our implementation strategy is based on the following principles:
- i. a clear and effective transitional governance structure;
 - ii. rigorous programme and project management;
 - iii. facilitating desired outcomes;
 - iv. appropriately resourced;
 - v. making sure that day to day service delivery does not suffer as a result of Members and officers working on transition;
 - vi. services are transformed during and after the transition period so that processes are improved and efficiencies are realised;
 - vii. communication with and involvement of communities, staff and stakeholders is effective throughout;
 - viii. the time available means that we cannot achieve everything by vesting day, therefore we will focus during the transition period on what is essential.

4 Governance Structure in the Transition Period

- 4.01 We will put in place the Member and officer groups shown in Figure 1. The roles and responsibilities of the various groups within the governance structure are set out later in this chapter and in Annex B.
- 4.02 A guide to decision making within the structure is set out in Annex C
- 4.03 One of the critical tasks during the transition period will be the disaggregation of Bedfordshire County Council's services, resources and assets. This process will involve joint working between the Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough implementation teams. No formal structure between the councils is intended at this stage, instead it is intended to reach agreement by negotiation between the two teams.
- 4.04 As far as possible it is intended to staff the Central Bedfordshire transitional governance structure from the existing officer complement in the County and district councils. There may, however, be some gaps in terms of capacity and specialist skills to fill all the roles. We envisage the need for additional support in programme and project management, specialist service advice, culture change, logistics, communications, asset management and backfilling. It must also be emphasised that the proposed structure will evolve over the time.

Fig. 1

Creating Central Bedfordshire



4.1 Shadow Authority

4.11 The Shadow Authority will hold its first meeting within 14 days of the Implementation Order coming into effect. It will consist of all the existing members of Mid Beds, South Beds and County Councillors for the divisions covering these districts.

4.12 The key roles of the Shadow Authority will be to:

- agree the budget for Central Bedfordshire
- determine members allowances
- agree the constitution for Central Bedfordshire
- agree the code of conduct for Central Bedfordshire.

4.13 In the event that there is a gap between vesting day on 1 April 2009 and elections to the new council, the Implementation Order stipulates that the Shadow Authority members will remain in office for the period concerned.

4.2 Shadow Executive

4.21 The Shadow Executive is the principal decision making body for the creation of Central Bedfordshire from the passing of the Implementation Order until four days after the elections to the new council. Its duties are set out in the Implementation Order and these include: to prepare for and facilitate the economic, effective, efficient and timely transfer to the new authority of its property, rights and liabilities and to prepare and keep under review an implementation plan.

4.22 It will comprise 12 existing Members, four each from Bedfordshire County, Mid Beds and South Beds Councils and will be chaired by the Leader of Mid Beds as one of the proposing authorities.

4.23 Individual Members serving on the Shadow Executive will support each Transitional Task Force (TTFs – see 4.4 below). This arrangement will provide a robust link between the TTFs and the Shadow Executive.

4.24 The key roles of the Shadow Executive include:

- executive decision making
- consideration of disposal of assets by authorities about to be abolished.

4.3 Central Implementation Team (CIT)

4.31 The Central Implementation Team will be comprised of officers from the three councils and will support the work of the Shadow Executive. It will be led by one of the District Chief Executives. Representatives of key local partners will also be invited to join the CIT as appropriate.

- 4.32 There will need to be effective liaison between the Implementation Teams for Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough concerning the disaggregation of County Council assets, liabilities and staff. Accordingly, the Chief Executive of Bedford Borough Council, or his representative, will be invited to join meetings of the CIT as appropriate. A reciprocal arrangement will apply concerning the Bedford Implementation Team.
- 4.33 It will be important to ensure that local partnerships are involved in the transition. It will be the responsibility of the CIT to ensure that all key partners (including public, private and third sectors) are given opportunities to influence the CIT's recommendations.
- 4.34 The key roles of the CIT are:
- focus on the vision and what success looks like;
 - ensure the timely implementation of the transition programme;
 - conflict resolution;
 - political interface;
 - talking to staff and having a high profile;
 - stakeholder engagement;
 - determining priorities;
 - managing relations with Bedford Borough Council;
 - gather information on all existing LSPs and other major partnerships;
 - identify statutory and framework guidelines on LAAs, LSPs and other key partnerships, and highlight any major issues;
 - identify priorities in all Sustainable Community Strategies and indicate matches and differences, assessing them against the new unitary authority boundaries, vision, strategic influences, new indicators set and likely needs, and ensuring early consideration of options within existing LSPs to enable transition to the new LAA;
 - draw up a plan for consulting on new LAA and Sustainable Community Strategy priorities;
 - identify external funding for partnerships and related issues.

4.4 Transitional Task Forces (TTFs)

- 4.41 Six TTFs will be established to carry out research, policy preparation and challenge. They will make recommendations to the Shadow Executive. The TTFs will be Member bodies appropriately supported by officers.
- 4.42 The TTFs will mirror the proposed Central Bedfordshire portfolios and their responsibilities set out in the December 2007 submission in figure 2f on page 32.
- 4.43 A member of the Shadow Executive will act both as champion for the services covered by the TTF and as conduit between the TTF and the Shadow Executive. That Shadow Executive Member, however, may not necessarily chair the TTF

- 4.44 The TTFs will be small groups of six to eight Members (plus the Shadow Executive lead) to ensure maximum focus and flexibility to respond to changing demands. The TTFs will focus on those areas where disaggregation and merger issues are likely to be greatest. This model would require a further 36 to 48 Members (6 to 8 x 6) to become significantly involved in the transition.
- 4.45 The role of the TTFs will be complementary to the decision making function of the Shadow Executive.
- 4.46 The scope of the work to be carried out by the TTFs will be defined by the Shadow Executive, although the manner in which they carry out that work will be a matter for the TTFs. Any departure from the scope will only be possible with the written agreement of the Shadow Executive. Draft terms of reference for a TTF are included at Annex B1.

4.5 Officer Programme Board (OPB)

- 4.51 The OPB will co-ordinate the overall programme and ensure its smooth running. The Board will report to and carry out work on behalf of the CIT.
- 4.52 Initially there will be five permanent members of the OPB who collectively will look across the entire programme. Some of these permanent roles may need external resources to be brought in. The Board will be chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive of Mid Beds District Council. The Board may make requests to the CIT for additional specialist assistance.
- 4.53 Officers serving on the OPB may be seconded from constituent authorities and therefore appropriate arrangements may need to be made to cover their existing workloads.
- 4.54 The key roles of the Board are:
- co-ordination and overall planning of the transition programme;
 - give confidence to the CIT over the timely implementation of the transition programme;
 - servicing and advising the Shadow Executive and Central Implementation Team;
 - advising Chief Executives, members and officers in existing authorities;
 - preparation of policy and procedure papers as directed by the CIT;
 - awareness raising, such as arranging events and preparation of presentations;
 - in consultation with the CIT, responding to DCLG and Government Office requests;
 - collating monitoring and progress reports on all workstreams;
 - maintaining and reporting progress on issue and risk registers for the programme;
 - identification and resolution of interdependencies between workstreams;

- identifying and acting on any projects which do not fit with the strategic vision or core principles of the new organisation;
- utilise programme and project management methodologies and best practices aligned to the new council's specific needs;
- monitor project and programme close-downs and ensure that follow-on plans are in place.

4.55 The OPB will create an Implementation Support Office (ISO) under the leadership of the OPB Chair (see Annex B12).

4.6 Officer Service Groups

4.61 The roles of all the various Officer Service Groups are set out in Annex B.

4.62 Separate guidance (including ways of working and business planning) will be produced by the OPB so that the OSGs go about their work in a co-ordinated manner.

4.63 A project manager will be allocated to each OSG. Each OSG should appoint an external expert to provide challenge and introduce ideas from elsewhere.

5 Risk Management

5.01 An initial risk register forms Appendix B of the December 2007 submission to DCLG. That register is a starting point for the creation of the programme risk log to be maintained by the OPB. At the time of preparing this Implementation Strategy the key risks associated with the transition programme are as set out below.

Risk	Likelihood H/M/L	Impact H/M/L	Mitigation
Loss of key staff during the transition period	H	H	Thorough communication and involvement plus consideration of retention packages.
Delays in setting up the transitional governance structure due to lack of engagement by Beds County Council	H	H	Districts to identify their participants to fulfil the roles identified in this strategy in order to generate momentum.
Insufficient time / resources to complete the key elements of the transition programme	M	H	Focus on essential matters and ensure that adequate resources are devoted to achieving those objectives.

Diversion of resources (Members and staff) leads to diminution in current service standards	M	M	Service plans to be reviewed. Backfilling to be arranged where needed.
Lack of understanding of what the real issues are.	M	H	Involvement of the right people at the right time including external expert advice.
Role confusion over who is responsible for what.	M	H	Clear governance structure widely owned and communicated.

6 Service Design

- 6.01 Our approach to service design will be complementary to that set out by Bedford Borough Council in their Unitary Implementation Strategy.
- 6.02 An early task of the OPB will be the finalisation of guidance to the officer service groups in order to ensure consistent and effective management of each project within the programme. The guidance will refer to the Project Management Toolkit currently used by Mid Bedfordshire District Council.
- 6.03 It should be noted that the lead officers on the various service design groups are not shadow directors.
- 6.04 The work of the Service Design Groups should include:
- i. scoping of each service area (including direct and indirect support services);
 - ii. determination of service design, delivery, outcomes, and current and proposed performance;
 - iii. clarity and identification of the actions required to enable successful transition;
 - iv. compiling and developing business plans;
 - v. determination of timescales and desired outcomes;
 - vi. analysis of Central Bedfordshire's communities' needs concerning each service;
 - vii. determination of any consultation requirements;
 - viii. identification of cross cutting issues;
 - ix. planning and programming of who does what;
 - x. determine communication requirements – corporate, internal and external;
 - xi. determine legal, policy, risk and resource issues relating to each area subject to transition including external contracts;
 - xii. determine existing and future partnership arrangements and requirements;
 - xiii. close liaison with the Corporate Resources officer sub-groups (i.e. Finance, Assets, Legal and ICT) and the HR officer sub-group to ensure that corporate plans are informed

6.05 As examples of the type of actions that will be undertaken in determining the successful transition of each service, we have identified the following typical process.

Step 1 Identifying issues:

- i. meetings with key staff in the districts and county councils;
- ii. reviewing current performance levels and carrying out gap analysis;
- iii. reviewing external inspection reports
- iv. reviewing internal audit reports;
- v. identifying national best practice;
- vi. attending local stakeholder meetings;
- vii. working with preferred partners to identify joint strategic arrangements;
- viii. facilitating any necessary training and development of staff and members.

Step 2 Understanding the issues:

- i. management issues such as capacity, leadership and gaps;
- ii. resource issues such as procurement, assets, budget pressures, capital expenditure and the effect these may have on services post disaggregation;
- iii. understanding demographic demands and staffing allocations to geographical areas;
- iv. understanding customer interfaces and channels into the council;
- v. disaggregating / harmonising existing ICT estates;
- vi. evaluating strategic links.

Step 3 Proposing solutions:

- i. short term (i.e. day one) – for the majority of services we would expect there to be little or no change on day one. The main task will be to create a working council with immediate effect;
- ii. medium term (two to three years) solutions will need to address –
 - a. strategic issues regarding the growth agenda, demographic change, needs assessments, budget pressures;
 - b. government requirements to March 2012 eg arising from the green paper on Adult Social Care, proposals to increase the school leaving age and others;
- iii. long term – the period from 2012/13 onwards which is likely to be dominated by the growth agenda.

Step 4 Implementing solutions:

- i. implementation will relate to the short, medium and long term;
- ii. in the short term the council will ensure that during the transitional stage, work will start on reviewing areas of concern and business process improvement;
- iii. implementing solutions for the medium and longer term will require planning and resourcing to be considered in the medium term financial strategy.

Step 5 Reviewing solutions:

Solutions will be kept under review by the CIT and the TTFs.

- 6.06 Local government reorganisation brings challenges for all services within the councils involved, however Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and customer services represent a particular challenge. Modern service provision relies on ICT to enable delivery. The model in Central Bedfordshire is based around the merging of three separate ICT infrastructures and the disaggregation of one (the largest). This process is both technically complex and has many interactions with the services involved. The existing infrastructure also has to perform operationally throughout the period of change. Many decisions are inter-related and it will be critical that the programme is both firmly managed and that effective leadership is given both to the transformation teams and the remainder of the authority in defining their business requirements. A discussion paper on ICT transition principles is at Annex D.

7 Communication and Consultation

- 7.01 Implementing the transition to Central Bedfordshire will require the input and support from staff in the three relevant authorities. One of our key principles therefore is to provide frequent and relevant communication to all officers, together with a range of opportunities for staff participation and influence in the implementation process. This could take the form of focus groups, a sounding board, staff ambassadors or open question and answer sessions – or a combination of events. In due course the OPB will be asking for thoughts from staff on what would be the best approach.

8 Resources

- 8.01 General regulations setting out financial powers are awaited, therefore provisions for individual councils are yet to be concluded. As soon as the regulations are made available, decisions will be reached about the transitional budget.
- 8.02 The transitional budget will be administered through the Implementation Support Office (ISO) based at Mid Beds Offices. For the transitional period only this will utilise the current Mid Beds financial system making use of appropriate financial standing orders and procurement procedure rules currently maintained by one of the three councils. An accountant will be designated to provide all appropriate support for and through the ISO.

9 Provisional Milestones

9.01 A programme plan for transition is in preparation and features the following milestones. The plan will be developed further by the various groups shown in the governance structure.

Milestone	Completion date
Agree transition period governance structure	31 Mar 08
Confirm names of Members, officers and external resources to fill all roles in the structure	31 Mar 08
Complete draft service plans	31 Jul 08
Agree accommodation strategy	1 Sept 08
Establish new constitution	3 Nov 08
Finalise staffing structures	31 Dec 08
Draft budget	End Jan 09
Approve budget for new council	2 Mar 09
Council tax billing	11 Mar 09
Vesting day	1 Apr 09
Elections (to be confirmed)	4 Jun 09
Inaugural meeting of the new council	End Jun 09
Appoint Chief Executive	End Aug 09
Appoint management team	Sept 09

10 Related Strategies

10.01 This implementation strategy is the first in a family of strategy documents that will underpin the transition process. At the time of preparing this strategy it is expected that additional strategy documents will be prepared on:

- human resources
- assets
- sharing services
- business / financial

Protocol for Joint Working

To assist the establishment of the new council each outgoing authority will commit to:

- work constructively and imaginatively together to deliver two new unitary councils that will achieve their full potential for local residents through transformational change and new ways of working;
- achieve efficiency and value for money and equity in services;
- work jointly to ensure the efficient, effective and timely transition to the two new unitary authorities based on the proposals contained within the joint proposal for Central Bedfordshire
- participate constructively on the Joint Implementation Committee to provide the necessary shared political and community leadership, direction and support for the transition;
- ensure each authority is effectively represented on the Joint Implementation Team and other implementation groups;
- contribute to the effective negotiations of all HR, finance and asset issues associated with the establishment of the new authorities:
- at all times respect the intention and the spirit of the guidance issued by DCLG;
- where it can, and as appropriate, communicate and engage with its stakeholders so that they too can play an effective role in the transition;
- release the necessary financial and people resources to support the transition taking into account the need to enable each council to remain focussed on day to day service delivery leading up to vesting day:
- provide a timely response to requests for information or data;
- ensure that any local priorities, commitments, issues or projects are properly considered and accommodated within the transition to the new authority where this is appropriate and where continuity is important;
- in all respects to operate with integrity and transparency.

To ensure the continued ability of the outgoing councils to undertake their role and functions effectively leading up to the transfer:

- the Shadow Executive and other transition teams will recognise it is essential for outgoing councils to maintain and deliver services to residents, customers and stakeholders until such time as they are formally transferred to the new authorities;
- the Shadow Executive and other transition teams will aim to minimise disruption to the working of the outgoing authorities;
- with this in mind the Shadow Executive will not seek to compromise this legitimate role by unreasonable or untimely decisions or unreasonable requests for information or resources.

Roles and Responsibilities of Various Groups

B1 Member Transition Task Force – Draft Terms of Reference

Purpose	<p>To provide overview and advice on policy development regarding Central Bedfordshire council including challenge of issues, costed options and policy proposals in respect of major service functions in transition, complementing policy formulation by the Shadow Executive.</p> <p>TTFs will be dynamic groups providing for wide involvement of both executive and non-executive members in the transition process.</p> <p>(Individual TTF and Service Design Group remits are set out later)</p>
Approach	<p>In view of the need to react quickly to the very tight timescales involved in establishing a fully operational new unitary authority by 1 April 2009, TTFs will be informal bodies, able to meet at short notice where required. While therefore having the flexibility to meet outside the formal committee structure (as with existing Member task forces in both Mid and South Beds), all recommendations will be reported to the Shadow Executive for discussion in public. TTFs will not have delegated decision-making powers.</p>
Membership	<p>The number, composition and scope of each TTF will be determined by the Shadow Executive but it will be a requirement that they include Members who are not serving Members of the Shadow Executive.</p> <p>Two Members will be appointed to each TTF by each of the three existing Councils. The Lead Member of each TTF will be appointed by the Shadow Executive. Where up to two additional Members have particular expertise to offer they may also be appointed to each TTF.</p>
Priorities	<p>The priorities for each TTF will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of the risk register and proposed risk mitigation; • review of project plans for activities within remit, to ensure optimal delivery within the overall Central Beds transition programme; • strategic development of business plans; • report progress concerns to the Central

	<p>Implementation Team via the Lead Member;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide handover information to be made available to the new Council to help inform future Central Bedfordshire priority setting.
Resources/ Support	Lead officers to be nominated by the Central Implementation Team. Advice by the lead officers on relevant officer sub-groups. Administrative support.
Relevant Information	Will include programme and project plans, service design, resource analysis (budgets, ICT plans, property plans and HR protocols).
Communication/ Liaison	Each TTF will establish communication links with other TTFs and with the appropriate Bedford Borough Transition Team. The focus will be on significant disaggregation and merger issues. There will also be close working with the relevant officer sub-group.
Frequency/ Style	The TTF meetings will not be public meetings. The work is expected to be dynamic and require a pro-active response regime often meeting short timescales. The actual frequency will be work driven. An officer will always be present to record agreed actions.
Start	April 2008, following with the establishment of the Shadow Executive.
Finish	31 st March 2009.

B2 Communications Lead Officer

To prepare a strategy for communicating effective, consistent, agreed messages to employees and elected members of all the affected authorities collectively.

To prepare a strategy for effectively communicating the changes to the public, major partners, stakeholders, parish councils and others

To manage and respond to press and media releases/requests, and requests from Members on publicity and responses.

To assist elected Members and officers with presentations, exhibitions and others explaining the new structures and processes for transition.

B3 Corporate Resources Lead Officer

To provide co-ordination and overview of all the resources needed by and available to the new authority.

To work with lead officers on ICT, finance, assets, and legal and governance sub-groups so that conflicts are resolved or options for resolution recommended to the CIT and Shadow Executive as appropriate.

To work closely with the Lead Member for Corporate Resources and the Corporate Resources Transitional Task Force.

B4 Human Resources Lead Officer

To identify all staffing, statutory and framework requirements and where particular risks may arise.

To draft a protocol for all affected authorities regarding the treatment of vacancies and recruitment during transition.

To gather information on all local conditions of service and employment policies, procedures, practices and discretions of all affected authorities. Compare and match them where possible; identify differences and develop Central Bedfordshire's terms and conditions, and policy and procedures in consultation with stakeholders.

To assess the current position regarding Job Evaluation (JE) and single status and to undertake a comparative JE /pay outcomes exercise to determine any correlation and major differences. Develop the new pay structure for Central Bedfordshire in consultation with stakeholders.

To identify and liaise with the ICT sub-group concerning systems and correlations/difference.

To draw up a full and definitive list of all posts (filled and vacant) and employees in the affected authorities together with salary and other information (including, for example, lease cars, car allowances, age).

To draw up a list of "at risk" employees and those likely to "block transfer", including the preparation of arrangements for ring-fencing of those employees not directly transferred.

To draft the terms of reference for the negotiation and consultation process with the Trade Unions and the workforce.

To prepare a set of draft guidelines to take account of the possible early retirement or voluntary severance of employees.

To prepare a plan and guidelines for recruitment of the Chief Executive and directors, including costs and key milestones.

To consider shared HR services during and after transition.

To devise an action plan with appropriate milestones to enable seamless HR transition to the new unitary council on 1 April 2009.

To identify skills shortages.

To review learning and development requirements, and develop a programme of cultural and organisational change for Central Bedfordshire.

B5 Service Design Lead Officer

To co-ordinate the organisational design of the new officer structure.

To work with the various officer sub-groups to achieve directorate structures which are both fit for purpose and affordable.

To apply best practice in organisational design from other unitary councils.

B6 Generic Brief for Officer Service Groups

To formulate a detailed action plan with milestones to achieve the actions.

To identify early immediate priority actions and matters including those to raise with DCLG.

To consider and suggest office locations for the services taking into account infrastructure, likely relocation issues and any other criteria.

To highlight any staffing, ICT and financial issues.

To identify essential links for services and action plans.

To consider best practice in appropriate organisations.

To advise the Service Design Lead Officer on detailed structures (taking into account any possible sharing of services across the two unitary councils or beyond).

B7 Information & Communications Technology Officer Service Group

To gather information on all ICT systems and infrastructure in the affected authorities and ascertain matches and differences.

To identify the principal systems required for the new authority and any existing contractual commitments the authorities may have with suppliers.

To identify immediately obvious areas of significance requiring early integration or other attention.

To identify any ICT related financial and staffing issues during transition and beyond.

To consider location issues for ICT teams bearing in mind existing infrastructure and other appropriate criteria.

To consider any skills shortages and training issues.

To identify any urgent business process re-engineering and development requirements and to take responsibility for the business transformation project established by Mid and South Beds.

To draft an Information Governance Framework programme to include protocols and policies for data, information and knowledge management and sharing.

To consider website management and related issues (including staffing, integration, design, and content management systems).

B8 Finance Officer Service Group

To advise on:

- financial accounting systems and integration
- payroll arrangements
- interim procurement arrangements
- capital programme and funding
- HRA budget 2009/10
- financial procedure rules (financial regulations)
- pension arrangements
- banking arrangements
- treasury management strategy.

To establish what the budget requirement, the council tax requirement and the Band D council tax would have been for 2008/09 and 2009/10. These figures are needed for budget purposes and to provide notional budget requirement, notional tax requirement and notional Band D council tax figures in order to inform the Alternative Notional Amounts and associated information that central government uses for capping comparisons.

To review each specific grant in order to assess the best way to allocate and identify any legislative barriers to be overcome. Area based grants (funding directed to LAAs) will need particularly careful consideration.

To seek agreement on all splits in liabilities to be transferred to the new authority in order to inform notional budgets.

To seek agreement between County, Bedford Borough and the Shadow Executive about how much of the County's formula grant allocation should be transferred to the new authorities to support functions transferred from the County.

B9 Assets Officer Service Group

To identify all assets and transfer them to the new authority. This includes the rights, property and liabilities to be agreed between the existing authorities after identifying what will be needed for the exercise of functions.

B10 Legal and Governance Officer Service Group

To plan for decision-making during the transitional process (i.e. Shadow Authority, Shadow Executive, Transitional Task Forces and supporting officer groups) and specifically:

- development of constitutional arrangements in respect of transitional governance structures,;-
 - terms of reference
 - delegations
 - procedure rules
 - codes and protocols
- timetable of meetings, location and timing
- arrangements for approval of any SRAs.

To advise on arrangements for administrative/committee support for the transitional decision-making structure, to be shared between the constituent authorities wherever possible.

To liaise with the Communications Lead Officer on effective communication methods with the public on Shadow Executive arrangements and the new Authority's responsibilities

To draft a new Constitution for Members' consideration taking account of best practice in other authorities and the new requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (including the detail of community networks).

To devise protocols for shared arrangements, working and engagement; these should be cross party wherever possible.

To consider and advise upon all civic and ceremonial arrangements (including the status of the Authority, civic head of the Authority, civic regalia, support for Lord Lieutenancy etc).

To formulate draft electoral arrangements for Central Bedfordshire for consideration by the Boundary Committee for England in conducting its review of electoral arrangements.

To formulate proposals for elected Member development (including preparations for induction of Members of the new Authority) in compliance with the Good Practice Guidelines for the Regional Charter on Elected Member Development to enable Central Beds to seek future accreditation.

To consider arrangements relating to elected Member support particularly having regard to the enhanced community leadership and representational role.

To advise upon arrangements/preparations for conducting elections to the new Authority in May/June 2009, including preparation of pre-candidate information packs.

To liaise with the ICT Sub-group regarding all software requirements relating to democratic services and governance.

To draft new arrangements/protocols for working with town and parish councils and other partners/organisations.

To consider and advise upon ethical standards and code of conduct issues.

To consider and advise upon arrangements for Members' Allowances both in respect of the transitional structure (see above) and the new Authority (including establishment of an Independent Remuneration Panel to advise in respect of a Members' Allowances Scheme for the new Authority).

To consider and advise upon all corporate governance requirements relating to the new Authority.

To consider arrangements for the provision of legal services.

B11 Service Grouping by Transitional Task Force and Officer Service Groups

Customer and community engagement	Customer care; contact centre, points of presence; community consultation and engagement; hard to reach groups; community networks; town and parish councils; the third sector; rural policy; councillor call for action; revenues and benefits; different discretionary policies e.g. on second homes, discretionary reliefs and discounts.
Children, young people and families	Safeguarding; children in need; adoption; fostering; early years and child care; family support; looked after children; young people leaving care; educational standards and achievements; schools support; SEN; youth support services; children's health; youth offending; 14 to 19 years strategy.
Social care, health and housing	Adult social care; independent living and direct payments; carers' support; adult protection; adult health improvement and NHS liaison; drug and alcohol abuse; housing policy, needs and assessment; homelessness; supporting people; special needs housing; housing landlord role, gypsies & travellers.
Safer and stronger communities	Community safety; anti-social behaviour; police liaison; leisure; sport and recreation; parks and open spaces; play provision; theatres and cultural events; libraries; museums; life long learning; environment and street services; waste management; highways; environmental health; trading standards.
Sustainable development	Development planning (including joint arrangements with Luton); housing policy and strategy; transport policy; climate change & energy conservation; economic growth & regeneration; external funding; tourism development; development control; building control; heritage, environment & archaeology; delivery & implementation (including LDVs).
Corporate resources	Revenue budget; HRA; capital investment; efficiency; ICT; insurance and risk management; superannuation; staffing; HR; central support services; property and asset management; legal; elections; policy, performance management, communications.

B12 Implementation Support Office (ISO)

The ISO will provide the information hub and be the standards custodian for the programme. It will be managed by the Lead Officer in the OPB. A physical location for the office has been set aside in Priory House. The role and composition of the ISO will evolve over the life of the transition programme but at the outset will be:

- to provide support to the Shadow Executive, CIT, Officer Programme Board, Officer Service Groups and Transition Task Forces;
- to provide advice to all those groups with a view to ensuring consistency across the programme;
- to act as the conscience and support body for the OPB lead officer, and service and functional lead officers providing advice and challenge regarding decisions that need to be taken;
- risk and issue resolution tracking;
- quality control to ensure consistent practices and analyse risk, and to help ensure that project managers are aware of and adhere to standards of management required by the programme;
- analysing interfaces and critical dependencies between projects and recommending appropriate actions to the OPB;
- a source of intelligence in relation to the health of the constituent elements of the programme;
- to be the custodians and repository for programme documentation.

The ISO will include the following roles:

Information officer	The role will be the central custodian of information generated by the programme, build a comprehensive physical and electronic archive of all the documentation.
Administrator	Exercise electronic diary control for key officers. The role will include arranging meeting rooms and ensuring that papers are sent to the right people.
Financial accountant	To keep track of all transition related capital and revenue expenditure from the outset. The role will carry out procurement for the programme, ordering and payment of invoices.
Researchers	The TTFs and officer groups will require research (such as identifying best practice) to be undertaken quickly.
Quality manager	Establishing consistent practices and standards for the programme, including project planning approach, reporting, change control, analysing risks and maintaining the risk and issues logs for the programme.

6 project managers	One project manager will be dedicated to work with each of the six service workstreams. They will be a dedicated resource working closely with the Officer Sub-group lead officers. One project manager will work with all four sub-groups under Corporate Resources although it is expected that more will be needed. The project managers will work together and with the lead officers to ensure a consistent approach to across the programme.
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In addition to the members of the ISO above, the programme will call upon:

Committee clerks	The meetings of the Shadow Executive, CIT, 6 TTFs and OPB will all require agendas to be prepared and minutes to be taken.
Communication	The communications Lead Officer on the OPB will need considerable support to prepare material for both internal and external communications including internet and intranet management.

Highly skilled Programme Management expertise will be needed and is likely to be brought in as an external resource. Further thought will be given to whether this person should be permanently part of the transition team or available as and when needed through a consultancy firm

Decision Making within the Governance Structure

Shadow arrangements

For Central Beds (CB) the principal requirements are set out in the Bedfordshire Structural Changes Order 2008.

These principal requirements are then translated into action through our Implementation Strategy and the governance model we have chosen.

Name of Body	Decision/Support
Shadow Authority	2009/10 budget and council tax.
Shadow Executive	Major decisions and recommendations to JM of Mid and South Beds
Central Implementation Team (CIT)	Key decisions affecting partners.
Transitional Task Forces (TTFs)	Support.
Officer Programme Board (OPB)	Key operational decisions.
Officer Service Groups (OSGs)	Lower level decisions.

The key purpose of the shadow arrangements is to prepare and facilitate the creation of the new unitary Central Beds council.

Governance principles

The transition period April 2008 to March 2009 will be particularly intense and demanding and it will not stop there. The challenge is to be met by:

- governance that meets the requirements placed on any local authority acting in the public interest and to public standards, and
- decision making that is transparent, robust, that happens at the most appropriate point, and is timely (in this context timely means the critical path demands of the transition programme are met).

Governance key elements

The key elements are:

- the overall structure and defined terms of reference for each component part, and

- the rules and procedures adopted in respect of :
 - decision-making and delegations
 - legal and financial requirements, including procuring services

Delegation Principle

Delegations will be extensive and authority to decide given to the most appropriate person/group. In exercising this authority the decision maker will always consider the wider context and consequences which may require reference up the decision making structure.

Decisions

Good decision-making will be essential during the transition phase. Decisions must be well considered and timely.

The end result will be linked to the quality of the decisions at each point in the process.

Decisions must therefore be made at the most appropriate point in the governance structure. Delegation to this appropriate point is essential. A key test will be for the decision maker(s) to assess the significance of the consequences for Central Bedfordshire. The thought process is set out in Figure 2.

Our governance model seeks to place the lower level and high volume decisions at the officer service group level and the critical decisions for Central Bedfordshire at the Shadow Executive point. There are four main decision points in the structure with a few matters reserved to the Shadow Authority :

1. The Shadow Executive (by majority vote if needed).
2. The CIT (matters referred by the Officer Programme Board that do not require Shadow Executive decision, matters for discussion and decision with partners).
3. The Officer Programme Board (key operational decisions in line with programme dependencies).
4. Delegation to named officers acting via the Officer Service Groups and in consultation with a lead member and other colleagues as required. (It is anticipated here that a schedule of authorised officers will be kept, mandated by the respective authorities' Chief Executives).

As the most critical decisions, which have the greatest impact, will be taken at the Shadow Executive the work of the Shadow Executive must not be overcrowded. Crucial decisions must be made based on the right scope and depth of information.

To visualise what we need to achieve it may be helpful to see the process as a series of filters that only let through to the next decision level, those decisions that truly require it. (see Figure 3).

It is anticipated that as the greatest volume of information and call for decisions will be placed with the Officer Service Groups it will be important to maximise their opportunity to make decisions. The following filters will operate:

- Filter 1 – each of the working groups will have senior officers from the three councils plus independent and specialist advice as required. Each group will be making day to day decisions, in volume, by empowering individuals to act (see 4 above). Each group will be in regular contact with other groups and specialist advisers. Each group will report to their relevant Officer Programme Board member to ensure decisions are made at Officer Programme Board level where necessary.

The decisions taken below Officer Programme Board level will be mainly operational in nature and those judged to be self-contained or sustainable within the group/service remit.

- Filter 2 – each OPB member will bring to the OPB those matters identified as requiring an OPB decision or higher level decision or where the nominated decision maker is unclear. These typically will be operational issues with a corporate impact or needing corporate support. Where the decision has wider impact, including on partners, it will be passed to the CIT.
- Filter 3 – where the OPB identifies a resource (money, skills, people, assets) shortfall it will seek a decision from the CIT or the Chair of the CIT (under delegated authority) to ensure timely resolution. Where the issue cannot await a Shadow Executive scheduled meeting the Chair of the CIT will consult with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Shadow Executive to seek approval for proposed action.

Decisions at Shadow Executive level will consist mainly of scheduled pre-known issues, for example, recommendations on the 2009/10 budget to the Shadow Executive, senior team and management structure, service plans, key policy options.

Figure 2

NOTES

The request for a decision will include those passed up the hierarchy.

'Scope and depth' will be defined for 'big' decisions. Usual decision making judgements will otherwise operate.

'Significant' will be defined as far as can be anticipated.

Schedules to list specific decisions delegations.

Record of decision passed to Implementation Support Office for logging.

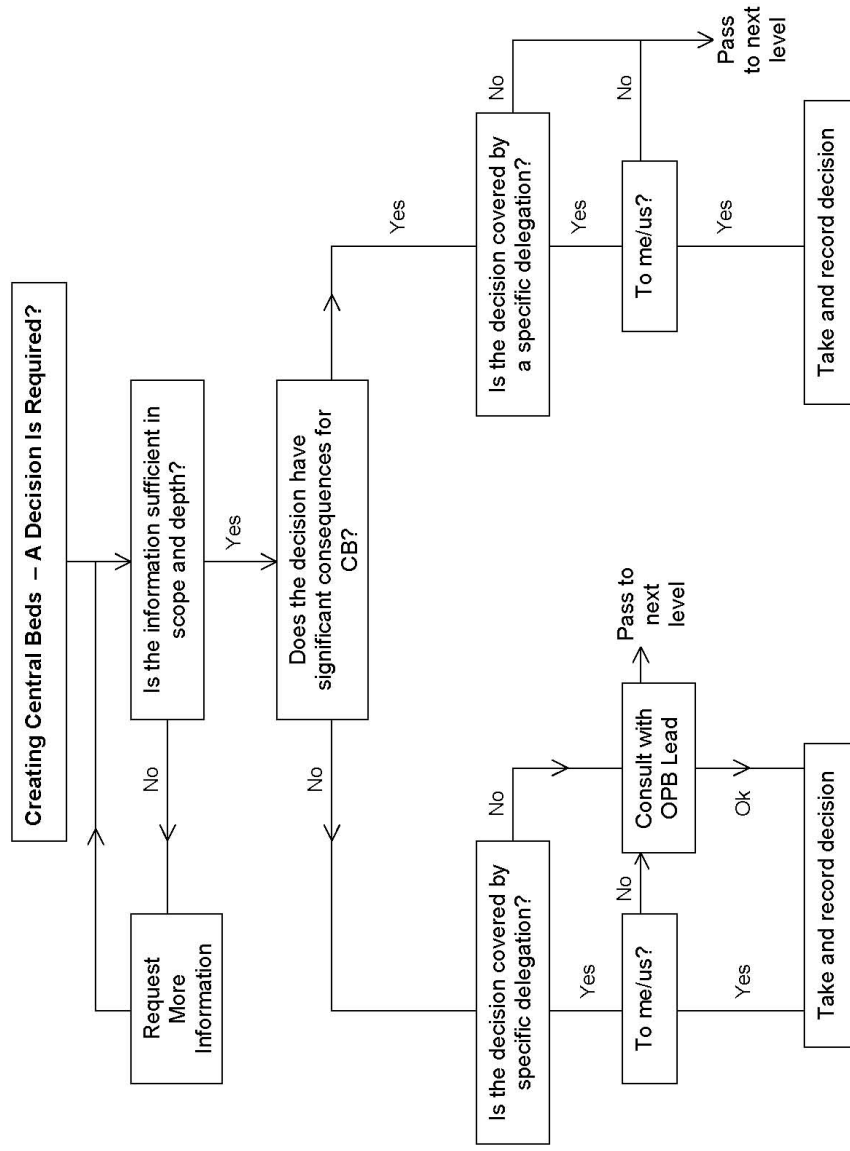
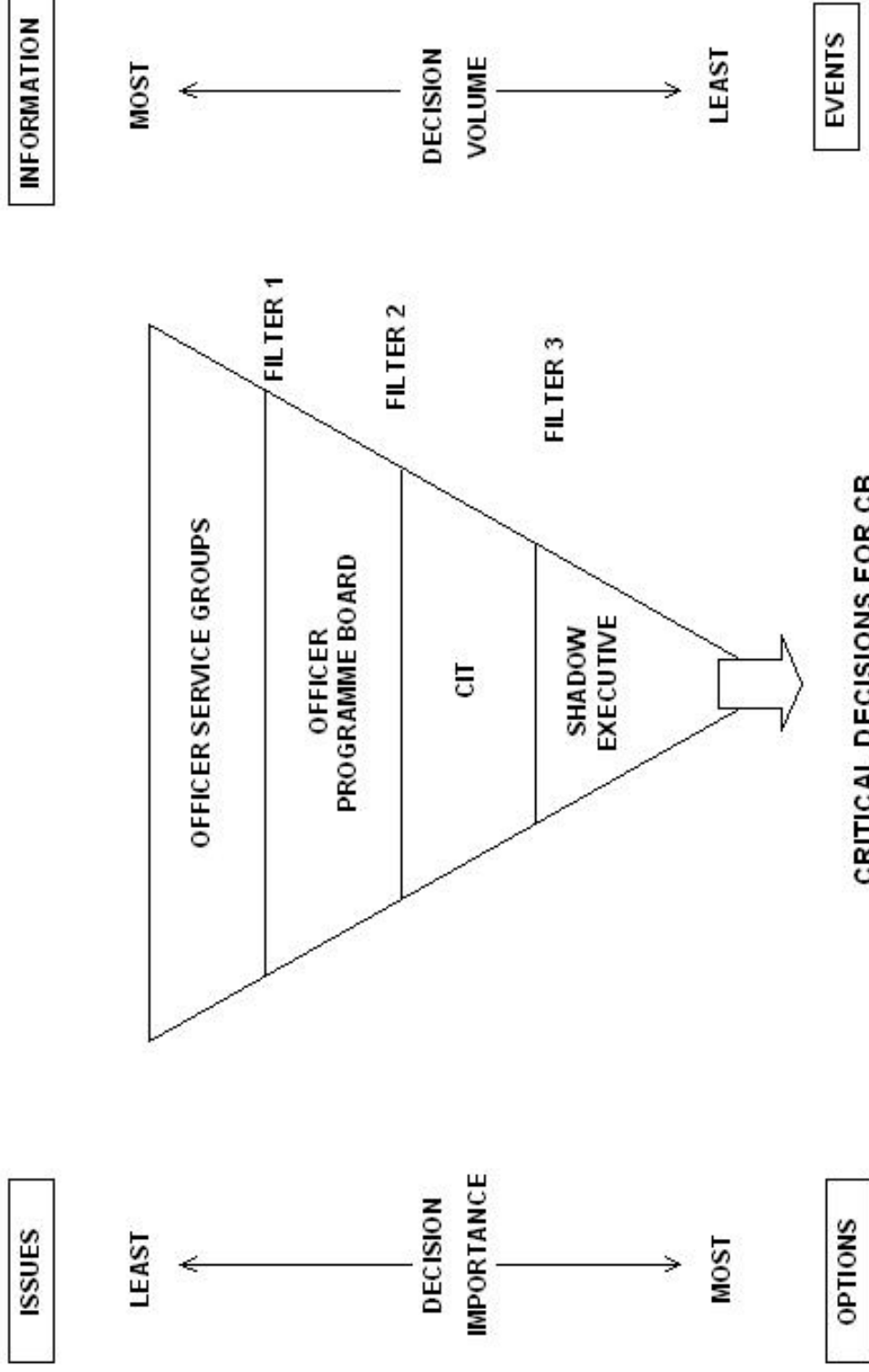


Figure 3

DECISION MAKING – IMPLEMENTING CENTRAL BEDS



ICT High Level Transition Principles

Introduction

The timescales involved in the process are extremely demanding. It will not be possible to complete all transformation for a vesting date of April 2009, however it is feasible to get a basic common infrastructure (e.g. website, telephones, e-mail) in place together with an agreed plan for ongoing change over the first 18/24 months of the new authority. This paper suggests the high level process that is involved with regard to ICT, although many items are equally applicable to generic change and is intended to raise some items for consideration in the weeks ahead.

The high level ICT plan

ICT change can be divided into three broad categories:

- **Policy, Procedures and Structure**
Policy on computer use (including Members ICT and home use), together with operational procedures. Future ICT service staff structure is also included in this category and is a critical component.
- **Core Infrastructure**
The generic ICT used by many services such as e-mail, file sharing, telephones, voicemail, internet and intranet, e-payments, EDRMS, desktop equipment. These are the foundations upon which everything else is based.
- **Application Infrastructure**
Application infrastructure can be divided into corporate and service related sub-groups, however in both cases it can be considered as software and associated hardware that generally supports a specific service or small group of services. These systems will often have integration to core infrastructure (e.g. e-payments) or, in the case of the service application sub-group, to other corporate applications (e.g. finance, CRM or Geographical Information Systems [GIS]).

It is understood that one of the keys to successful IT project and programme management is a clear set of agreed requirements. Without this projects will drift in time or expense due to rework. They are also most unlikely to deliver customer satisfaction as the criteria which will define success are not adequately specified or understood. It is also essential to have a clear decision making process that can resolve required decisions in a quick and efficient manner.

The generic tasks that will be needed for each of the categories within the ICT stream are:

- investigation of current “as is” situation and documentation of the same if required;
- requirements gathering and sign off of business & technical requirements for new authority;
- design of new infrastructure, interface requirements, policies and procedures;
- delivery of new infrastructure, policies and procedures;
- development of interfaces and in house software.

While some of this work can be undertaken in parallel, on a given topic it carries great risk to proceed to the design stage without a full set of agreed requirements being available. The major issue is that there are numerous independencies between the three ICT categories and the topics within them.

The core infrastructure category is largely a technical one and although a number of elements will be driven by and be dependant on requirements from the other two categories, there is little direct business input required. However this situation is different when looking at the other two streams, in particular the application infrastructure stream. Here decisions will be very much business based and whilst ICT input will be important, the requirements and decisions within this stream need to be very much owned by the service areas involved. From an ICT standpoint, two decisions will typically be required for each service area, namely:

- the choice of strategic service application system moving forward
- the amount and timing of change that will occur
(Common processes, merging of service application systems)

The first of these decisions must be made quickly and efficiently. It is not possible to design core infrastructure effectively if you do not know what the strategic systems will be moving forward. The second of these decisions again is needed early in the process to help define the programme and its resources, however the actual timing of change may be pre or post vesting day.

The policy, procedures and structure category must also not be ignored. Key decisions and strategy on items such as Member ICT provision and employee home working in the new authority have a significant impact on core infrastructure design, especially with the new and rightful focus on data security and information governance. It is critical that clear guidelines and policy are agreed and available for vesting day so that the new authority can move forward with robust arrangements and members of the new authority can understand at nomination time what is expected of them in terms of the way they need to work if elected to the new authority as this may well differ significantly from the arrangements they are currently using.

The decision making process – choice of systems

When considering divisional application systems, it is important that in addition to a quick decision, the most suitable choice of system is made. The following model could be used to provide a framework within which to make such decisions.

Functionality

Of the existing systems available within the authorities, how do they compare regarding their functionality in terms of service needs? Any new common processes also need to be considered at this juncture as these may change the current functionality needs with a move to more generic customer services approach and the introduction of CRM.

Costs

The issue of comparative costs is an important one. There are liable to be significant costs in the choice of a strategic system, including:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Licensing costs | Many systems are licensed either on the numbers of users, or size of authority, both of which are liable to increase. With some systems it may be appropriate to purchase extra modules in order to provide more functionality and therefore decrease the number of systems moving forward, as suppliers have often expanded their portfolio from that available at the time of purchase by the existing authorities. |
| Transfer costs | Whether or not completed by vesting day, most services are liable to require data converted from the system that is not chosen and imported into the strategic system for historical and case reference purposes. Data transfer is a major and expensive process and will require costs from both suppliers (in both directions), if comparative and accurate costings are to be achieved. This section also includes and consultancy services to change or setup the chosen system for the unitary environment. |
| Training costs | Inevitably some existing users will be required to move systems. If staff are to be effective they will need to be trained in the new strategic system. In addition there will be technical training required for some ICT staff. Training is often a significant cost in system implementation. Whilst the odd member of new staff may be offered "on the job" training by existing staff, this is unlikely to be a suitable model with the numbers of staff and other change workload that will be involved here. |
| Hardware costs | If a system is to grow from a data and user perspective, then new or upgraded hardware may be required. This needs to be properly evaluated and costed. |

Supplier reputation / Experience

The authorities have useful experience of the existing suppliers and their attitude to them as customers. This knowledge should be used and combined with a current market assessment to provide information that will be useful in deciding which systems, and therefore suppliers, will move forward in a strategic role. This amount of change will require supplier flexibility and therefore the ability of suppliers to provide this must not be overlooked.

Technical Considerations

Whilst it is important not to “have the tail wagging the dog”, ICT must have an input into the technical suitability of proposed systems. Systems that operate on platforms for which we do not have a strong skill base or that do not have good integration abilities (e.g. for CRM / e-payments) will lead to increased costs within ICT and possibly customer services or finance; an ongoing revenue cost at a time when efficiencies are paramount. Likewise a technical analysis of current and future required hardware is needed and this may lead to funding requirements. It is important therefore that whilst the final decision must be owned and driven by the end user service, ICT aspects must be considered and taken note of.

If all the above are assessed, then there is a good likelihood that a robust and correct decision will be taken with regard to which systems move forward as strategic applications in the new authority.

The decision making process – timing of change

In addition to deciding which systems move forward, there needs to be decisions made as to when systems or departments are merged (or split in the case of county services) and in particular whether it should and/or can happen before vesting day. In most cases, common processes will need to be adopted by services on or before vesting day, however this does not mean that system change has to happen at the same time. Indeed this is not possible for the authority as a whole.

Again there are a number of generic considerations in this task, all of which will have different levels of impact according to the specifics of the service area.

Location

Where will the staff using the systems be based and will this change over the period from now until March 2011? This question is applicable for reasons of cross training, network capacity, implementation of new common processes and other similar reasons.

People

People issues split down into resources and structure. System change requires significant resources. If these are unavailable or have other more demanding calls upon them, then any change has to be programmed to fit around the availability of suitably skilled individuals. Structure is also important. The impact of new systems and processes should not be underestimated and it will be difficult to work with service areas and push decisions through if there is not a suitable local management and decision making structure in place.

System / Technical

Unlike the choice of systems, the actual merging process has a very significant technical component as well as interactions with a service at a detailed operational level. The resulting complexities (when combined with other issues) will largely define when is the best time to undertake change.

Service Work Cycle / Delivery Requirements

As mentioned above, change impacts the end user service department at a detailed operational level. It will not be possible to undertake change at certain times in certain departments (e.g. year end – Local Taxation). This consideration is therefore important in the decision making process. In contrast some services (e.g. finance) will require change to be effected by vesting day in order to deliver their service effectively. This is also liable to be true of any existing County services that need to be split by vesting day between the two new authorities.

Costs

Whilst cost will have been considered as part of the decision making process in the choice of strategic system, it also has a place in the timing decision. Depending upon the length of the currently running contracts and their associated notice periods, the timing of change may be able to be programmed to minimise wastage costs in some instances. This may or may not be desirable in the overall considerations.

These decisions based upon the above criteria will be needed by summer 2008 in order that the ICT programme may be formulated, approved and actioned.

Authority for change

If a project of this type is to be successful, it has to have a quick decision making process available to it. There will be hundreds of decisions that will be needed for the programme to deliver, ranging from decisions on new authority logos and public facing telephone numbering strategy to procurement authorisations and policy decisions. It will not be possible to achieve this through the normal channel of report / committee (with associated pre-publish and call in timescales) due to time and resource constraints.

It is essential therefore that a suitable structure of delegated powers is put in place from inception (April 2008?) until late Summer 2009. This is liable to be a significant departure from the local authority norm and comfort zone. Whilst audit and controls obviously still have to remain, the need for a more “command and control” way of working cannot be underestimated and is liable to be one of the biggest threats to the success of the programme as there is no project contingency due to us already being on the critical path from a time perspective.

Current Actions

It has been an aim of both MBDC and SBDC to install a CRM system for some time, however the project has been delayed because of the issue of LGR. It is considered that a CRM will be essential for Central Bedfordshire Customer Services and that for this to be implemented the following must occur:

- agreement and documentation (but not necessarily implementation) of new common process for Central Bedfordshire (by October 2008);
- choice of strategic application infrastructure (corporate and service) by (September 2008 – ideally earlier). This is because for CRM to be effective it is essential to integrate it with all core application infrastructure. This is by far the most expensive and difficult part of a CRM installation and we should not waste money integrating with applications due to be phased out. We cannot go out to tender for the CRM until the strategic application choices are known.

In early February 2008 MBDC (on behalf of the T-Government Partnership of MBDC and SBDC), issued a tender for BPR consultancy services. These services are designed to provide the following:

- manage the process and provide the project resources to assist services create & document the “to be” processes required for Central Bedfordshire. (Currently the tender is limited to processes with a public/customer services component and only covers MBDC and SBDC)
- perform the analysis of service applications (functionality, cost etc) to enable the authority to make its choice of strategic application systems moving forward.

The tender award is due to be made by the end of April, with commencement of the contract in mid May. It will be essential for all services to fully engage with this process if we are to complete the work by the deadlines previously indicated.