

<p>SHADOW EXECUTIVE</p>
<p>5 AUGUST 2008</p>

SUBJECT	<p>Vision, Values and Priorities for Central Bedfordshire</p> <p><i>(To consider the proposed vision, values and priorities for Central Bedfordshire following a series of visioning workshops facilitated by the IDeA.)</i></p>
REPORT OF	Interim Chief Executive
<p><i>Contact Officer: Jaki Salisbury (Tel: 01462 611004); Jon Ruddick (Tel: 0845 8496147)</i></p>	

IMPLICATIONS

SUSTAINABILITY	Sustainability is a key theme of the proposal to create Central Bedfordshire and is at the heart of what the new council will want to achieve.
FINANCIAL	None specific but value for money is a key objective in the proposal for Central Bedfordshire.
LEGAL	None
PERSONNEL/EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	None
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/SAFETY	Community development and safety will be key objectives for the new council.
TRADES UNIONS	None
HUMAN RIGHTS	None
KEY ISSUE	Yes
BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK	No

OTHER DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO REPORT

“Emerging Priorities and Vision for Central Bedfordshire” Item L1, Shadow Executive, 10 June 2008.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the vision, values and priorities for Central Bedfordshire as set out in this report be agreed and form the basis for work on business planning and budget preparation for 2009/10.

Reason for Recommendation: To confirm the long term vision and priorities for Central Bedfordshire in order to guide work on business planning and budget setting.

Background

1. This report builds on the report “Emerging Priorities and Vision for Central Bedfordshire” considered by the Shadow Executive on 10 June. It also draws upon the outcome of two workshops arranged by the IDeA and held in Priory House on 6 June and 11 July. Summaries of the outcomes of the two workshops are attached as appendices “A” and “B” to this report.
2. Members will be aware that the interim vision for Central Bedfordshire was first set out in the proposal for unitary local government submitted in December 2007. This stated, “Our vision is that people living, working and thriving in Central Bedfordshire will benefit from sustainable growth and improved quality of life”.
3. Whilst this interim statement was approved by the Shadow Executive on 10 June, Members recognised that further development of the vision, values and emerging priorities for Central Bedfordshire was needed. In particular, with regard to emerging priorities, Members wished to ensure that they adequately reflected the challenges posed by an ageing population and the desire to ensure that children’s welfare was seen to be at the heart of the new council.

The Vision for Central Bedfordshire

4. A vision may be defined as a short statement providing a broad, aspirational image of the future. Vision statements should be timeless and, if successful, will be remembered and become synonymous with the organisation.
5. At the IDeA workshop on 11 July members considered the interim vision as set out at paragraph 2 above. The IDeA facilitated a discussion on the nature of this vision and challenged Members to consider if it suitably expressed what is new and exciting about Central Bedfordshire and if it makes it clear that the authority needs to balance the needs of all its communities and to capitalise on the unique character of the area.
6. Whilst inevitably the workshop gave rise to widely differing opinions, it is recommended that the following modified vision is adopted by Central Bedfordshire:

“Our vision is that all people living and working in Central Bedfordshire will benefit from future growth and improved quality of life. We will work to ensure that the unique character of our communities and our environment is protected”.

The Core Values of Central Bedfordshire

7. The December 2007 bid document set out the way in which the new council will work towards its vision. A clear set of core values helps set the context and tone for the new authority. The IDeA workshops explored these issues in some detail and, building on that work, the following set of “Central” core values is now proposed:

C – communicative

E – efficient

N – nationally regarded (for quality and value for money)

T – trustworthy

R – responsive

A – approachable & aware (of the needs of all of the community)

L – local

Proposed Priorities

8. The latest IDeA workshop also considered the emerging priorities for Central Bedfordshire. There was considerable discussion amongst Members on what should be the new council’s initial service priorities. Prioritisation is clearly essential in guiding the preparation of business plans and the budget.
9. The discussions were informed by a range of background information including:
- priorities outlined within the Bedfordshire Community Strategy and, allied to this, the Local Area Agreement;
 - other potential priorities for Central Bedfordshire drawn from the earlier workshop sessions; and
 - the views of residents regarding those factors influencing their quality of life.
10. Workshop groups were asked to suggest their top priorities, using their knowledge and experience as elected representatives, as well as the background papers. The top priorities for each group were then collated. This produced a “short list” of priorities, with several functions / services prioritised by more than one group.
11. The short listed priorities were then displayed, and each participant had three votes to cast. All three votes could be cast for just one priority, or shared across more than one. The top priorities, excluding those which scored only a single vote, are shown below (in descending order):

Supporting and caring for an ageing population
Restraining Council Tax through value for money
Learning and opportunities for young people
Managing growth effectively
Strengthening partnership working
Building safer communities
Encouraging greater involvement and engagement in local communities
Affordable housing
Tackling traffic congestion
Economic development – new/local jobs
Promoting healthier lifestyles
Maintenance of roads and pavements

12. It is recommended, for the purposes of business planning and budgeting for 2009/10, that these 12 priority areas are used to help inform the allocation of resources. It is likely that, after the 2009 local elections, the new council will want to reconsider these priorities, but that they should remain in place until April 2010 at least.
13. The suggested priority areas require further refinement in terms of presentation. All of them will cascade through to business plans but some are at a higher level than others. Officers will report back on this at the next meeting of the Shadow Executive.

Next Steps

14. Subject to Shadow Executive agreeing the proposed vision, values and priorities in this report it is intended that:
- a draft Strategic Plan will be prepared for Shadow Executive to consider at its meeting on 2 September;
 - officers, in consultation with appropriate Portfolio Holders and Transitional Task Forces, will develop business plans by the end of September.
15. The Strategic Plan is likely to include, among other things:
- introduction from the Leader (including the vision and values of Central Bedfordshire);
 - key facts and figures about Central Bedfordshire
 - the national context
 - vision for the community and council (including how the plan relates to the Community Strategy)
 - service priorities
 - managing performance
 - partnerships
 - governance arrangements in Central Bedfordshire

- value for money
- customer and community engagement.

16. The Strategic Plan will have the following purposes:

- help clarify the intent of the new council for staff, Councillors, customers, and partners;
- provide confidence to the Secretary of State that the outcomes set out in the criteria in the original October 2006 “Invitation to Councils” are at the heart of preparatory work for the new council;
- provide essential background to budget setting;
- assist in setting the foundations for Comprehensive Area Assessment in 2009.

Background Papers: “Central Bedfordshire, A Joint Proposal for Unitary Local Government” Volumes 1 and 2, December 2007.

Letter from Minister for Local Government to Leader of Central Bedfordshire Shadow Executive, “Delivering the New Unitary Authorities”, 31 March 2008.

Location of Papers: Deputy Chief Executive’s office, Priory House, Shefford.

File Reference: CG3