

CREATING CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE

PROGRESS REPORT

DATE OF REPORT: JULY 2008

<p>1</p> <p>1.1</p> <p>1.2</p> <p>1.3</p>	<p>SUMMARY OF PROGRESS</p> <p>The speed in taking up the challenges to prepare and form the new Central Bedfordshire Council, although slow initially, is now gathering pace and momentum as more skilled officers are drawn into transition teams to support Officer Service Groups (OSGs) in the design of services and delivery.</p> <p>Considering that we were some three months behind in getting off the starting block we are pleased with the overall progress made to date. Much has been achieved and these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for transitional governance and senior management structure. • Developing a 'Vision for Central Bedfordshire'. • Implementing robust controls to ensure focus is maintained in delivering the objectives and outcomes of the Implementation Strategy. • Negotiating agreements on shared-services and hosting arrangements. • Making a start on the design of service structures and delivery vehicles. • Putting in place the different channels to communicate and inform all employees, Members, and Central Bedfordshire citizens with news about the creation of Central Bedfordshire. <p>There is still much more to do and work will be carried out according to the high level implementation plan which, supported by the more detailed project plans, will help drive forward the individual pieces of work necessary to form the new authority.</p>
<p>2</p> <p>2.1</p>	<p>What decisions and actions do we need to maintain and / or increase the pace?</p> <p>The main ones currently considered to be most urgent are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreements on cross-cutting and cross-boundary aspects, especially on the principles and processes for the disaggregation of staff, assets and liabilities with Bedford Borough Council.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-alignment of the Portfolio Holder and Transition Task Forces structures to the agreed Directorate structure so that transitional implementation work can progress in a more efficient and co-ordinated manner with the Officer Services Groups (OSG). • Realignment of OSG Leads to reflect the agreed Directorate / Head of Service structure.
3	<p>What we have achieved so far?</p> <p>Three months into the transition period of creating a new unitary authority we now have:</p> <p>3.1 Strategic Leadership and Governance in place, including –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A balanced Interim Senior Management and governance structure</i>, which is sufficiently transparent and inclusive in nature for the transition period. • <i>An Interim Chief Executive and Shadow Executive</i> working closely with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and peers from the new District Unitaries, including Bedford Borough Council, on corporate issues like disaggregation principles and staffing regulations. • <i>Groups of Transition Task Forces</i>, consisting of members, and Officer Service Groups Leads (OSGs) working together on the transitional preparations and designs for services. • <i>Officer Programme Board and Implementation Support Office</i> teams of skilled officers to help drive forward the preparations for the formation of a new Central Bedfordshire Council by 1 April 2009. • <i>A new Senior Management structure</i> for the new Central Bedfordshire Council (agreed in early June) and the recruitment for Directors, which has now started. • <i>An initial Vision and Emerging Priorities discussion paper</i>, which was considered by the Shadow Executive as a good basis to develop into a final 'Vision for Central Bedfordshire'. This will be further developed after completion of the Compass workshops. • <i>Fully resourced transition design teams</i> comprising of project managers, policy officers, specialists financial and personnel advisors, and administrative staff who will provide support to OSG Leads in the design of service structures and service delivery.

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3.2	<p>Formal implementation controls in place and key information available, including –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>An agreed Transition Implementation Plan</i>, with key milestones, to keep all Officers and Members focused on delivering the structures and innovative services for the new Central Bedfordshire Authority. • <i>Robust programme and project management controls</i> that will support us in managing the progression of key deliverables, minimise risks and resolve issues as we focus on achieving the Creating Central Bedfordshire objectives and outcomes. Examples of these are the weekly Programme Board Meetings, weekly Progress Reports, and weekly reviews of risks and issues. • <i>Raw data and specific services' information from County</i> about employees, services, and assets, and additional information requested by OSG Leads to help with designing service structures and services. • <i>A specific database set up for all the documents and deliverables</i> relating to the Creating Central Bedfordshire implementation work, and which is accessible to all the officers involved.
3.3	<p>Services being designed including those being considered for sharing, including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Firm decisions taken on options for shared-services</i> and agreement to have further discussions on finalising the various hosting arrangements. • <i>Agreement to adopt SAP</i> for the new Central Bedfordshire Council, following a series of Chief Executive meetings. • <i>Project Initiation Documents (PIDs)</i>, which have been produced by service design lead officers and project managers, defining the scope of project activities and key deliverables that will contribute to the formation of the new Central Bedfordshire Council. • <i>Initial Business Plans</i> developed by the OSG Leads for each of the services within the Directorates, closely aligned to the new Central Bedfordshire vision and emerging priorities.
3.4	<p>Communications machinery in action, including –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Central Bedfordshire website</i>, which has been operational since early May. • <i>The first CBC weekly email to all employees</i>, which was sent out in early June as this was considered an effective platform to keep employees informed and involved. • <i>A Stakeholders Newsletter</i> sent out in early July to all stakeholders e.g. Town and Parish Councillors, PCT and other Partners, to keep them informed about the Creating Central Bedfordshire activities. • <i>The start of a Branding exercise for Central Bedfordshire</i>, which will involve discussion and consultation with senior officers, portfolio holders and key stakeholders in the forthcoming weeks.

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<p>3.5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Roadshows</i> being planned for July, which will involve the Interim Chief Executive and Senior Managers meeting with employees from all the constituent authorities. <p>Budgets and Financial controls in place, including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Robust procurement procedures</i> implemented and all expenditures relevant to Creating Central Bedfordshire monitored and logged centrally by a finance officer in the Implementation Support Office. • <i>An exercise completed on refreshing the financial data in the December bid</i> and making appropriate adjustments accordingly. • <i>Agreed sets of financial consents</i> and processes implemented to ensure compliance with regulations. • <i>Regular monitoring and reporting of transitional costs accrued</i>, by the Officer Programme Board (OPB), to ensure there are no surprises with unplanned expenditures. • <i>High level indicative budget figures</i> made available to assist the development of initial service designs and business plans.
<p>3.6</p>	<p>ICT programme and project teams in place, including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A high level PID</i> , which was approved in early May, to deliver the systems needed in supporting the creation of Central Bedfordshire Council. • <i>Early discussions</i> with Senior Users of ICT have started and they will be focusing on the work required for specifying and selecting application-specific software and systems that will support the delivery of services.
<p>4</p>	<p>Where are we compared to where we should be, and compared to the progress made by other new unitaries?</p> <p>4.1 In examining the targets that we set in April 2008, it would fair to say we have made good progress on what we have achieved so far against what we said we would deliver.</p> <p>4.2 Although there have been some hiccups and delays to a few of the tasks during the very early days, we have managed to work around them and have continued with the tasks at hand. This approach has enabled us to get back on track quickly.</p> <p>4.3 By regularly pre-assessing the status of near-future key tasks and milestones we have also, at times, taken early corrective actions to reduce the risk of delays successfully. This approach will continue to be used to ensure that potential problems that could delay future progress are minimised or removed.</p>

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Links to some of the key the documents mentioned in this report are given below:

* Central Bedfordshire Implementation Strategy

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/CB%20Implementation%20Strategy_tcm5-24676.pdf#False

* Transition Programme Key Milestones - Implementation Plan

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/EDRMS%20367%20Implementation%20Plan%20-%20Transition%20Programme-v1%2014a_tcm5-25925.pdf#False

* Transition Programme Issues Log

http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/Images/EDRMS%20369%20Transition%20Programme%20Issues%20Log-v2%207_tcm5-26409.pdf#False

* Transition Programme Risks Log (this is kept in the Electronic Document Records Management System which some reader may not be able to access).



Transition Programme Risks Log.vso

[Transition Programme Risks Log](#)