

Creating  
Central Bedfordshire  
Council

**Children, Families and Learning -  
Directorate Plan 2009/10**

**September 2008**

## THE COUNCIL'S VISION FOR CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE

“Our Vision is to improve the quality of life of all in Central Bedfordshire and enhance the unique character of our communities and our environment”.

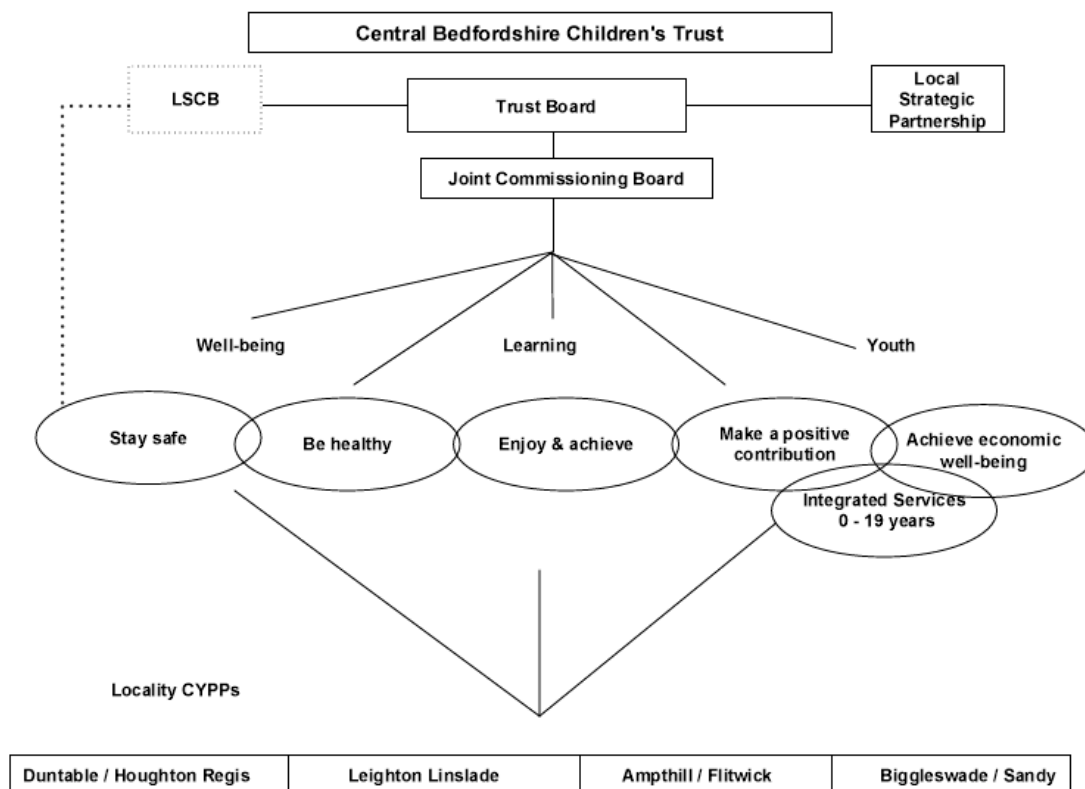
All the council’s directorates will work together to implement this vision.

**Children are one of the council’s top five corporate priorities.**

### “Educating, Protecting, and Providing Opportunities for children and young people”

We want every child to be safe, healthy, and successful in education and employment and make a positive contribution to society. In particular, we will support children to become ambitious and have high aspirations.

We will achieve this by working closely with partners and service users in an integrated multi-agency way within defined geographical areas. A key element of this will be the establishment of a Children’s Trust, which will be the means for all agencies to work together to deliver real and sustainable improvements in the quality of life for children and their families (See below). This will involve pooling staff, expertise and resources towards achieving the outcomes which will be set out in a Children and Young Person’s Plan, which will have clear priorities and measurable outcomes to ensure that the five objectives ‘Every Child Matters’ are achieved.



## **Strategic Direction and Vision - Children, Families and Learning**

To achieve the vision, the Central Beds Council and its partners will make available a range of services to Children and families, including specialist services to vulnerable children. There will be special emphasis on a preventative approach, based on our Early Intervention Strategy provided through venues, such as Children's Centres, Neighbourhood Centres, Schools, Colleges and Youth Centres, as well as Leisure and Cultural facilities.

Schools will be a key element in achieving our vision for children. We see schools not only as places of learning but as places which will, in the future, deliver a wide range of extended children's services, as per the national ten year plan. In particular, we will work with schools to build a strong partnership and collaborative approach, which focuses on continuous improvements in educational achievement, as well as narrowing the performance gaps between vulnerable groups and their peers. We are committed to providing support and challenge to schools to achieve this.

We are committed to involving children, young people and families in planning, service design and delivery and will carry out consultations with them and all our partners and other relevant stakeholders.

### **Key Priorities and Challenges**

- Reduce the health inequalities of children and families in Central Bedfordshire (NI 51, NI 56 LAA)
- Embed and ensure a multi-agency approach to safeguarding practices across Central Bedfordshire
- Develop integrated, locality service planning, decision making and service delivery
- Raise Educational Achievement and improve children's assessment outcomes and examination results at age 11 and 16 (statutory indicators LAA).
- Increase young people's participation in positive activities (NI 110 LAA).
- Increase the number of young people in employment, education or training (NI 117 LAA).
- Reduce the number of First Time Entrants and the Proven Rate of Re-offending.
- Deliver services that represent value for money and drive efficiencies

### **Business Plans**

This Directorate Plan is supported by five detailed Business Plans, which sets out how each service will contribute to the council's and directorate's vision and priorities. Each Service Area within CF&L will also focus on particular priorities during the first year:

A summary of each service is given below:

## **Learning and Schools**

The schools are at the heart of our planning and service delivery. There will be special emphasis on delivering high educational achievements and continuous improvements in academic performance. We want schools serving each community to work together in the closest possible way and to be the base for delivering a whole range of services to their communities. The Service will work closely with schools to ensure children achieve their true potential and have the best possible start in life.

We will develop a single staff development framework for all staff working with children to create effective integrated working.

We have a unique opportunity to create and implement new strategies including how to access government funds to transform the services we deliver in our communities. The Learning and Schools branch will be at the heart of helping design these new facilities so that our children and their families can learn in the most modern ways, using the most up to date ICT systems, and making the most effective use of new qualifications so that they have the best chance of living economically and socially prosperous lives.

Some early priorities include:

- Further develop the positive relationship with schools in Central Bedfordshire. This will include establish working relationships and strategies which will accelerate the rate of performance improvement in schools.
- To determine a strategy for the future direction of learning and schools
- Establish with LSC new arrangements for educational provisions for 14-19 Year olds.

## **Integrated Services**

The Service will bring together professionals from a variety of disciplines to deliver early intervention and prevention and targeted youth services to children, young people and families in Central Bedfordshire. It includes a diverse range of services that ensures access to Children's Centre services, support Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers of free nursery education, support schools to meet all the elements of the core offer entitlement of Extended Services and provide core training, continual professional development to Central Bedfordshire's children's workforce.

A Joint Parenting Support Strategy underpins the joint commissioning of a range of early intervention and prevention parenting support services. A free phone family information service, INFORM 0-19, enables parents and carers to access accurate up to date information, advice and guidance on a range of childcare, leisure and family support services.

Working with other partners in Connexions and Youth Services to increase Education Training and Employment opportunities. It works closely with the Youth Offending Team to reduce to reduce re-offending and incidents of anti social behaviour. It provides specialist services such as Family and adolescent support, and Leaving Care services.

Some early priorities include:

- The development of an Integrated Youth Service including the Connexions Service, including planned arrangements for managing the central elements of the Connexions service
- A Targeted Youth Support Service which meets Government expectations
- Work closely with the Youth Offending Service, hosted by Bedford Borough Council.
- Meet all that targets related to the roll out of Children's Centres
- The development and roll out of the common assessment framework, lead professional model and multi agency locality working

### **Specialist Services**

Specialist services bring together education and social care professionals to provide services that support children in need, children in need of protection, children in public care and children with school attendance and disabilities or special educational needs. Children referred to specialist services will, in the main, be those with complex needs requiring targeted preventative services. Some of the early challenges include:

Some early priorities include:

- Ensuring a "safe transition "is made by the staff in specialist services in order to protect the interests and well being of vulnerable children and young people
- Developing an integrated approach to working with children, families and schools across the range of social care and educational services within Specialist Services.
- Put in place a Central Bedfordshire Local Safeguarding Board
- Review of Special Educational Provision
- Implement the government's "Aiming Higher" strategy for children with disabilities

### **Policy, Planning and Commissioning**

Policy Planning and Commissioning Directorate is the driving force for creating a first class Children's Services. It will ensure that the most cost effective and high quality services are put in place. Its role is also to ensure that the council responds appropriately to all relevant legislation and provides a robust planning and policy framework to support operations.

Some early priorities include:

- Create a new Children and Young People Strategic Partnership
- Develop a new Children and Young People's Plan.
- Support Annual Performance Assessment and Joint Area Reviews.
- Develop policies and procedures fit for Central Bedfordshire.
- Develop needs analysis for Central Bedfordshire and commission services that represent value for money.
- Build capacity within the third sector and local communities to deliver services locally.
- Contribute towards Local Area Agreement and Comprehensive Area Assessment.
- Work with the PCT to commission Child Health Services.
- Facilitate access to schools and provide alternative provisions where appropriate.

### **.Leisure and Cultural, Adult and Community Learning**

The Leisure and Cultural Services branch of Children Services has a fundamental role to play in improving the quality of life of all the residents of Central Bedfordshire and enhancing the unique character of its communities and environment.

The Council intends to deploy its services across a range of shared priorities with its partners. Sport and the Arts will be used to help raise educational attainment in our schools, increase levels of physical activity to address rising levels of obesity, alleviate problems with mental health, provide opportunities to divert people away from criminal activity and anti-social behaviour and regenerate rural and urban environments.

Some early priorities include:

- The production of a Cultural Strategy for Central Bedfordshire.
- Commencement of the redevelopment of Flitwick Leisure Centre.
- Formulating action plans in relation to the Bedfordshire Obesity Strategy.
- Developing future service arrangements for Community Learning.

### **Summary**

This Directorate Plan, along with the Children and Young People's Plan and each of the sub directorate Business Plans set out our priorities and targets. These will be reviewed and refreshed annually. A comprehensive performance management framework will set out the structure for monitoring and measuring our performance.

The Council will be setting targets against the national performance indicator set and a range of local indicators. This information will be used to monitor progress against our priorities by, amongst others, the Management Team, Executive and Overview & Scrutiny Committees.

The Council's Strategic Plan and the full set of Directorate and sub directorate Business Plans are all available on the Central Bedfordshire Council website:

<http://www.centralbeds.gov.uk/>