

SHADOW SCRUTINY

11 December 2008

SUBJECT	Creating Central Bedfordshire – Progress Report To report on overall progress towards creating the new council for Central Bedfordshire and to highlight issues in order to assist the committee in the discharge of its functions.
REPORT OF	Central Bedfordshire Management Team
<i>Contact Officer: Simon Redmore (01462 611255)</i>	

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	As at 6 November £4.2m had been spent or committed against a transition budget of £18.2m.
LEGAL	The Shadow Authority is required by the Structural Changes Order to prepare, keep under review and revise as necessary an Implementation Plan.
PERSONNEL/EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	A People Management Protocol has been prepared by the four councils and the trade unions.
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/SAFETY	Community development and safety will be key objectives for the new council.
TRADES UNIONS	Consultation with trades unions is built into the transition programme.
HUMAN RIGHTS	None arising from this report

OTHER DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO REPORT

- | |
|---|
| 1. "Creating Central Bedfordshire Implementation Strategy", Item 3, Shadow Executive 10 April 2008. |
| 2. "Implementation Plan and Risk Analysis", Item L2, Shadow Executive 10 June 2008. |
| 3. "Central Bedfordshire Strategic Plan", Item L1, Shadow Executive 2 September 2008. |
| 4. "Creating Central Bedfordshire – Progress Report", Item S7, Shadow Scrutiny, 4 September 2008 |

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Scrutiny Committee comment on progress against the programme to create the new unitary council for Central Bedfordshire;

Reason for Recommendation: To assist the Scrutiny Committee in the discharge of its functions

Introduction

1. This is the second progress report to the Shadow Scrutiny Committee. As before, the report aims to assist the Committee to identify the key issues and risks associated with the changes to unitary local government in Central Bedfordshire. Shadow Executive portfolio holders have been invited to attend the meeting in order to provide additional information and to answer questions.
2. This report is divided into the following sections:
 - national background
 - overall progress in creating Central Bedfordshire
 - visit by the local government minister
 - governance
 - ensuring day one delivery
 - staffing
 - information and communications technology
 - accommodation
 - neighbourhood arrangements
 - partnership working
 - transitional service delivery
 - implementation plan
 - risks
 - communications
 - finance
 - development control committee
 - conclusion.

National Background

3. Central Bedfordshire is represented at monthly national progress meetings held by officials from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The last such meeting was on 6 November. It was clear from that meeting there are a number of general themes arising in all of the nine areas in England affected by local government reorganisation. Those receiving most attention are:

- *Financial planning* - the changing economic circumstances mean that for most councils across the country the budget setting process this year will be difficult. The expectation is that all unitary areas should be able to manage potentially difficult financial circumstances using the flexibility offered by restructuring.
 - *Staffing structures* - areas have progressed at different speeds but all with the priority to put in place senior staffing structures and to fulfil commitments to staff so that employees know what their position will be regarding the new unitary councils around the turn of the calendar year.
 - *Neighbourhood arrangements* - there are numerous interpretations of how to empower local people recognising each area's diversity.
 - *Partnership working* – there is recognition that there is some uncertainty and concern among partners about the future and how they might be affected by the changes.
 - *Communications* – is recognised as being of paramount importance for all areas going through the change. Progress varies across the nine areas.
 - *Executive working* - variable progress is being made to move away from previous thinking in the old two-tier county-district structure.
 - *Access to services* – there is generally good progress to ensure that customer access to service is enhanced from day one, but there is some concern that big, unitary local government could reinforce centralised top down services.
4. Progress in Central Bedfordshire on each of these themes is summarised later in this report.
5. The Local Elections (Ordinary Day of Election in 2009) Order 2008 was made on 4 November, moving the date of local elections to 4 June 2009, the same day as the European Parliamentary elections.
6. Sometime around February 2009, the DCLG intends carrying out a stock take of progress in all the reorganisation areas. The purpose of the stock take is to give the Minister information as vesting day approaches and external interest from the media and other interested parties increases. The precise nature of the work, which will be determined by the DCLG, has not yet been decided.

Overall Progress in Creating Central Bedfordshire

7. As Members may be aware the very limited time available to carry out the transition programme has meant that critical work-streams have had to be run in parallel. There has been no alternative to this way of working and the programme is now facing a number of immediate and significant challenges as officers bring together key areas of work as part of budget preparation.

8. Particular areas of focus are:

- human resources has developed a number of strategy documents and timelines, together with disaggregated and aggregated staffing data. This has been brought together with financial constraints by Directors and lead officers in order to finalise the staff structure;
- ICT has a high level, strategic programme but work on individual projects and external delays diverted resources and meant that the programme had not been sufficiently kept up to date or used as a reference point. Considerable effort has gone into improving this situation;
- Property Services are developing an accommodation programme (which includes an initial accommodation plan and a medium term strategy). Officers are focussing on day one issues while continuing to work on the longer term;
- budget preparation is bringing together all the above issues plus the design of directorates and the need to develop organisational structures which are fit for purpose and keep within available budget envelopes;
- there is a need to improve co-ordination and communication across the programme both at a strategic level and aligned to the operations themselves. Officers are revising their governance arrangements to achieve this and increasing capacity through bringing in appropriate resources.

9. More detail on these issues appears throughout this report.

10. A summary progress report on the overall programme is at **Appendix A**.

Visit by the Local Government Minister

11. The Minister for Local Government, John Healey, has written to the Leader of the Shadow Executive following his visits to Bedfordshire in October. A copy of his letter is at **Appendix B**. The key points in the letter are set out below and provide a valuable set of reference points as the work continues:

- a) there should be a clear move away from old county thinking for children's services and adult care;
- b) a smooth transition to the new council with no diminution in services and delivering tangible benefits for communities;
- c) putting in place the means to secure local service delivery, dovetailed with Bedford Borough where appropriate and the pursuit of challenging aims such as the growth agenda;
- d) developing an affordable budget that delivers the commitments in the bid for savings and council tax;
- e) providing strategic leadership while maintaining the confidence of partners:

- f) agreeing detailed practical arrangements to empower people and their most local communities;
- g) communicating a clear understanding of the vision of the new council, what it will deliver and how it will work on day one especially how people can contact and engage with the council;
- h) it is imperative that all the outgoing councils present a united message about the two new unitary councils and ensure a seamless transition.

Governance

- 12. As the work in creating the new unitary council proceeds, there are a number of key developments, which require changes to structures and processes to make sure that they remain fit for purpose. The newly appointed Directors are now in post (except for the Director of Social Care, Health and Housing who starts in early January) and constitute the new Management Team. The Team has begun to develop a working relationship with the Shadow Executive and individual relationships with their Portfolio Holders and Transitional Task Force (TTF) chairs. These will be important officer/Member relationships and essential for keeping Portfolio Holders up to date with policy developments.
- 13. Deloitte have carried out an independent health check on the officer programme governance structure. **Appendix C** summarises their findings and officers' proposed action.
- 14. Member governance arrangements have also been reviewed. To date the TTFs have given much time and thought to their contributions to creating Central Bedfordshire. But the work has taken considerable officer time, and as the corporate focus moves to ensuring that the day one imperatives will be delivered, officers need to be focussing their time on co-ordinating and implementing that delivery.
- 15. The programme to create the new council, therefore, now needs a different set of processes as we step up to the last and most challenging phase – delivery on vesting day. To this end, TTF agendas and activities have been reduced and re-focussed in three ways:
 - i) the chairs, with the portfolio holders, are developing working relationships with the new directors and disseminating any intelligence to other TTF members as appropriate;
 - ii) the TTFs are holding one more meeting (or maximum two), before Christmas, to discuss one or two of the key “overview” topics in their area, which need some urgent political input/endorsement. The key topics include:
 - the budget
 - domiciliary care – implementation of new block contracts
 - development management committee
 - constitutional issues

- corporate performance management framework
 - prevention, early intervention and family resilience
 - corporate parenting
 - rolling out and implementing the corporate brand identity;
- iii) the TTFs will hold a further one (or maximum two) meetings between January and the end of February to develop their legacy reports, which will flag up for the new council and Executive the critical issues on the horizon for Central Bedfordshire. Officers will be providing a template to assist in the production of these reports.

16. It has also been agreed that the two Task Forces for Safer and Stronger Communities and Sustainable Development should meet as one Task Force to complete the above tasks.
17. An additional meeting of this Scrutiny Committee has arranged for 22 January to take a first look at the proposed budget.

Ensuring Day One Delivery

18. It is important to differentiate between programme deliverables for day one and “flagship” deliverables for the following two to three years. But in focussing on day one imperatives, to ensure a seamless transition, we also need to consider the steps that are critical for the transitions/transformations that are taking place in year one. Increasingly, therefore, attention is being given to developing a greater understanding of the balance between “transition” and “transformation” and what that means for day one.
19. Officers are looking critically at the Implementation Plan, with a view to de-scoping some of the more ambitious milestones. This is in order to shift the focus to ensure delivery of day one imperatives. However, transformation remains firmly on the April 2009 agenda, and is central to emerging business plans and budgets.
20. A key factor is the need to specify the day one outcomes, the activities needed to achieve them and the critical path to be successful. This triangle of activities is being led by the staffing structures which themselves will lead to clarity on accommodation and ICT requirements. This will determine the potential for any staff moves, which could be agreed for reasons of strategic leadership or on the basis of efficiency for those business units in multiple locations.

Staffing

21. The organisation structure for Central Bedfordshire has now been concluded, with the majority of senior posts appointed. Veredus has been engaged as search consultants for the post of Chief Executive and work on this appointment will now begin. All Directors and internal Heads of Service have been appointed and the remaining Heads of Service positions are being actively marketed. Job descriptions are being drafted for recruitment to the third tier of the organisation in order to begin making appointments at this level before the turn of the year.

22. Staffing information on all staff initially disaggregated from the County, and those being transferred from the Districts, has been consolidated. This information is subject to change, dependent on the County Council appeals process that got under way in the week beginning 24 November. Due diligence is being carried out to ensure that County Council staff resources have been disaggregated appropriately and indicative team structures for day one are sufficient for a seamless transfer of service delivery.
23. Detailed mapping of staff to new organisation structures is also under way and this will be completed once disaggregated County Council staff are confirmed. The milestone that we are seeking to achieve, before Christmas, is to communicate to all those to be employed by Central Bedfordshire on day one, informing them, as far as possible, of their position in the new organisation.

Information and Communications Technology

24. The ICT workstream is concentrating on essential infrastructure (servers, email, storage and telephony). These work areas alone are substantial but small compared to the 670 or so applications currently in use in the County, Mid and South Beds; all of which will have to be supported on day one.
25. The overall ICT programme has slipped for a number of reasons but especially:
 - early delays arising from lengthy corporate discussions with Bedford Borough about SAP (enterprise resource software) and SWIFT (contains adult and children's care records);
 - restricted capacity in other work-streams which meant that service users were not able fully to engage with ICT;
 - knock-on consequences of delays in related work-streams (for example, branding guidelines needed to make progress on web site design);
 - a focus in the ICT work-stream on individual projects rather than the overall ICT programme.
26. The above issues have now been understood and are being addressed. Resource for ICT programme management has been significantly increased by the inclusion of two additional project managers who are now leading on areas that were covered by the ICT programme manager. At the time of writing, the new project managers are expected to be fully effective at the start of December.
27. Work with Deloitte on improving ICT programme management is progressing. As a result, a range of methods to provide greater visibility of the tasks taking place within the ICT programme are due to be in place before December. An oral update will be given at the meeting. The key documents in this area will be a simple dashboard providing a status, the dependencies for ICT delivery document (already constructed and being sent to Management Team weekly) and a high-level programme plan.

Accommodation

28. Most staff will remain where they are on day one, as set out in the report on accommodation considered by Shadow Executive on 30 September. There is a need, however, to confirm any minor moves that may be sensible to make for day one. Intended occupants for Priory House include:
- Management Team
 - Business Transformation Directorate (Revenues & Benefits and the contact centre to be considered separately)
 - Legal and Democratic Services,
 - Human Resources
 - Members' rooms.
29. A draft medium term property strategy (covering all the new council's property, not just staff and Member office accommodation) is due to be considered by Shadow Executive on 16 December. At this stage the proposals will be at a skeleton level with the final strategy scheduled for consideration in February.

Neighbourhood Arrangements

30. Continuing consideration is being given to the Community Area Network (CANs) model for Central Bedfordshire. Following the successful Town and Parish Council conference in October, the proposed number of CANs is a maximum of 11. Specific dialogue will continue in order to finalise this number and take account of existing practice that mirrors the CAN concept.
31. It is clear that one size will not fit all and our aim must be to ensure that the successful model will add genuine value to community engagement within Central Bedfordshire. To do this we need to build on local success and good practice, both within the existing local authorities and that to be found in the organisations of our key partners and stakeholders. Some important examples of this are neighbourhood improvement planning, parish and town planning and community safety fora.
32. Although subject to further development, the proposal for the CANs has been acknowledged by GO-East and shared with their department leading on the community empowerment agenda. The department's purpose is to develop a community of practice network that aims to share examples of good practice across the sector. This may generate an opportunity for Central Bedfordshire to access some additional support to develop the CANs concept further.

Partnership Working

33. The Local Government Minister, John Healey, met with stakeholders from across Bedfordshire on 7 October. Feedback from attendees and CLG officials has been very positive. The Chief Executive of Aragon Housing Association, who was present, has said that the approach being followed to create Central Bedfordshire "was praised by all concerned for the way it is involving stakeholders in the formation of the new council".
34. The Central Beds LSP has been formed following Shadow Executive's endorsement in principle of the core membership of 14 at its meeting on the 28 October 2008. The first formal meeting of the Shadow LSP took place on 11 November 2008. Councillor Tricia Turner was appointed chairperson and John Gelder (Director Voluntary and Community Action) was appointed as vice chair. Terms of reference for the Shadow LSP have been agreed. The LSP will remain as "shadow" until the June 2009 elections.
35. The current countywide Local Area Agreement (LAA) is being disaggregated. The existing LAA was developed in such a way as to enable this divide to happen smoothly. In addition to disaggregation, the annual refresh process will enable Central Bedfordshire, in conjunction with Government Office East, to add any new priorities to the LAA. Five thematic partnerships have been agreed for Central Bedfordshire:
 - safer
 - stronger
 - environment and economy
 - children and young people
 - health and wellbeing.
36. Lead Officers have been identified for these partnerships and negotiations are currently taking place with Government Office East regarding the LAA refresh. The final LAA for Central Bedfordshire will be presented to both the Shadow Executive and the Shadow LSP early in the new year with final submission to Government Office East in March 2009.
37. As part of the IDeA programme with Central Bedfordshire Councillors, a successful briefing meeting took place on 30 October, on the subject of Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements.
38. An introductory meeting has now taken place with representatives from the key Voluntary and Community Sector organisations in Bedfordshire. The final Countywide Assembly took place on 19 November and included presentations from both Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough on progress to date. In embedding new partnership arrangements for Central Bedfordshire, consideration will be given to holding similar "partnership assembly" events twice a year.

Transitional Service Delivery

39. After detailed discussions between the four councils stretching over several months, agreement has now been reached over which services will be shared and which ones “disaggregated” between Central Bedfordshire and Bedford. As required by Shadow Executive at its meeting on 10 June the Interim Chief Executive has consulted the Leader, Deputy Leader and relevant Portfolio Holder and Transitional Task Force chairman on the proposed way forward.
40. The position in Bedford is more complex because the Bedford’s Chief Executive does not have delegated authority on this matter. Officers understand that recommendations may have to be made to that authority’s Implementation Executive and the next meeting is not until January. In order to make progress, officers will have to assume agreement because to wait would be to introduce an unacceptable level of risk into the transition.
41. The services and which authority will lead on each are listed in **Appendix D**. In summary it is planned that:
- at least 43 services will be shared
 - 18 will be hosted by Central Bedfordshire
 - 20 will be hosted by Bedford Borough
 - 5 will be hosted by the Primary Care Trust (PCT)
 - ICT is not to be shared except where the case is made for specific applications
 - 10 of the services will be reviewed in year 1; 6 in year 2; 20 in year 3.
42. Work is well advanced to settle service level agreements (SLAs) for all the shared services. It has been agreed for the purpose of simplicity that the basis of charging between the new unitary councils will be cost recovery with open book accounting.

Implementation Plan

43. The meeting of the Shadow Executive on 10 June adopted and agreed to keep under review an Implementation Plan for the creation of Central Bedfordshire. Since that time the plan has been reviewed weekly and the latest update posted onto the Central Bedfordshire website.
44. The Implementation Plan focuses on key milestones. Beneath this high-level of planning there is a much more detailed Gantt chart itemising all the tasks for each work stream within the programme.
45. A copy of the latest Implementation Plan is at **Appendix E**. It shows which targets are completed, on track, at risk, or delayed. The current position regarding exceptions shown on the Implementation Plan is as follows:

Milestone	Proposed Action
Line 19 – accommodation strategy	This action was delayed pending finalisation of the staffing structure. At the time of writing the structure has just been completed. As a result delays to this milestone should be minimal.
Line 25 – Service level agreements for shared services	Work is well advanced. The key current issue is how to ensure that the SLAs are binding without becoming formal contracts which would entail additional work that would not be justified because all the transitional arrangements will be reviewed over a three year period.
Line 32 – agreed locality strategy	Draft governance on Partnership and Community Area Networks has been prepared but this only partly covers this deliverable as there is a wider cross-authority locality strategy to be agreed. This is tied up with the accommodation strategy that first has to be delivered before locality decisions can be developed.
Milestone	Proposed Action
Line 35 – ICT requirements / implementation plans for each service.	Working with Deloitte, a detailed plan has been prepared and a summary version will be prepared for Shadow Executive. Work is be focussed on priorities (Tribal education data; SAP; SWIFT) for day one.
Line 39 – communication to staff on structures.	At the time of writing structures have just been finalised; an oral update will be given at the meeting.
Line 42 – externally appointed Heads of Service (HoS)	Recruitment was delayed pending finalisation of structures but is now underway.
Line 45 – appeals hearings and mapping employees to the new structure.	This work was due to have been completed by the end of November. Although the County Council has sought to accelerate the process, the work is running behind schedule and appeals have run into December. One outcome of this is that the planned three months' parallel payroll run has had to be reduced to two months.
Line 49 – workforce training plan.	A training needs analysis will be completed by Christmas with delivery taking place in January, February and March.

46. Since Scrutiny Committee last considered the Implementation Plan a number of changes have been made. The Committee's attention is drawn in particular to:

- line 16 – record of assets, liabilities and capital investment – two new milestones have been added to cover a capital investment strategy and the capital programme;
- line 28 – highways and transportation – a number of new milestones have been added;
- line 39 – road-shows and staff communications – new milestones have been added throughout November to February involving all staff in place of the idea of a “sounding board” which would have involved only a small number of staff;
- after line 59 – the Plan previously listed ten government regulations. Work on these regulations was not within officers’ control and any minor delays that have arisen have not been critical for our programme. Those lines have now been deleted from the plan although officers will continue to be closely involved in the outcome of DCLG work on regulations.

Risks

47. A key principle being adopted in the programme’s governance is management by risk. A risk log is reviewed each week by officers so that risks are assessed and action identified in order to mitigate each risk. The risk log is also submitted to the monthly meeting with DCLG officials. A copy of the current risk log is at **Appendix F**.

Communications

48. The Central Bedfordshire brand and corporate identity were finalised by the Shadow Executive on 30 September. Since then work has been undertaken to produce the corporate identity guidance and governance arrangements. The corporate identity guidance has now been finalised, with the governance arrangements almost complete.
49. In parallel with the work on the corporate identity guidance and governance arrangements, an audit is underway across the three authorities of their current brand. This process is nearing completion. The aim of the brand audit is to identify the scale of implementing and rolling out the new corporate identity. Based on this audit work, and via initial discussions with managers across Central Bedfordshire, an indicative timetable for the rollout has been produced. This timetable still needs agreement from Members and Management Team. There are also a number of procurement issues that need addressing to ensure that the rollout is achievable and provides the best value for money.
50. The main challenges in relation to the implementation and rollout of the new corporate identity are around ensuring delivery of the branding (vehicles, signs, stationery) within acceptable timescales, to budget and complying with relevant procurement practices and procedures.

51. Communications with staff, Members and stakeholders is continuing via the regular newsletters. Work between communications and organisational development is underway to ensure that programmes are in place to develop and embed the new cultural identity of the organisation. Further work is planned to continue to raise the profile of the authority to residents, stakeholders, businesses, central government and the wider local government family.
52. The Minister of State for Local Government's visit was the first public use of the new Central Bedfordshire corporate identity. An exhibition which was also used for the Minister's visit has now been moved to the Dunstable office of South Beds District Council.

Finance

53. Officers have held three challenge days to focus on staffing, priorities and the emerging budget. A great deal of work remains to be done on the budget but is on track for consideration by Shadow Executive and Shadow Scrutiny in February.
54. All expenditure on the transition to Central Bedfordshire is managed centrally. The table below shows the transitional budget breakdown included in the December 2007 submission and commitments against that budget as at 6 November.

Budget Monitoring to 6 November 2008 (Against Transitional Budget)

Budget	Element	Spend (£s inc. Commitments to 31/03/09)	Remaining (£s)
0.50	Accommodation	135,465	364,535
0.90	Change management	1,555,981	- 655,981
0.10	Miscellaneous	49,452	50,548
0.70	Contract novation	0	700,000
4.80	I.T.	1,914,387	2,885,613
0.50	Training	10,492	489,508
0.20	Communications/ branding	102,024	97,976
0.70	Elections / democracy	95,628	604,372
0.30	Recruitment	354,828	- 54,828
0.60	Relocation	0	600,000
5.20	Early retirement	0	5,200,000
2.20	Redundancy	0	2,200,000
1.50	Closedown	0	1,500,000
18.20		4,218,257	13,981,743

55. As is clear from the table above, expenditure on change management is running higher than estimated when the transitional budget was calculated in early 2007. Change management costs are incurred on staffing and other related expenses during the transition period to the new unitary council. They include specialist fees to people and companies who have been employed to ensure a smooth transition in April 2009. Such expenditure is necessary to provide both specialist skills and additional resources.
56. The money for transitional expenditure comes from the reserves of the three existing councils and will need to be repaid to those reserves over a maximum five-year period after the creation of the new council. A budget of £18.2 million was set at the beginning of the unitary process for the transition costs. The costs were estimated very early on in the process and will inevitably turn out to be lower in some areas and higher in others. If total transition costs rise above the approved budget, Members can decide either to pay back more costs during the period originally agreed or extend the length of time to pay back the costs.
57. Officers are currently working on budget preparations for Central Bedfordshire which will include looking at these costs and how they can be effectively managed and minimised whilst at the same time maintaining an effective level of reserves. This will include ensuring that grants available to the council, which would decrease the gap between the budget and any possible additional costs, are fully identified and claimed.

Development Control Committee

58. The meeting of this Committee on 4 September considered the proposal for a single Development Control Committee covering the whole area of Central Bedfordshire and requested a report back to its next meeting on the issues raised.
59. A joint meeting of the Sustainable Development and Safer, Stronger Communities Member Transition Task Forces (now merged to form the Sustainable Communities Member Transition Task Force) met on the 6 October to give detailed consideration to the composition and arrangements of the future Development Management Committee. Their recommendations were subsequently considered by the Constitution and Governance Member Working Group, a sub-group of the Corporate Resources Transitional Task Force on 31 October and forwarded to all Members of the shadow authority for consultation. Comments were requested from Members by 19 November to enable their consideration by the Constitution and Governance Member Working Group on 26 November. To facilitate Members' understanding of the proposals and encourage a full response to the consultation a briefing session for all Members was arranged for 13 November in the council chamber at Priory House.

60. It is anticipated that the complete constitution for the Central Bedfordshire authority, will be considered by the Shadow Council on 26 February 2009.

Conclusion

61. The programme to create the new council has now reached the implementation phase. Most key senior management staff are in post (albeit some are having to balance twin workloads) and new governance arrangements are coming into shape, replacing the temporary arrangements set up in April.
62. Significant uncertainty is inevitable at this time as budgets are developed and County staff disaggregated to the two new councils. That period is now coming to a close and increased internal communication will be a high priority in the weeks ahead.
63. It has become clear in recent weeks that the balance of attention in the short term must be transition in order to ensure a seamless changeover on day one. Work will proceed on transformation but achieving the benefits from transformational change will be phased over at least three years.
64. Independent feedback tells us that the approach being taken to create Central Bedfordshire is well regarded by key partners for the way they are being involved in the formation of the new council.
65. The key challenges for the period between now and April 2009 are numerous but will be particularly concentrated in resources (staff, ICT, accommodation and budget); organisation and leadership (creating new officer directorates and teams, programme governance and preparing for new Member decision making arrangements); and communications (with residents, businesses, staff, Members and partners).
66. While a number of milestones have not been achieved on target, the programme overall is on or close to target. Management Team is aware of where the challenges lie and is taking action as appropriate. Huge progress has been made and we should all be confident that a successful transition will take place on 1 April 2009.

Background Papers: “Invitations to councils in England” DCLG, October 2006
“Bedfordshire (Structural Changes) Order 2008”

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

File Reference: CG3