

SHADOW EXECUTIVE
16 December 2008

SUBJECT	Creating Central Bedfordshire – Progress Report (To report on overall progress following the adoption of the Implementation Plan by Shadow Executive on 10 June 2008.)
REPORT OF	Programme Management Office
<i>Contact Officer: Simon Redmore (01462 611255)</i>	

IMPLICATIONS

SUSTAINABILITY	None arising from this report
FINANCIAL	As at 1 December £5.9m 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	None arising from this report
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/SAFETY	None arising from this report
TRADES UNIONS	None arising from this report
HUMAN RIGHTS	None arising from this report
KEY ISSUE	No
BUDGET/POLICY FRAMEWORK	No

OTHER DOCUMENTS RELEVANT TO REPORT

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| 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. |

RECOMMENDATION:

That a further report be made to the next meeting of the Shadow Executive

Reason for Recommendation: So that Shadow Executive can monitor progress and comply with the requirement of the Implementation Order regarding the need to maintain an implementation plan to deliver the new unitary authority.

Introduction

1. This is the seventh progress report to Shadow Executive since the Implementation Plan was agreed at the meeting on 10 June. The report follows the previously used format.
2. Sometime around February 2009, the DCLG intends carrying out a stock take of progress in all the local government 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. Officers will report back on this once more information has been received.

Overall Programme

3. Deloitte have carried out an independent health check on the programme and the officer governance structure. **Appendix A** summarises their findings and officers' proposed action. In summary, Deloitte recommended that an intensive focus on planning was needed before Christmas in order to pull the programme together and that there was need to add to the capacity of programme management. At the time of writing, the intensive planning phase has begun and an oral update will be given at the meeting.

Staffing

4. The organisation structure for Central Bedfordshire has now been concluded, with appointments made to the majority of senior posts. Veredus has been engaged as search consultant 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.
5. 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's 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.
6. Detailed mapping of staff to the new organisation structures is also under way and this will be completed once disaggregated County Council staff have been 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

7. The ICT work-stream 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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 is now in place. The key documents in this area will be a simple dashboard showing status, dependencies for ICT delivery document (already constructed and being sent to Management Team weekly) and a high-level programme plan. A summary of the plan is in preparation at the time of writing this report and it is hoped will have been circulated to Members by the time the Shadow Executive meets. An oral update will be given at the meeting.

Neighbourhood Arrangements

11. 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. Discussion will continue in order to finalise this number and take account of existing practice that mirrors the CAN concept.

12. It is clear that one size will not fit all and the aim must be to ensure that the successful model will add 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.
13. 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

14. 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. Terms of reference for the Shadow LSP have been agreed. The LSP will remain as "shadow" until the June 2009 elections.
15. 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.
16. 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.
17. An introductory meeting has 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.

Implementation Plan

18. A copy of the latest Implementation Plan is at **Appendix B**. 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 8 – CDRP partnership arrangements	Partners had not signed off the arrangements at the time of writing this report but were due to have done so by 5 December.
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 that would entail additional work and may trigger the need for more formal procurement which would take too long. It is expected that the work will be completed by 12 December.
Line 28 – ownership of transport routes and cross boundary recharging	Requires input of the client from each authority i.e. children’s and adult services. Meetings are due to take place imminently to agree this.
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.
Line 35 – ICT requirements / implementation plans for each service.	Working with Deloitte, a detailed plan has been prepared. Work is being focussed on priorities (Tribal education data; SAP; SWIFT) for day one.
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.

Communications

19. 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.
20. 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.
21. 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.
22. 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.

Finance

23. The table below shows commitments against the transitional budget as at 1 December.

Budget Monitoring to 1 December 2008 (Against Transitional Budget)

Budget	Element	Spend (£s inc. Commitments to 31/03/09)	Remaining (£s)
0.00	Employees & back-filling	491,860	-491,860
0.50	Accommodation	138,389	361,611
0.90	Change management	1,248,460	-348,460
0.10	Miscellaneous	2,092	97,908
0.70	Contract novation	0	700,000
4.80	I.T.	3,447,306	1,352,694
0.50	Training	10,492	489,508
0.20	Communications/ branding	85,804	114,196
0.70	Elections / democracy	117,531	582,469
0.30	Recruitment	354,846	-54,846
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		5,896,780	12,303,220

24. As covered in previous monitoring reports, the transitional budget remains under review. One change from previous budget monitoring summaries is that a line, "employees and back-filling" has been taken out from "change management".
25. Officers are currently working on budget preparations for Central Bedfordshire which will include looking at transitional 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.
26. 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.

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