

**TTF LEGACY REPORT – SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & HOUSING**

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**Chairman's Foreword**

When we first met as a Transitional Task Force (TTF), it was important to establish a councillor led vision. Our highest priority was that of the vulnerable people who use our services and making sure that the transition to unitary status was as smooth as possible. Secondly that wherever appropriate, services would not be shared especially where the ultimate accountability lay with the new authority and lastly that that by combining Health, Housing and Social Care together, we use this opportunity to redesign our service delivery in a more effective way.

In creating a new unitary, there were basically three options, stay the same and use gradual iteration to improve; use best practice from benchmarking; or become innovative in trying to become a leader in service provision. However, the usual restrictions of time, resources and most importantly putting the user at the heart of all we do, led to a healthy dose of pragmatism which limited to a large extent what could be radically changed.

As social care delivery nationally is already in a state of transformation, simply relying on the status quo was not an option. The new authority would have been at an immediate disadvantage if we hadn't taken account of this changing agenda. Consequently the work of the TTF was not only supporting transition arrangements but also looking at the ongoing national transformation agenda.

Establishing these aims early on meant the TTF, with portfolio holder, was able to support the officer led part of the process. This enabled a logical framework where the key decisions had a direct member led input and vision based guidance on other subsidiary issues. The timing of the TTF meetings was established so it linked in with this process. The TTF were very keen to do initial research on a topic so that decision making was informed and based on evidence.

The TTF enabled members of the task force to learn about the various service elements; understanding the intricate nature of service provision, engage key partners in dialogue and look to future partnership and third sector arrangements.

I hope that the work of the Social Care, Health and Housing TTF has provided a strong basis for transition arrangements and laid the groundwork for the continuing transformation and improvement of services for our residents in the new unitary authority.

Councillor Mike Gibson  
Chair of TTF

February 2009

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**Background**

As part of the Central Bedfordshire implementation strategy the Transitional Task Force (TTF) for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing was established as a cohesive group of Members working on the strategic direction for Social Care, Health and Housing. The work of the TTF focussed on research, policy development, advice and recommendations to the Shadow Executive on key transitional issues affecting service delivery within the new Directorate.

The work and achievements of the TTF, which are documented below, were guided by the following principles:-

- that change should be well managed
- there should be no detriment to service users
- integration of services should be maximised, both internally and externally with key partners such as other statutory providers and the third sector with added emphasis on health management
- opportunity to explore a partnership approach to improve the quality of services.

Whilst recognising the important constraint of budget pressures, the TTF provided invaluable support and guidance to the Portfolio Holder and Officers involved in progressing the formation of the Social Care Health and Housing Directorate. Their contribution was significant in maintaining momentum and ensuring the work programme was kept on course.

**Key Issues Considered by the TTF****Shared Services**

Consideration was given to the merit of sharing the following services with Bedford Borough Council and which authority could host service delivery, noting the legal obligations to ensure service delivery and safeguard people.

- Adult Social Care Commissioning
- Mental Health Commissioning
- Supporting People Services
- Drug and Alcohol Abuse Services

Taking into account changing demographics, coupled with Central Government policy to transform Adult Social Care and recognising that sharing services could yield both advantages and disadvantages, the TTF agreed the following recommendation:

The TTF considered that putting in place autonomous services for Adult Social Care would be more easily accomplished from Day One of Central Bedfordshire, thereby enhancing the identity of the new authority, reducing uncertainty and assisting staff retention.

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However, it was acknowledged that, where appropriate, collaborative and partnership working should be encouraged.

**Domiciliary Care Provision**

With current domiciliary care contracts provided by Bedfordshire County Council due for renewal, the TTF considered 3 options regarding the difficult issue of future contracts:

- To continue with procurement of new contracts
- To extend existing contracts
- Do nothing

The TTF recommended to the Shadow Executive to continue with procurement of new contracts and the Portfolio Holder duly approved the consent for the County Council to continue with the procurement process.

**BUPA Contract – Accommodation for Older People**

BUPA manage 13 residential homes on behalf of Bedfordshire County Council. The 12 year contract is due to expire in 2010. The TTF considered options for future provision beyond the end of the contract, taking into account issues of service delivery, accountability and cost. They decided to recommend the current BCC strategy to tender for future provision, on the basis that the options for Central Bedfordshire are not adversely constrained.

**Homelessness/Advice/Housing Options**

SBDC currently operate an in-house service for Homelessness and Housing Options, whereas MBDC outsource these services to Aragon Housing Association. The TTF considered 4 possible options for the future management of homelessness, housing options and housing register services.

The TTF felt that to compare provision by SBDC and Aragon was not the best way forward and in the short term, both should continue with the good service they currently provide. Looking to the longer term, the TTF recommended that providing the service in-house offered the best opportunity to integrate housing and adult social care and that consistency of decisions was of paramount importance. However, as the new Director's appointment was imminent, the TTF agreed that a Central Bedfordshire wide perspective on Housing should emerge, prior to a decision being taken on Housing Options.

**Welfare Rights and Anti-Poverty, including Macmillan Service**

The TTF considered the current role of the Welfare Rights Service which highlighted the opportunity to provide a cost effective and integrated outreach service to people in their own homes to calculate benefit entitlements and maximise income. The TTF heartily endorsed this initiative, which they felt would achieve an improved service whilst utilising existing resources to provide a 'one visit – one assessment' approach for all assessment purposes.

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**Partnerships**

The TTF considered the key role of partnership working for the new Directorate and highlighted:

- The importance of a partnership approach to adult strategic commissioning where Central Bedfordshire could link with other authorities such as Bedford Borough and Luton.
- Support for a LSP structure which works for Central Bedfordshire as a locality, whilst working within existing, effective structures, in order to maintain capacity.
- The creation of a Healthier Communities and Older People Group within the Local Strategic Partnership, drawing on a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Central Bedfordshire to replace the Adult Strategic Commissioning Partnership for Bedfordshire.
- Voluntary Sector and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector engagement.
- The important role of the directorate in engaging community support for health initiatives in areas such as mental health, obesity and smoking cessation.
- The role of housing and well-being services in tackling mental health and other health issues, and links with this to the task of building Sustainable Communities.
- Support for the LAA draft performance indicators for Adult Health and Well-being, Tackling Exclusion and Promoting Equality.

**Directorate Plan, Business Plans and Directorate Structure**

The TTF considered in detail the Directorate Plan, individual Business Plans and the future structure for the Directorate. Key recommendations were:

- Support for the proposal that Housing Strategy should sit within the Sustainable Communities Directorate, taking into account its relationship with Strategic Planning, on the basis that Directors maintain a close working relationship.
- That Private Sector Housing services should be positioned within the Directorate.
- On principle, that a Home Improvement Agency should deliver private sector housing and housing options services, hosted by Central Bedfordshire, but in partnership with and strongly influenced by the voluntary sector, thereby establishing a platform for preventative services which were closer and more accessible to vulnerable people.
- That homelessness, private sector housing and landlord services should all be kept together within a single team, a consideration which was reflected in the subsequent decision to create a Housing Service by amalgamating the Wellbeing through Prevention and Options Service with the Landlord Service.

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**Key Immediate Issues of Concern before Vesting Day**

The TTF were keen to ensure that a Risk Register was produced and updated regularly to take account of Day One Imperatives, which were considered to be as follows:

Area	Key Issues
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee structure and recruitment plan devised</li> <li>• Staff informed of new role and workbase, with relevant equipment in place</li> <li>• Management structure established, line management determined and communicated to staff</li> <li>• Customer Services – staff trained on interface processes</li> </ul>
Working arrangements/ regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent assessment of policies and procedures, including Safeguarding Protocols</li> <li>• Partnership arrangements reviewed and agreed</li> <li>• Contracts reviewed and agreed</li> <li>• SLAs agreed</li> <li>• Out of hours arrangements reviewed and agreed</li> <li>• Worksite Health and Safety arrangements to reflect staff changes</li> <li>• Registration processes completed for care homes and domiciliary care</li> <li>• Signage, ID badges, stationery amended</li> </ul>
IT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disaggregation of SWIFT</li> <li>• Relevant IT in place</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service users and carers informed of transfer to Central Bedfordshire</li> <li>• Tenants informed of new name of landlord</li> <li>• Information on how service users/carers can raise issues, complain and compliment services</li> <li>• Transport services – any changes to service communicated</li> </ul>

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Area	Key Issues
Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance data available and targets set for 2009/10</li> </ul>
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Budget and finance data available and accessible</li> <li>• Process in place for recharging for service users across boundaries</li> </ul>
Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JSNA updated and an interpretive document produced setting out key strategic messages for Central Bedfordshire.</li> <li>• New Healthier Communities and Older People Strategic Group established within the LSP structure.</li> </ul>

### Key Medium Term Issues – The Legacy for the New Council

With the medium to longer term considerations of providing high quality, autonomous, integrated services, the TTF looked ahead to areas where this vision could be progressed, as follows:

#### Specific Actions:

- District wide assessment of Housing prior to a decision being taken on Housing Options.
- Creation of a Healthier Communities and Older People Group within the new Central Bedfordshire LSP, underpinned by a 'vision' document, sponsored by the TTF and focussing on 'Social Care, Health and Wellbeing'; and embracing Housing.
- The provision of significant additional units of extra-care sheltered housing is critical to achieving outcomes for older people, this being achieved by 2015, and resulting from a corporate response, in particular, working closely on the growth agenda.
- Develop Strategy for Older People.

#### General Aspirations

- Continue the emphasis on the integration of services, such as the single assessment initiative.
- Focus on wellbeing through prevention services rather than reactive services.
- Remain mindful of an increasing ageing population and growing numbers of vulnerable adults, together with the resultant burgeoning financial cost of looking after older people in need of care. The TTF recognised this as an issue with cross-cutting implications requiring a corporate response at a strategic level.

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- Establishing the TTF has created a base of knowledge amongst the Members who participated in the meetings which can be transferred to the new council and further developed over the next 6 months.
- Consult with and involve existing communities in the development of new neighbourhoods; their housing, community facilities and transport links.
- Improved communication system (signposting, connecting people up) and the strength of the Council as a whole.
- Continue development opportunities for elected Members on the wider activities within the Directorate.