



Central
Bedfordshire
Together



Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2031

A prospectus for Central Bedfordshire

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Foreword

**By Councillor Tricia Turner MBE,
Chairman, Central Bedfordshire Together and
Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council**



I am proud to introduce this, our first Sustainable Community Strategy for Central Bedfordshire.

Since the creation of Central Bedfordshire on 1st April 2009, we have been on a challenging and very exciting journey. This strategy provides a prospectus for Central Bedfordshire, setting out what sort of place we want it to be. We have the opportunity to establish Central Bedfordshire as a vibrant, forward thinking, innovative and desirable place to live, work, visit and invest in. This challenge is being met with drive, passion and commitment by all involved.

Our ambition for the area is described in our vision statement:

**“Globally connected,
delivering sustainable
growth to ensure a green,
prosperous and ambitious
place for the benefit of all”**

Our vision is one of greater economic prosperity based on sustainable growth. We need to ensure that Central Bedfordshire fulfils its economic potential, and that there are more local jobs for local people. We will experience considerable population growth over the next 20 years and we need to make sure that we have the houses and facilities needed to support this growth, so that Central Bedfordshire remains a desirable place.

Importantly, our vision reflects the views of local people, communities and stakeholders and responds to their aspirations for Central Bedfordshire.

There are two key themes to delivering this vision:

- **creating the conditions for economic success and community prosperity**
- **raising standards and tackling inequalities**

We know that the only way we can achieve our vision is by ensuring that we continue to listen and respond to what our residents, businesses and communities are telling us. It is only by all of us working together that we can shape Central Bedfordshire to be the place we want it to be, both now and in the future.

This document sets out the high-level actions we will take to improve local services and to ensure we manage growth and build strong and sustainable communities. It provides an overarching single strategy for Central Bedfordshire, and each of the partners has developed their own plans and strategies that give the detail on the contribution they are making towards it.

I would like to thank everyone who has participated in the development of this strategy. I am looking forward to working together with you to successfully deliver it and seeing the improvements it will bring to our quality of life.

Why we have a Sustainable Community Strategy

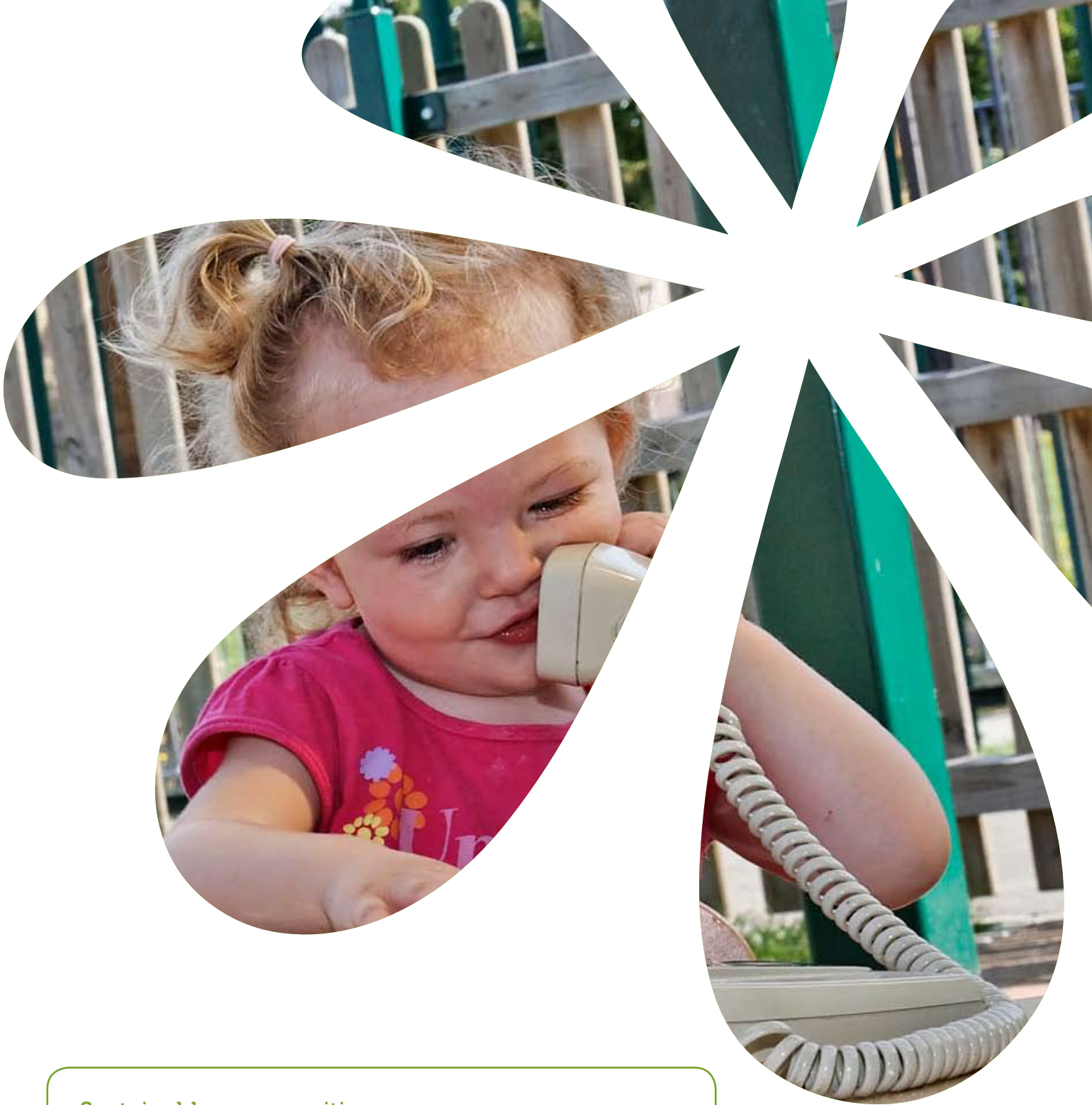
All local authorities have a duty to work with partners to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy. These strategies are all about improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area and the people who live there. In order to make a real difference, the strategy must focus on what's really important to local communities. It must help focus and shape the existing and future activity of all of the key public sector agencies, working in partnership together, and with local businesses and the voluntary and community sector in the area, to deliver sustainable communities.

Our Sustainable Community Strategy is based on a shared long-term vision for Central Bedfordshire that has been developed by Central Bedfordshire Together, which is the name for the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Senior representatives from Local Government, Police, Fire, Health, Education, Business, Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary and community sector collectively make up Central Bedfordshire Together.

The Board of Central Bedfordshire Together is responsible for developing this strategy, and ensuring we work together to achieve it. It ensures that the priorities identified in it reflect the views of our residents and communities and the issues that are most important to them, and would make a real difference to their lives. These priorities are supported by a wealth of evidence that will be published separately. The Board also draws on a shared understanding and agreement among partners about the key things we need to do to make Central Bedfordshire a globally connected, green, prosperous and ambitious place delivering sustainable growth for the benefit of all.

Central Bedfordshire Together is made up of five Statutory and Thematic Partnerships that work to develop and implement strategies and action plans for each of our priorities. These Partnerships are:

- Children's Trust;
- Healthier Communities and Older People Partnership;
- Community Safety Partnership;
- Stronger Communities Thematic Partnership; and
- Environment & Economy Thematic Partnership.



Sustainable communities are...

'... places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good service for all.'

(Definition from the Department for Communities and Local Government)

What it's like to live in Central Bedfordshire

- Central Bedfordshire is a mainly rural location in the East of England and is considered to be a highly desirable place to both live and work. Much of the area has either a suburban or rural feel, with picturesque villages, beautiful hamlets and historic market towns.
- Some 255,000 people live in Central Bedfordshire, with just over half of the population living in rural areas. The largest towns are Leighton Buzzard and Linslade, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Biggleswade, Flitwick, Sandy and Ampthill.
- The Chiltern Hills, an area of outstanding natural beauty, form a major feature in the south west, the Greensand Ridge runs eastwards through the area, and the Forest of Marston Vale provides over 30 square miles of woodlands in the north west. There are more than 30 sites of special scientific interest, as well as three national and 11 local nature reserves. Transport links include good regional and national rail lines and nearby Luton and Stansted airports, together with cycle routes of national and regional importance.
- The area is one of the most rapidly growing in England, and is planning for substantial additional development as part of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area.
- This planned housing and employment growth means that the population is expected to increase to over 320,000 by 2031. Affordable housing is an important local issue, as house prices are generally above average compared to other areas both regionally and nationally.
- In the near future, we will have a major new visitor attraction in the Center Parcs Holiday Village near Ampthill, complementing the already well known and popular Woburn Safari Park & Abbey, Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable Downs, and Shuttleworth Collection.
- Central Bedfordshire is home to world leading companies such as B/E Aerospace, Lockheed Martin, Nissan Technical Centre Europe, Amazon and Jordans Cereals. The area also has high quality educational institutions including Cranfield University and the University of Bedfordshire.
- More than 60 different languages are spoken at home by children in Central Bedfordshire schools. Around 10% of people living in the area are from ethnic minority communities, the largest of which are 'White Other' (not British or Irish), Indian and White Irish.
- Three quarters of people in Central Bedfordshire say they are Christians. Of the remainder, two thirds say they have no religious affiliation, and one third belong to other religions.
- Overall health in Central Bedfordshire is better than the UK norm. However, there are significant differences in health and life expectancy depending upon where people live, and by gender, income and ethnicity in some parts of the area.

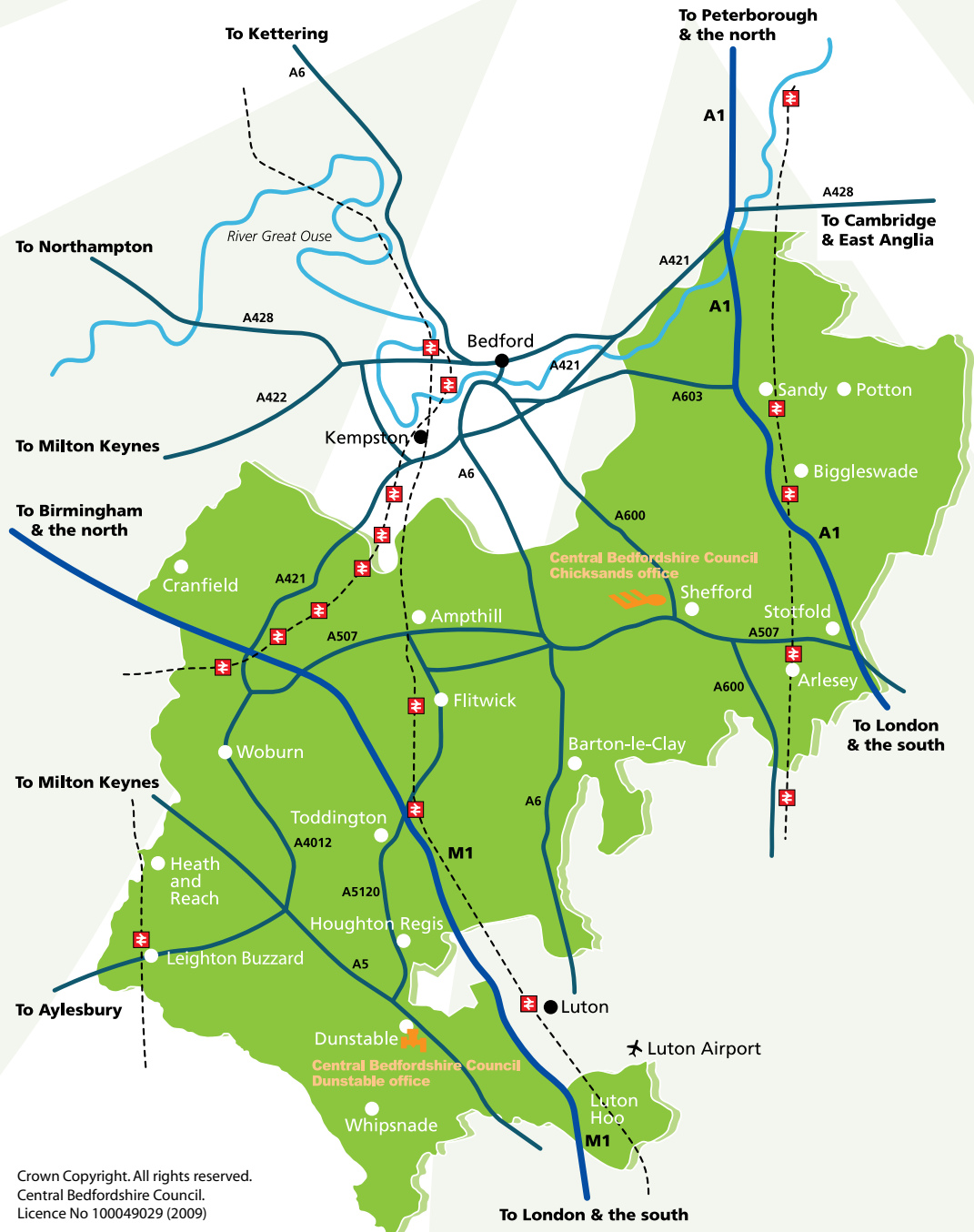


“Very rural communities still have excellent links to Central London”



- In overall terms, none of our communities have high levels of deprivation, particularly when compared to other areas in the rest of the country. However, for some of the individual aspects of deprivation, such as education and

crime, a small proportion of our communities fall into the worst 10% nationally. The most deprived areas in Central Bedfordshire are in parts of Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Leighton-Linslade, Flitwick and Sandy.



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Our vision

is to ensure that Central Bedfordshire is...

“Globally connected, delivering sustainable growth to ensure a green, prosperous and ambitious place for the benefit of all”

By 2031, this will mean that:

- Central Bedfordshire is a highly attractive, well-connected prime location for businesses to thrive in a global economy – generating over 23,000 new, wide ranging and sustainable jobs – with the area being renowned for innovative, high-tech, knowledge-based industries.
- Our business sector and diverse jobs market is supported by excellent education provision and access to a well-skilled workforce, driving a culture of enterprise and success and motivating people to look forward to a positive future.
- Every child has the best possible start in life, and by the age of 19 has the knowledge, skills and qualifications to give them the best chance of success.
- Investment to deliver the highest standards of design and planning has been made and our population has increased to over 320,000.
- 54,000 new homes have been built (since 2001) and we have improved our town centres, community facilities, roads and countryside.
- A choice of transport is available to take people to employment, education, healthcare, shops and other services, with less reliance on the car.
- People can easily access high quality leisure and cultural facilities and the natural environment, which are enjoyed by all.
- Our residents feel a real sense of belonging to their local community, and are actively involved in community life.
- People feel that Central Bedfordshire is a safe place.
- Our people are supported to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and there are fewer differences in life experience between communities.
- Central Bedfordshire has enhanced its reputation as a great place to live, work and visit.

Our themes and priorities

Our Sustainable Community Strategy has two key themes that underpin and support all of our priorities:

- creating the conditions for economic success and community prosperity
- raising standards and tackling inequalities.

These will help us to deliver improvements to the people and places of Central Bedfordshire, and are the 'golden threads' that support our eight priorities. The diagram below shows the relationship between our vision, at the centre, our priorities and the two overarching themes.



Our priority: Maximising employment opportunities and delivering housing growth to meet the needs of our communities

Outcome: Central Bedfordshire is a highly attractive, well-connected prime location for businesses to thrive in a global economy. More families are choosing Central Bedfordshire, with its high quality housing, as a place to live, work and enjoy.

In 2008 1,400 new jobs were created and 1,300 new businesses were registered

means

Stronger economic recovery, with more local jobs and better support for existing business to grow

means

Our people prosper and our communities thrive

means

Central Bedfordshire is recognised as a successful area and a prime location for business

Why it's important:

- Our population is going to continue to grow and we need to ensure we match this by attracting more employment opportunities into the area.
- Our residents feel that job opportunities in Central Bedfordshire are limited, and that they can get higher salaries by working outside the area.
- Unemployment is still comparatively low in Central Bedfordshire, but the recession has hit some areas and people more than others. It is notably higher in Houghton Regis and Dunstable, and is also generally higher among young people.
- 54,000 more houses are planned across Central Bedfordshire between 2001 and 2031 to meet the housing needs of our growing population.
- Our town and village centres are at the heart of our communities, and support to help them grow and thrive is critical to delivering economic success and great places to live.





How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will have:

- Delivered an economic vision and strategy to attract investment and delivered strong local employment growth.
- Actively promoted Central Bedfordshire as 'Open for Business' through new marketing and branding material, securing interest from businesses wanting to locate in the area.
- Listened to local businesses to identify their needs and developed a new Central Bedfordshire Business Engagement Framework to secure private sector leadership.
- Reduced youth unemployment by creating new local jobs for young people targeted at unemployment hotspots in the area, and worked with partners to help people on out of work benefits into jobs.
- Supported volunteering and social enterprises to flourish.
- Completed town centre plans that set out how we will guide and encourage investment in our high streets; enable access to public services and develop better public spaces for people to meet in, shop and enjoy.
- Helped people to access good quality, suitable housing by ensuring that at least 35% of our new homes are affordable.
- Delivered the £2.4m Greensand Ridge rural development programme.

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will have:

- Supported higher rates of business start ups, through collaboration with local universities and business support providers and promoting self employment.
- Released more employment sites, providing thousands of jobs in a range of sectors.
- Delivered improvements to our market towns to meet the needs of our growing population.
- Encouraged knowledge-based, innovative companies to establish in our area.
- Ensured that all new homes meet new sustainable home standards.

In the long term (10+ years) we will have:

- Developed industries and jobs in response to the need for a low carbon economy, and helped them to flourish.
- Delivered more than 23,000 new jobs by 2031.
- Ensured that Central Bedfordshire is recognised as a high performing area and is meeting its full potential as a high skilled economy.
- Nurtured vibrant and attractive town centres and villages with a strong sense of place and local character.
- Ensured that growth is well planned, and that any impact on our environment is minimised.
- Promoted Central Bedfordshire as a setting for businesses to start up and grow locally.
- Encouraged existing homes to fit adaptations to reduce the use of natural resources.
- Ensured that all accommodation is safe, healthy, accessible and affordably warm.
- Encouraged new industries to establish and develop in renewable and green technologies.
- Ensured more higher paid jobs are available locally.

Our priority: Ensuring our local people have the skills to prosper

Outcome: Local people are skilled and have access to new employment opportunities in a diverse and prosperous local economy. The local workforce has a strong, diverse skills base and has been developed in line with the growth agenda.



Why it's important:

- By helping local people to develop their skills we will build successful, sustainable communities.
- People in Central Bedfordshire are generally well educated and more than a quarter have degree-level qualifications. However, around 11,000 people from the area have no qualifications at all.
- Not all of our school leavers are realising their potential. In parts of Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Biggleswade and Sandy, young people are much less likely to go on to Higher Education.
- We need to ensure that local people have the right skills to access the increased number of job opportunities, and that they continue to develop their skills to keep pace with new technological developments.
- Our businesses need to recruit a stream of appropriately skilled workers to enable them to adapt and grow.



How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will have:

- Developed a new Employment and Skills Board delivering a Skills Strategy for people of all ages and delivered better outcomes for local people to access local jobs.
- Encouraged more young people, particularly from our most deprived areas, to take up Further and Higher Education.
- Motivated and supported all adults to achieve their first qualification and to develop an appetite to gain more.
- Identified the skills that our businesses need, and developed local provision to meet that need.
- Improved the employment prospects and life chances for those not in employment, particularly in our most deprived areas.

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will have:

- Ensured graduates staying or returning to Central Bedfordshire have the opportunity to work in high value knowledge-based businesses.
- Further developed a culture of enterprise, both through the education system and in our local communities.
- Taken opportunities to make sure our schools and colleges are available for the use and benefit of the whole community.
- Prioritised the funding provided for skills and training to support people on their path to employment.
- Increased the number of public and private businesses investing in training and skills development for their workforce.

In the long term (10+ years) we will have:

- Motivated our residents who have been out of employment for a long time to gain the skills they need to help them into work.
- Increased the number of skilled people in Central Bedfordshire to exceed the average for the greater South East area.
- Ensured that the local labour market meets the needs of local businesses.
- Supported local business resilience, growth and enterprise, including access to training.
- Improved access to learning via Apprenticeships, Further Education and Higher Education.
- Encouraged higher level skills and new industries generating local jobs for all, in a well performing economy.

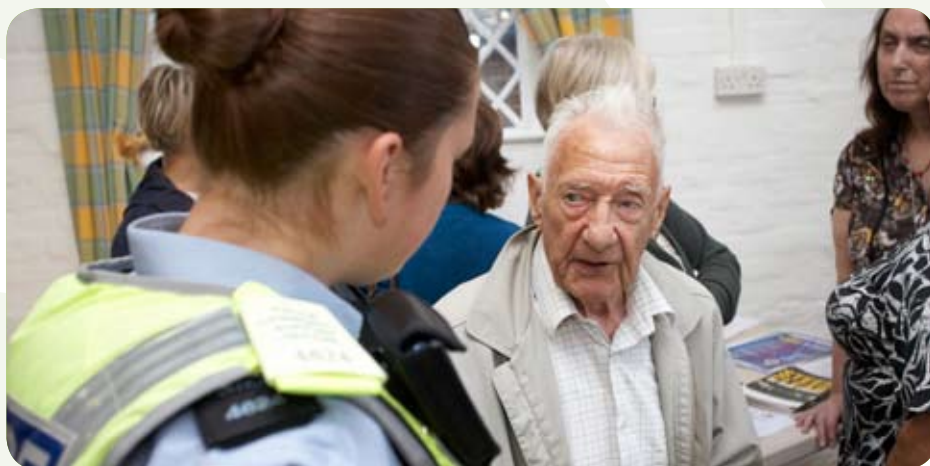
Our priority: Keeping our communities safe

Outcome: Levels of crime and disorder and antisocial behaviour are reduced, along with the harm caused by the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances. People are less afraid of crime and have increased confidence in the safety of their communities.



Why it's important:

- In general, crime in Central Bedfordshire is similar to the national average. However, despite a decrease in serious acquisitive crime (this relates to domestic burglary, robbery and vehicle crime) over the past year, it is still higher than in other similar areas.
- Nine in ten people in Central Bedfordshire feel safe outside in their local area during the day, but this drops to just over half after dark.
- Anti-social behaviour is not perceived to be a big problem. However, when asked, our residents say that their biggest issues are teenagers hanging around the streets; and vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles.
- In 2009, seven people were killed on Central Bedfordshire's roads, with a further 851 people injured, including 128 serious injuries.
- It is estimated that 10% of offenders are responsible for 50% of all crime. A key issue is to identify and deal with our persistent and other priority offenders.
- Substance misuse is an issue across our area, in terms of the night time economy, public order, binge drinking and the levels of criminal damage and anti social behaviour.
- Domestic violence accounts for around a quarter of all violent crimes reported to the police, with more than 2,000 incidents reported in Central Bedfordshire, and a high proportion of repeat incidents.
- As with many areas nationally, fear of crime is disproportionate to actual crime levels, and increasing the public's confidence in how local agencies are working together to improve the area is a priority in Central Bedfordshire.



“The crime rate is low compared to some places - people feel safe”

How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will have:

- Used the findings of residents’ surveys to respond to issues identified by our communities.
- Implemented an Integrated Offender Management Programme, to assist our work with persistent and other priority offenders.
- Provided support for offenders, alongside training for accommodation providers, to help secure suitable housing and reduce the likelihood of tenancy agreements being breached.
- Carried out visits to licensed premises across Central Bedfordshire combining the resources of various agencies to check, monitor and review licensees, particularly in relation to the sale of age restricted products.
- Set up more intervention and treatment programmes to help those adults and young people who are addicted to drugs and alcohol.
- Continued to support No Cold Calling Zones, ensuring our most vulnerable communities are kept safe.
- Sustained the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to address the most serious cases of domestic abuse, developing unique multi-agency action plans for each survivor.
- Continued to develop the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service, which currently supports survivors at highest risk, so that it also supports medium risk survivors.
- Increased the provision of diversionary activities for young people.
- Continued to reduce road accidents at known accident hot spots and among vulnerable road user groups.

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will have:

- Supported offenders by working with accommodation providers to secure a greater range of properties for those released from prison and moving on from Probation-approved premises, ensuring faster access to suitable housing located closer to the relevant support services.
- Developed a range of access routes for people to report domestic abuse, with a consistent multi-agency response across Central Bedfordshire.
- Designed new estates to reduce the likelihood of crime and anti-social behaviour, and to encourage safe routes to cycle and walk.

In the long term (10+ years) we will have:

- Reduced re-offending, with a particular focus on the small number of offenders who commit most crime in our communities.
- Reduced offending and the harm caused in our communities through substance misuse, including drugs and alcohol.
- Reduced crime, particularly serious acquisitive crime, which includes burglary, vehicle crime and robbery.
- Reduced incidents of anti-social behaviour by co-ordinating a multi-agency approach with partners.
- Reduced repeat incidents of domestic abuse by providing advisory and professional support services for all those affected by, or at risk of domestic abuse.
- Used engineering, education and enforcement to make our roads safer and reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads.

Our priority: Nurturing a sense of pride and belonging

Outcome: Vibrant, strong, cohesive and sustainable communities where people feel a sense of identity and belonging, are actively involved in place-shaping and the social, cultural and environmental life of the community, and where public services are responsive and accessible to all.

In 2009 779 people took part in 'Get Back Into Sport' events, which enables those involved in sport in the past to take it up again

means

People and communities come together to learn new skills, make new friends and create new networks

means

Building confidence and strengthening people's voices

means

People feel involved, heard and able to influence local decisions about their area

Why it's important:

- Many of Central Bedfordshire's residents feel a strong sense of belonging and that they can influence local decisions, yet almost a quarter say they would like to be more involved in local decision making. One in five of our residents volunteers on a regular basis.
- We need to break the poverty cycle. People living in lower income families face significant difficulties that impact on their health, wellbeing, relationships and life opportunities. Just over a quarter of children in Central Bedfordshire live in low income families, rising to almost half in parts of Houghton Regis and Dunstable. A child born into a low income family is more likely to die from an accident in childhood, have low educational achievement, turn to crime, and as an adult live and raise their own children in poverty.
- A quarter of adults in Central Bedfordshire achieve the recommended levels of physical activity, which is higher than the average for England.
- Around half of all adults in the area use a public library and a similar number visit a museum or gallery.



How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will have:

- Enriched people's lives by encouraging participation in regular volunteering, sport and physical activity, and in the arts and cultural activities.
- Promoted active community engagement by providing opportunities for everyone to take part in community life, and developing and supporting a thriving voluntary and community sector.
- Built a sense of identity and belonging by enabling more people to influence decisions in their locality if they wish, and empowering and supporting people to manage their local community facilities.

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will have:

- Lessened inequality by reducing the number of people living in poverty, providing easily accessible, high quality welfare advice and information services and encouraging creativity and lifelong learning.

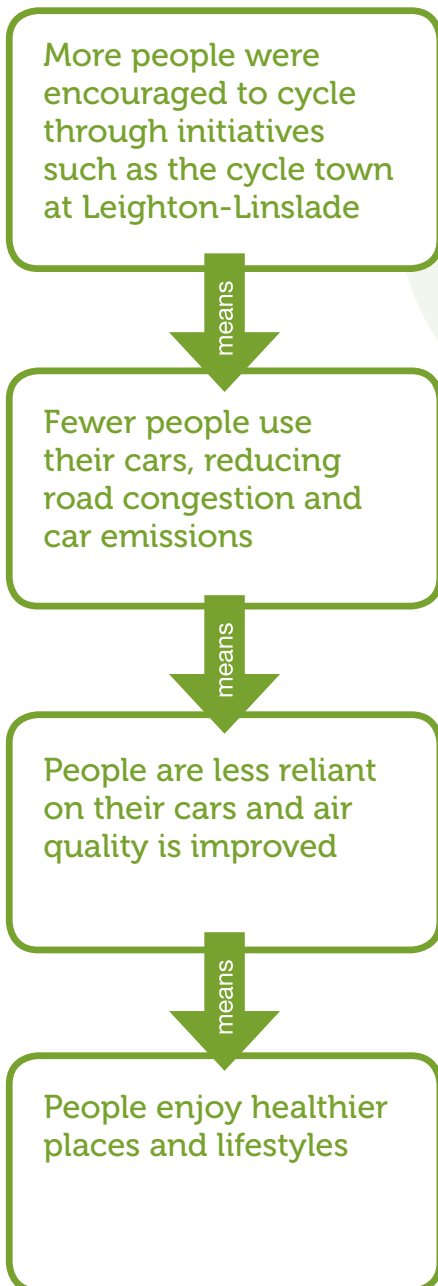
In the long term (10+ years) we will have:

- Ensured that housing and economic growth is accompanied by adequate social infrastructure and supports the development of strong and vibrant communities.



Our priority: Getting around and caring for a green and clean environment

Outcome: Central Bedfordshire is recognised as a well-connected location where people have a good choice of different ways they can travel. Our natural environment and green spaces are an important part of our local character, and people are supported to live sustainably and to make the most of their local area.



Why it's important:

- Our residents are particularly proud of our rural communities and open spaces, and consider them to be one of the key benefits of living in Central Bedfordshire. We need to protect, care for and improve our green environment, heritage, arts and culture.
- Central Bedfordshire has more than 1,900 listed buildings, including churches and grand properties, such as Woburn Abbey, as well as thatched cottages, farmhouses and Victorian school buildings. There are more than 80 protected archaeological sites in the area, as well as several hundred other significant sites ranging from the Palaeolithic (125,000 years ago) to World War II.
- Our residents say we need to improve our roads, and businesses need a reliable road network. Accessibility in the area is generally good, although some rural areas do have problems of poor access, and at peak times some of our roads are congested.
- Air quality is poor in some areas, particularly in some of our town centres and alongside our major road corridors.
- The impacts of climate change in the area will include increased pressure on water resources and increased risk of flooding. We need to ensure that growth in the area responds to these impacts, particularly where natural resources are limited.
- Central Bedfordshire's carbon footprint is lower than the UK average, but remains four times that of developing countries.
- Almost half of all waste produced in Central Bedfordshire is recycled or composted, but the remainder still goes to landfill.
- Investment is needed to improve our transport system and community facilities, as well as our green and public spaces.



How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will have:

- Reduced the amount of waste we produce, and maximised opportunities to reuse, recycle and identify sustainable waste solutions.
- Continued to tackle illegal flytipping and reduced environmental crime.
- Completed and seen benefits from improvements to our road networks, including:
 - dualling the A421 to the M1 junction 13;
 - widening the M1 from junction 10 to 13 and developing junction 11a; and
 - completing the Woodside road connection in Houghton Regis.
- Begun initial works on the Luton Dunstable Guided Bus Way and promoted a wide range of schemes across the area to encourage people to walk, cycle or use public transport.
- Delivered a road to rail freight facility.
- Improved and increased access to our countryside and recreation activities and extended green spaces alongside our sites of housing growth.
- Found new viable uses for our listed buildings and sites of historical interest to keep our heritage and culture alive.
- Encouraged people and businesses to buy and supply locally.

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will have:

- Delivered a waste treatment facility.
- Ensured that accessibility is considered at all stages of the development and planning process, and that new developments have good access to a range of services.

- Supported our residents to reduce their household energy costs and live more sustainable and active lifestyles.
- Developed a comprehensive cycling network across Central Bedfordshire connecting our communities to local facilities and to national and regional cycle routes.
- Completed the link road between the A5 and the M1, and delivered the north Luton bypass linking the A6 to the A505.

In the long term (10+ years) we will have:

- Protected, enhanced and raised awareness of our biodiversity, landscape, historical environment, green spaces and paths.
- Ensured that all housing developments are of a high standard, are water and energy efficient, and consider the effects of climate change.
- Enabled people to get about easily with minimum impact on our environment.
- Supported action to create a healthy environment, with reduced air pollution and contamination.
- Adapted to the effects and limited the causes of climate change and extreme weather conditions.
- Reduced levels of congestion and air pollution that could be caused by the increases in traffic levels.
- Designed and built new neighbourhoods with the necessary local facilities, designed to encourage sustainable methods of transport with less reliance on the car.
- Significantly increased the reuse, recycling and composting of waste.

Our priority: Promoting health and reducing health inequalities

Outcome: Overall health and well-being is good; there are fewer health inequalities across our communities and people are supported to have healthier lifestyles. People have more choice and access to high quality services based on their needs and preferences.



Why it's important:

- The overall health of people in Central Bedfordshire is good. The main causes of early deaths for people aged under 75 are cancer (43%) and circulatory diseases including heart disease and stroke (23%). This is in line with the national picture.
- Although generally affluent, Central Bedfordshire does have differences in health outcomes between its communities. For instance, men living in the most deprived areas can expect to live five years less than men in the least deprived areas.
- These differences in our health are most likely to be seen in areas of high deprivation and also among vulnerable groups of people, such as homeless people, the prison population, looked after children, people with disabilities, people with mental health conditions, ethnic minorities and gypsies and travellers.



How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will have:

- Ensured a healthy start to life by increasing access to high quality antenatal and postnatal care.
- Supported more people to stop smoking.
- Delivered NHS Health Checks to people aged between 40 and 74.
- Increased the uptake of breast, cervical and bowel cancer screening.
- Supported more people to be more active and eat healthily.

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will have:

- Worked with partners to address the wider determinants of health, such as education, housing and poverty.
- Reduced the number of people admitted to hospital through alcohol-related illness.
- Further strengthened Primary Care services to make sure that people are provided with care closer to their homes.
- Improved prevention and early detection for people at risk of cardiovascular disease (heart disease / stroke / diabetes), cancer and mental illness including dementia, and ensured high quality treatment once diagnosed.

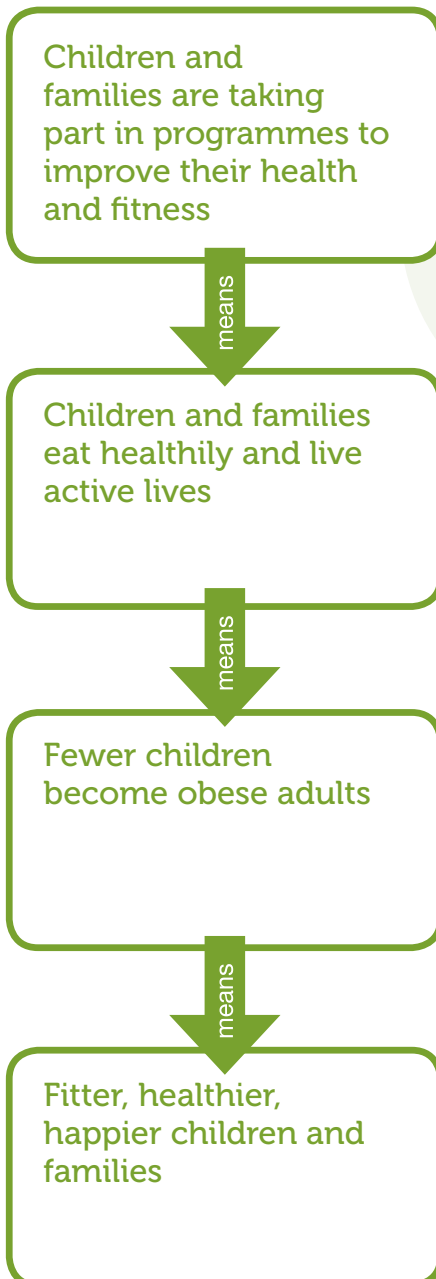
In the long term (10+ years) we will have:

- Reduced differences in our health by focusing on people in areas and communities with the poorest health.



Our priority: Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people

Outcome: Every child in Central Bedfordshire enjoys their childhood and has the best possible start in life. Every child does well at school, makes friends and builds strong relationships. By the age of 19, every young person has the knowledge, skills and qualifications that will give them the best chance of success, so that they are prepared to take their full place in society as a happy, healthy, contributing and confident citizen.



Why it's important:

- In 2009 GCSE results for Central Bedfordshire pupils were the same as the average for schools in England. Compared to our statistical neighbours performance is relatively low at GCSE level and results have not risen at the same rate as other schools nationally.
- A quarter of 10-11 year olds in Central Bedfordshire are overweight, including one in seven who are obese. Research shows that obesity in children leads to obesity in adulthood and is a significant factor in the development of conditions such as diabetes and heart disease in later life.
- The percentage of young people aged 16-18 who are not in education, employment or training is around 6% in Central Bedfordshire. Non-participation in education, employment or training after compulsory education is a major predictor of later unemployment, low income, depression, involvement in crime and poor mental health.





How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will have:

- Kept a focus on safeguarding children and young people by strengthening the activities of the Children's Trust, a Statutory partnership made up of all the key local agencies.
- Brought together teams in local areas made up of staff from the NHS, Council, Police, voluntary and community sector and other partner organisations so that they can provide easy access to support that children and families need.

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will have:

- Ensured that schools develop and implement plans for children and young people to move smoothly between schools and to develop the skills, qualities, competencies and capabilities necessary for a 21st century society and economy.
- Offered a wide variety of services for children and young people in local communities, and set up health, education and social care services as multi-agency teams using seamless systems to support families.

In the long term (10+ years) we will have:

- Supported children and young people to lead healthy lifestyles, have good mental and emotional health and be able to make responsible decisions in relation to drugs, alcohol and sexual health.
- Continued to protect children and young people from harm by an increasingly integrated approach to early intervention and safeguarding across all agencies.
- Transformed teaching and learning and strengthened leadership to ensure that every school and early years setting is at least good.

- Worked with employers, colleges and schools to increase the range and quality of local training, volunteering and job opportunities.
- Used the creative talents of young people to create positive role models throughout our communities.
- Inspired our most vulnerable young people to raise their aspirations and provide them with integrated support.



Our priority: Supporting and caring for an ageing population and those who are most vulnerable

Outcome: Older people, carers and those who are vulnerable feel valued as citizens within their communities, are safe and in good health with choice and independence and have equal and timely access to high quality health and social care services.



Why it's important:

- We have an ageing population that is expected to increase significantly, with more people needing care and support. The number of people aged over 65 is projected to increase by over 50% by the year 2021, from 35,900 to 55,000. An even higher rate of increase, of almost 65%, is projected for those aged over 75.
- With an ageing population, the number of people with dementia is also expected to increase significantly, as dementia predominantly affects people aged over 65. There are currently around 2,400 people with dementia in Central Bedfordshire and this is projected to double by 2028.
- Three quarters of people in Central Bedfordshire own their own homes. A significant proportion of these are households with people of pensionable age, who are likely to need care and support as they get older and wish to remain in their own homes.
- The number of people acting as unpaid carers is expected to increase as the population ages. In 2001 more than 21,000 people provided unpaid care. Around 3,400 of these were aged 65 or over, and the number of older people who are carers is forecast to double by 2030.
- Poverty among older people is a particular issue in some parts of Central Bedfordshire, affecting almost a third of older people in parts of Sandy, Dunstable, Houghton Regis and Flitwick. Some households also suffer from fuel poverty, which particularly affects people in rural areas.



How we will achieve it:

In the short term (3-5 years) we will have:

- Focused on prevention and early intervention, ensuring that good information, through signposting, advice and advocacy is provided to promote independence.
- Ensured people with care needs are safeguarded from abuse.
- Introduced an Enabling Homecare Service so that people are helped to remain independent and have a better quality of life.
- Worked closely with service users and carers to develop services and care packages that are tailored to people's needs and preferences.
- Provided integrated care and support to people with dementia and their carers, including raising awareness and understanding of dementia.
- Enabled greater access to Telecare, which uses technology such as fall sensors and gas detectors to provide support in the home.
- Ensured people who are funding their own care are not disadvantaged and are supported to access appropriate and timely services.
- Ensured carers feel valued and supported to have a life of their own and are able to continue to provide care even during complex times.

In the medium term (5-10 years) we will have:

- Ensured a seamless approach to care services with health and social care working together to provide intensive support for people leaving hospital to help them regain the skills necessary for daily living.
- Increased access to a range of personalised support packages and services to enable people with care needs stay in their own homes for as long as possible.

- Supported the voluntary and community sector to develop a wider range of preventative services and build capacity for support networks in communities.
- Developed a shared vision for mental health services that enables us to work with our partners towards supporting people with mental health issues.
- Supported vulnerable people to achieve and maintain independent living, including access to meaningful training and paid employment, particularly for young people to help them prepare for adult life.

In the long term (10+ years) we will have:

- Continued to drive up standards of care whilst providing people with more choice over how their care needs are met.
- Developed a broader range of supported housing options for older people and vulnerable groups, including extra-care housing.
- Put people more in control of their own health and care and improved options for self directed care.
- Improved outcomes and experience of people with dementia and their carers.
- Supported and developed services offered through service user groups, self help groups and voluntary and community organisations.

How we will report on progress and delivery

How we will report on progress and delivery

- Central Bedfordshire Together has agreed the shared vision and priorities set out in this Sustainable Community Strategy. All of our partners are committed to working together to provide the best possible outcomes for our residents.
- Our five Statutory and Thematic Partnerships will develop action plans to set out how they will achieve each of the priorities. These action plans will be monitored on a quarterly basis through the Central Bedfordshire Together Board. We will also produce an annual statement to our local communities reporting on performance against our priorities.
- As well as agreeing joint action plans through the Partnerships, each of the partner organisations will continue to develop their own plans and strategies, giving detailed information on the contributions they will be making to our shared vision.
- We will review the Sustainable Community Strategy every year, and refresh it every three years. This will help us to make sure that the Sustainable Community Strategy continues to reflect the priorities for Central Bedfordshire, based on the views of our residents and the latest available evidence for the area.

If you want to know more about the Local Strategic Partnership

Please contact Peter Fraser, Head of Partnerships and Insight at Central Bedfordshire Council.

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or visit: www.centraltogether.org.uk



About the Local Strategic Partnership

Central Bedfordshire Together provides the vision and strategic direction to improve the quality of life for all in Central Bedfordshire, by encouraging local partnership working across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

