

Town & Parish Council Conference

29 April 2009



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Introduction

The 1 April 2009 brought about a landmark change in how public services are delivered to the people of Central Bedfordshire with the creation of the new unitary Council. Our vision for Central Bedfordshire is based on bringing local government closer to communities. We can't do this on our own and working together with Parish & Town Councils is vital to achieving this vision.

All Parish & Town Councils in Central Bedfordshire were invited to attend our first Central Bedfordshire Parish and Town Council Conference. The conference was an opportunity to build on our existing relationship and ensure it is productive and rewarding in the future.

At the conference over 100 Parish & Town Council representatives had a chance to network with colleagues and talk to our front-line service delivery teams, meet our Directors and Assistant Directors and talk with us about how we can work better together for the benefit of our residents.

This report provides a write up of all the comments and feedback we received plus answers to every question that delegates left on the question cards provided.

We are building your key issues into our forward thinking to ensure that many of the issues you raised will be addressed within our service plans. We have already actioned some of the feedback, such as arranging more Project Involve training and using the feedback to inform a first draft of our community engagement strategy.

Thank you to all those of you who were able to participate as your involvement is critical to our joint working for the benefit of all our communities. We will be able to update you on progress at the next Town & Parish Council Conference, which will be held on 4th November 2009 at Priory House, Chicksands. Please put this date in your diaries.

Finally, these conferences are not one-off events and we will continue to consult with you in between times through a variety of means.



Tricia Turner
Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council

P.E. Turner.

Conference Objectives

Upon arrival we asked all delegates how well informed they felt and tested this again using our interactive voting buttons at the end of the conference. The results – both before and after – are shown below:

Conference Objective Voting Questions

Q1. How informed do you feel about the vision for Central Bedfordshire Council?

	Before (%)		After (%)		Difference (%)	
Very informed	8	41	29	81	21	40
Quite informed	33		52		19	
Not very informed	43	59	15	19	-28	-40
Not informed at all	16		4		-12	

Q2. How informed do you feel about Central Bedfordshire Council's priorities?

	Before (%)		After (%)		Difference (%)	
Very informed	6	39	18	75	12	36
Quite informed	33		57		24	
Not very informed	45	61	22	25	-23	-36
Not informed at all	16		3		-13	

Q3. How informed do you feel about the services Central Bedfordshire Council is responsible for?

	Before (%)		After (%)		Difference (%)	
Very informed	38	75	29	77	-9	2
Quite informed	37		48		11	
Not very informed	23	24	22	23	-1	-1
Not informed at all	1		1		0	

Q4. How informed do you feel about how to contact Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service at central Bedfordshire Council?

	Before (%)		After (%)		Difference (%)	
Very informed	25	58	38	77	13	19
Quite informed	33		39		6	
Not very informed	19	44	16	23	-3	-21
Not informed at all	25		7		-18	

Communications

After presentations from the senior management team, roundtable discussions considered what works well in terms of communications, what needs improving and any new ideas. This was followed by a voting exercise on the preferred methods of communication. The results of the vote and a summary of the table discussions is detailed below.

1. Communications - Voting questions

Q1. Which of these is your most preferred method of communicating with the council?

	%
Face to face contact – with officers	50
Electronic communication – such as e-zines, websites and email	28
Conventional written communication – including hard copy newsletters	16
Networking events – such as these conferences	7

Q2. Which one of these is your most preferred way of communicating with officers of Central Bedfordshire Council?

	%
Regular information about contact officers in all services	47
Dedicated officer “friend” at the council to act as a key contact	27
Regular officer attendance at your council meetings	26

Q3. Which one of these is your most preferred method of receiving information?

	%
Targeted letters and/or emails – relevant specifically to your organisation	60
Shared communication channels - partnership portals for exchanging news and views.	29
Partnership newsletters - from Central Bedfordshire Council	11

Communications – a summary of the roundtable discussions

Q1. What is working well and should be maintained?

- Emails to Clerks, but would like hard copies of attachments, and particularly large documents
- Direct contact numbers/ key contacts, which are regularly updated
- Officers, Members and Police attending Parish and Town Council meetings
- Parish & Town Council events/ conferences
- News Central Magazine
- The highways helpdesk and Watchman service is good
- Community Liaison Forums and Community Safety Forums are cited as good.

Q2. Issues we need to learn from or improve?

- Lack of response from some officers; queries not given a priority
- Information overload; excessive emails some not relevant; documents too large – need executive summaries and plain English
- More meetings in the evening to encourage attendance
- Planning – feedback on decisions required, engage earlier, early involvement in S.106 agreements, remove 3 minute rule to speak at planning meetings

Q3. New ideas or information exchange between Town and Parish Councils and Central Bedfordshire Council?

- A-Z of services
- Contact details (officers and Members)
- More out of hours contact
- Maintain continuity of dialogue even when officers change
- More face to face contact and officer and Member attendance at Parish and Town Council meetings
- Executive summaries on consultation documents including key questions

During the roundtable discussions any comments were recorded on a 'dialogue mat' on each table. A full copy of all of the comments is recorded in Appendix 1.

Community Engagement and Development Support

Delegates heard about the model being developed to better engage with our communities, and how the Council will work with and support Parish & Town Councils. After this the second roundtable discussions considered how Parish & Town Councils could work together, and with the Council, to solve community issues, improve community led planning and deliver devolved services. The discussions also considered what additional support the Council should provide. The discussions were followed by a voting exercise on the preferred approach to tackling local problems and the benefits of large events for discussing key issues. The results of the vote and a summary of the table discussions is detailed below.

2. Community Engagement & Development Support - Voting questions

Q1. What is your preferred approach to tackling local issues?

	%
Working with neighbouring parishes	74
Working in clusters of parishes with the neighbouring Town	21
Working with non-neighbouring parishes	5

Q2. How helpful are group events for discussing key issues in your locality?

	%
Very helpful	38
Helpful	37
Not very helpful	16
Not helpful at all	9

Q3. How often would you like a Town and Parish Council conference hosted by Central Bedfordshire Council?

	%
Twice a year	52
More often	27
Annually	21

Community Engagement & Development Support – a summary of the roundtable discussions

Q4. Agree with the concept of working together to solve common issues?

- Most agreed clusters should be issue-led
- A few felt clustering based on geography was also important – model needs to be flexible
- Strong leadership from Central Bedfordshire Council required
- Towns and Parishes are different and should be treated differently

Q5. What support can we (Central Bedfordshire Council) provide to help make Parish Plans more effective?

- Admin support
- Funding
- Be clear what we want from Parish plans – how aspirational should they be? What is achievable?
- Smaller parish councils don't have the capacity
- Central Bedfordshire Council to facilitate small parishes joining up
- Take more notice of the plans/ process for adoption by Central Bedfordshire Council

Q6. What areas, if any, would Town and Parish Councils want to consider taking on as devolved services?

- Common suggestions – grass cutting, hedge cutting, weed control, street cleaning, footpath maintenance, minor road and path maintenance
- Concerns about adequate funding and capacity, some councillors are volunteers
- Need to support Parish and Town Councils with skills training
- More flexibility on how to pass on funding to Parish and Town Councils

Q7. What other support can CBC provide to help Town and Parish Councils carry out their community roles more effectively?

- Training – for Clerks and Councillors (induction, code of conduct, responsibilities)
- Training on Planning
- Support to gain Quality Status – and some reward for achieving it
- Project Involve
- Support through the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils (BATPC)
- Funding
- Help promote Parish and Town Councils e.g. Parish newsletters

During the roundtable discussions any comments were recorded on a 'dialogue mat' on each table. A full copy of all of the comments is recorded in Appendix 2.

Questions and answers

Throughout the conference if delegates had any questions that were not being considered as part of the roundtable discussions they were encouraged to write their query on one of the 'question cards' left on each table. A total of 50 questions were collected and these are listed below along with a response to each.

Question Cards

Number	Question / Comment	AD Response
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Conference Feedback

1	Working on own was not an option for Town and Parish Councils to choose	The questions were designed to gain a greater understanding of how Town and Parish Councils could work together on common issues. Peter Fraser
2	Can all the presentations be sent electronically to all the Town Clerks?	Copies of the presentations were emailed to all Town and Parish Clerks shortly after the conference and are available on the Council's website. Peter Fraser
3	What is this "panel of local representatives"?	The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 requires local authorities to consult and reach agreement with local people via a "panel of representatives" before submitting proposals to central Government. The legislation and guidance says only that they must be made up of 'representatives of local persons'. This is defined as 'a balanced selection of the individuals, groups or organisations the authority considers likely to be affected by, or have an interest in the proposal'. In this context, the term 'representative' does not refer to formally elected or nominated members of the community such as councillors or officeholders in community organisations (although such individuals are not excluded from taking part in panels). Peter Fraser

4	What are citizen panels and how can we use them?	<p>A citizen, or resident, panel is a group of people who are broadly representative of the population in terms of where they live and characteristics such as age, gender and ethnicity. Central Bedfordshire Council jointly runs a large panel with Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service and Bedfordshire Police Authority called BedsVoice, consisting of 5,000 residents across Bedfordshire (excluding Luton). All of the panel members have agreed they are willing to be consulted about local issues. If a Town or Parish Council wanted to use the panel they would need to contact the relevant panel members (through Central Bedfordshire Council) to ask them if they would be happy to take part in the Town and Parish Council consultation. This is required to satisfy the data protection requirements. There would be a charge to the Town and Parish Council for this initial correspondence. Peter Fraser</p>
5	Will you please pass the views of Town and Parish Councils back to Central government instead of just towing the line that is fed to you by them?	<p>Central Bedfordshire Council officers and Members regularly meet with senior colleagues from regional government (via GO-East) and Whitehall departments, and take every opportunity to feedback views from the area. Peter Fraser</p>
6	Will Parish Forums return and if so will there be funding and admin support?	<p>The Council is committed to delivering a robust approach to Community Engagement - ensuring collaborative working that maximises the quality of services and opportunities for the residents of Central Bedfordshire.</p> <p>Our work to date has identified very mixed views on the need / benefit of area based forums. Whilst there are no plans to implement specific parish forums, we are committed to supporting area based work where the uniting of parishes will accelerate the resolution of common community-based problems.</p> <p>Ian Porter</p>

7	Is this the only example of 2 way communication?	<p>The Town and Parish Council Conference, which will be held twice-yearly, is one example of our pledge to ensure strong 2-way communication. We are keen to build a productive and honest relationship with all Town and Parish Councils and, on request, we will look to attend your meetings on an ad-hoc basis where we can help to drive forward a community initiative and / or solve a common problem. Our individual directorates will hold bespoke events / dialogue with Town and Parish Councils on specific matters and we will run a number of consultations on both corporate cross-cutting matters and service specific ones. In consulting with you, we will not shy away from the answers. Where we cannot do something, we will explain why.</p> <p>Ian Porter</p>
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Performance

8	Are the target points used to measure performance well spread to ensure the whole CB organisation runs well – or is it just the measured points? Bob Dicker, Gravenhurst Parish Council	<p>On an annual basis, the Council will set performance targets set for all areas across the organisation. The Local Area Agreement for Central Bedfordshire is a set of targets agreed with Central Government for nationally and locally agreed priorities. Ian Porter</p>
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Project Involve

9	What is going to happen to Project Involve training (Beds CC website provision for Towns and Parishes). Lyn Lyman - email address provided for a response	<p>Training will be provided on the following dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 17th July 2009 - 10th September 2009 <p>Further training dates will be announced in due course. All those who have previously expressed interest in receiving training have been contacted accordingly. Anyone else who is interested should contact Rachna Shah on: 0300 300 6018</p> <p>Peter Fraser</p>
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Other

10	Are we being “cloned” by Central Government? Who only understand Metropolitan and countryside and have no rural market town policy.	<p>Whilst Central Government continue to work with us on the implementation of the new unitary council and the delivery of the pledges made in our bid for unitary status, Central Bedfordshire Council has set its own vision and its own set of strategic priorities – based on those issues that are most important / relevant to the characteristics of the Central Bedfordshire area.</p> <p>Ian Porter</p>
11	Do you believe in unelected Quangos faceless i.e. Eastern Regions. What authority does E. Region have over Central Beds. An unnecessary cost. George Wilson, Biggleswade Town Council	<p>Central Bedfordshire Council is keen to work closely with any regional authorities that can assist the area in delivering its vision. The Council will work in partnership with a wide range of partners and stakeholders to ensure that regional policy is influenced by local priorities. Peter Fraser</p>

Police

12	As the police authority is no longer considered the worst in the country, what actual process has been used to raise all those critical achievements?	<p>There is no short answer to this. Changes that have taken place are many but some key ones are:-</p> <p>Force restructure to create following directorates</p> <p>Territorial Policing (response, neighbourhood policing, Criminal Justice, community safety etc.),</p> <p>Protective Services (specialist departments such as SB, Child and adult protection, Drugs and serious Crime etc.)</p> <p>Corporate Services (Finance, Estates etc.)</p> <p>Changes of personnel in key positions</p> <p>Greater co-operation across directorates (Team Bedfordshire approach)</p> <p>HR processes that support front line staff</p> <p>HR Planning – recruiting up to establishment</p> <p>Leadership and coaching</p> <p>Implementation and embedding of the Neighbourhood Policing model</p> <p>Improvement to Criminal Justice processes</p> <p>Creation of a Citizen Focus division and embedding concept throughout the organisation. Neil Wilson, Bedfordshire Police</p>
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13	Far too much jargon in this police report – what does “improved resilience across area response” mean?	<p>Apologies for use of jargon. What I mean is that the structural changes that have taken place have enabled me to pull in additional resources / officers. This will allow me greater flexibility in that I can divert these resources to meet demand (as and when this is necessary).</p> <p>Neil Wilson, Bedfordshire Police</p>
14	The Shefford Snt is 30% under strength, according to Sgt Denham. This has allowed crime figures to rocket. How/when do you intend to rectify the man power problem in the Shefford Snt? Paul Makin, Shefford Town Mayor	<p>The SNT at Shefford consists of a NPO (Constable) and two PCSOs. There are no vacancies either within this team or the wider Ampthill SNT. In fact we have just created two additional posts within the wider team (former Mid-Beds area) and posted two Sergeants to these positions.</p> <p>There are a number of officers within the SNT who, through injury are on restricted duties. They are being managed to ensure a speedy recovery and return to full duties. They are supporting front line officers in other ways.</p> <p>I would also like to reassure the Mayor that both crime and incidence of antisocial behaviour (ASB) within the Shefford area has actually fallen.</p> <p>In the three month period Nov 08 to Jan there were 73 recorded crimes within Shefford in the next three month period Feb 09 to April 09 there were 56 recorded crimes, a reduction of 23%.</p> <p>The latest crime figures indicate that in April and May this year there were 32 recorded crimes and 7 incidents of ASB, in the same period last year there were 43 crimes and 21 incidents of ASB. I.e. a 45% and 33% reduction. Neil Wilson, Bedfordshire Police</p>
15	Policing in rural areas is no working it needs more proactive approach and more visibility in the village. Totternhoe Parish Council	<p>The Neighbourhood Police Officer PC Dady is working closely with partners and the Parish Council. She attends as many Parish Council meetings as she can. However, she has another 6 villages to share her time with.</p> <p>In order to improve visibility and increase the number of foot and bike patrols within the locality a dedicated PCSO for the Totternhoe / Eaton Bray neighbourhood was appointed on 19th March 2009. Neil Wilson, Bedfordshire Police</p>

16	We used to have, and pay for our own, PCSO. Now we can't do this, and instead we have to share one with other Parishes and now we are being criticised about lack of visible police presence. How can we get our PCSO back?	The funding arrangements with the Home Office allowed the Police to seek partnership funding with the Town & Parish Councils whereby for £6,000 a full time PCSO was provided with the Police paying the other £18,000. This was a temporary arrangement managed through the contracts that expired and caused a significant operational imbalance in the deployment of PCSOs across Bedfordshire and Luton. There could be an opportunity for the Town to purchase additional PCSO or Police Officer time but would be on a full costs recovery basis. This could be explored if the Town and or neighbouring villages wished to explore it. Neil Wilson, Bedfordshire Police
17	Have the police been able to recruit more PCSO staff to increase the presence in villages?	The establishment of PCSOs in the county is 128. We have recruited up to this level and further recruitment is taking place to maintain these resource levels. This level is the fully budgeted establishment. Neil Wilson, Bedfordshire Police
18	Police/ Magistrates – Can we please slow down the recycling time of criminals through prison.	A Subject close to my heart, although not one I can influence in any way. The police have no influence whatsoever in sentencing; it is a matter for the Courts. The issue is therefore one for the wider Criminal Justice System and in particular the Courts. The local Criminal Justice Board can and do feedback to the Home Office and Ministry of Justice via the Office of Criminal Justice Reform, the concerns of our local communities in such matters. Neil Wilson, Bedfordshire Police
19	Petition the police to reconsider their command decision re-response from Leighton Buzzard Police Station instead of Dunstable. Has rural Policing failed? Kensworth Parish Council	<p>Chief Inspector Waring is reviewing the response function and Neighbourhood Policing Model within the South Bedfordshire area. In particular the best way to ensure an efficient response to incidents occurring within Paddington and the other villages south of Dunstable.</p> <p>I would like to reassure these villages that while Leighton Buzzard maybe used as an administrative centre, the most appropriate unit will respond. This also includes other police resources such as Roads Policing and other Operational Units such as Armed and Dog resources in emergencies. Neil Wilson, Bedfordshire Police</p>

20	Police – will the main call centre remain in kempston? Police call out times evenings/ weekends/ Bank holidays so poor, will this improve? Kensworth Parish Council	<p>Yes. There are no plans to relocate the Call Centre from Kempston. Response to incidents is dealt with according to the type of incident and how it is graded. There should be no degradation at the weekends. However there may be a perception of this and comments will be fed back to the Call Handlers to ensure understanding of expectations. Lower graded incidents are responded to differently than emergencies and more serious issues.</p> <p>Neil Wilson, Bedfordshire Police</p>
21	Police – PROVE the claimed improvements be seen to be strong in handling complaints.	<p>Not sure what the questioner is asking. Improvement in performance against reduction and detection targets has been well documented. I can give more detail if required.</p> <p>In regards to police complaints there has been a national change in the way complaints are handled (Taylor Report). There is now much more emphasis on handling complaints locally with managers taking responsibility to seek speedy and local resolution.</p> <p>The independent monitoring and audit of how we handle such issues is through the Professional Standards Committee of the Police Authority and the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC). Neil Wilson, Bedfordshire Police</p>

Community Safety

22	Please provide the names of Community Safety Teams in Everton Parish and Moggerhanger? Please advise by letter to 2 Grange Way, Willington, MK44 3QW. D.A. Payne (Clerk)	A written response was made on 28th May 2009, as requested. Jane Moakes
23	Will you be continuing the confident communities fund approach started by BedsCC last year?	<p>The Confident Communities Fund was a Bedfordshire County Council initiative funded for one year only; Central Bedfordshire Council has no plans to continue this one off initiative.</p> <p>Jane Moakes</p>

Planning/ Growth/ Housing

24

Will the new authority provide what we really want? Sustainable housing for natural growth and all the infrastructure that goes with it. Not the huge unsustainable housing defined in the core strategy.

One of the objectives of the Government's "Sustainable Communities Plan" published in 2003 is to provide sustainable growth which will be of benefit to both our existing and future communities alike. Whilst the housing and employment targets set out within the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy (MKSMSRS) are challenging, we see the growth area objectives as an opportunity to reinforce and improve the places we live and work by improving public transport network, access to the countryside and our town centres.

For the Luton and Southern Bedfordshire area, in order for strategic urban extensions to be truly sustainable, they will be required to deliver a critical mass (in housing and employment terms) that will enable them to function in a way that does not place unreasonable burdens on existing or new infrastructure. They should also contribute to serving the needs of adjacent existing urban areas where infrastructure deficits exist. This approach of bringing forward a small number of large-scale mixed use urban extensions is considered more preferable, in the context of Luton and Southern Bedfordshire, to bringing forward a larger number of smaller non-strategic ones that will be unlikely to bring forward appropriate amounts of supporting infrastructure. For example, we consider that such strategic urban extensions should provide no less than 2,500 dwellings of mixed tenure and between 15-20ha of employment land.

What if you don't find the employment to match the 60,000 houses? Do you not build them or do you have to build them regardless?

I would imagine that the vast majority of parish councillors feel that the biggest issue is the affect of the growth plan. This conference did not address this directly it only talked in general terms about managing the growth. The fact is most parishes want to scale down the growth to truly manageable and sustainable levels.

In order to create truly sustainable communities, housing cannot happen in isolation from employment and service provision. Our research and consultation with stakeholders has identified the preferred locations for employment land and we will endeavour to deliver these through the Local Development Framework process. Our economic regeneration team will be working closely with key stakeholders in order to promote these employment sites. Notwithstanding the current economic slow down, Regional and Sub-Regional policy expects that the employment targets for the period - 2031 will be met.

The growth area agenda represents a step change in the delivery of housing and employment provision. The housing and employment targets are rigid and have been set at Sub-Regional level. In order to meet the Government's "Sustainable Communities Plan", there is an expectation that these targets, which are expressed as a minimum, are to be met and the onus is on the authority to do so. Whilst we recognise the concerns of the parishes in relation to the Luton and Southern Bedfordshire Core Strategy, it remains part of the Joint Committee's vision that where practical, the identity of rural villages will be safeguarded. As set out at point i), our preference for the Luton and Southern Bedfordshire area is to deliver growth by bringing forward a small number of large-scale mixed use urban extensions as opposed to a larger number of smaller non-strategic ones. Mark Saccoccio

25

What are Central Beds policies for giving parish councils more say about housing and roads in rural areas. Luton and Dunstable urban muscle have dominated the scene, especially the core strategy.

As set out in our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), we recognise and appreciate the importance of community involvement in the plan making process. The former south Bedfordshire area is currently undergoing a public consultation exercise that seeks the views of the community in respect of the Core Strategy Preferred Options. This has involved 7 manned exhibition venues across the former authority area together with a dedicated website and questionnaire opportunity. The Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy is clear that the main focus of urban growth should be directed toward Dunstable and Houghton Regis in order to help regenerate those towns. Therefore, the large infrastructure requirements would by definition have to be directed toward servicing both the exiting and future populations thereabouts. Notwithstanding this however, the larger villages at least will be expected to take additional development and the views of those parish councils will be actively sought in how to shape the proposed development that may be directed there. Small scale reviews of the Green Belt boundary around these settlements may be required. Both this matter and the allocation of land to satisfy the need for development in the rural area will be brought forward through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document which will follow and accompany the Core Strategy within the Local Development Framework. Mark Saccoccio

Where committees have a village design statement document in place and adopted by former mid beds planning as a consultation document – can you confirm if this will continue to be the case? Lot of community involvement and support for this and extremely disappointed if as a body they are disregarded.

We recognise and value the importance of village plans in their evidencing of community led consultation and localised identification of needs, wants and aspirations.

We are currently undertaking a review on how we support the creation and delivery of Parish Plans to better deal with how the Council responds to their existence. The whole spectrum of issues/services for which the Council has responsibility for is addressed within PPs; not the physical planning issues alone. Because of this, our position is that it is not deemed reasonable for the Council to 'adopt' or 'endorse' the plans per se, rather that we become specific with our responses on Planning issues (and all service issues) during their development stage.

We anticipate that this will offer an early and collaborative input clearly indicating what we are able to be proactive on with our support. It also emphasises that 'ownership' of the plans along with initiating activity delivery starts at source.

Consideration is being given to how we 'formally receive' PPs to help inform and raise opportunities for joint working as appropriate across the council. We will also approach the LSP to undertake a similar process for receiving them though this is at a very early stage.

The change to unitary status has not therefore affected the status of these plans within the planning system. We will be writing to Town and Parish Councils in the coming months in relation to village plans and the two emerging LDFs for Central Bedfordshire and will have regular contact opportunities to maintain a dialogue through 6 monthly (TBC) Town and Parish Forum meetings. Given the present status of the emerging LDF's for Central Bedfordshire, we would wish to take this opportunity to review those existing Village Design Statements. Mark Saccoccio

27	<p>Why can't local parish councils be involved in the formality and setting up of section 106 agreements. At the moment we get told what is in their offer they have been signed and then we are left with the mess!</p>	<p>The majority of Agreements are now sought using the Planning Obligations Strategy. This is not an 'offer' but is a requirement identified by the needs assessment undertaken as part of the creation of this document. The use of Section 106 Agreements are controlled by statute and guidance on them are contained in Government produced Circulars. The legal content is vetted by the Council's legal team to ensure that the obligations set out in the Agreement are subsequently able to be secured. All negotiations relating to Agreements have to be undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Circulars. Gary Worth</p>
28	<p>Planning applications arriving late not giving the Parish Council a chance to consult with residents, not enough time to respond if application arrives after parish council meeting, sometimes meeting the deadline is difficult – Parish Clerk has to trawl CBC website. Paper copy was a better way. On large applications see lot we need to be informed from the start and help same planning officer to see the application to the end.</p>	<p>We attempt to consult with Parish Council's as quickly as we can once the application is registered. It is accepted that they have to operate to a tight timescale but the Council is required to determine planning applications within set targets and therefore to achieve these targets it is necessary to receive all the consultation responses in good time to ensure that we can deal with the applications within the required timescales. The e-government agenda has required Councils to move over to electronic consultation and it is also considered that this is a far more efficient way of consulting on applications than printing off large volumes of paper plans. Gary Worth</p>
29	<p>Please confirm that where a development will involve a Sec 106 agreement, Towns and Parish Councils will be consulted on issues in the locality so that resources can be allocated more effectively than in the past. In the past there was no consultation and the result was wasted resources which the county can no longer afford.</p>	<p>In terms of planning applications Parish and Town Council's are consulted on all planning applications. If there are specific issues that they feel could or should be addressed through the Sec 106 process then there is an opportunity for them to raise them as part of their response. We will consider whether it is appropriate or possible to include these requests within any agreement in accordance with the requirements set out in response (27). The Planning Obligation Strategy is based on a needs assessment of each Parish and there is an opportunity for parishes to raise specific need issues through any revisions to this document. Gary Worth</p>
30	<p>Why do parish Councils only get 3 minutes to speak at planning meetings? It is insufficient to get all the issues across! If you want to work with us then give us the opportunity!</p>	<p>This is contained in the Constitution for Central Bedfordshire and was the established practice at the former Mid Beds Council. It is necessary to ensure that planning committee meetings run to time. Gary Worth</p>

31	Can we have “out of office hours” planning meetings for key planning applications (may be on request from Parish Council?)	The committee timetable is published in advanced and is a requirement of the constitution to publish the timetable. It is possible to arrange special meeting if necessary, however Central Beds planning committee is arranged for day time meetings. Gary Worth
32	Still a feeling of them and us (East and West) This will not improve if planning etc. is to be split to two sites. Kensworth Parish Council	At present we are operating from three locations. We are however harmonising all of our procedures, and are holding facilitated internal staff events to promote a ‘Central Beds Development Management Service’. Gary Worth

Highways

33	Local grass cutting in local hands, Parishes will cut when needed or requested not on a date as now. Kensworth Parish Council	Grass cutting and weed spraying are matters that we are happy work on with Parish and Town councils. Please be aware that there are contracts in place from the legacy organisations that constrain the amount of change we can facilitate in the short and medium term. Basil Jackson
34	Parish Paths Partnerships (P3) – Who is running it now? Bob Dicker, Gravenhurst Parish Council	This service is run by Countryside Access and the officer with operational responsibility is Steve Halton, Senior Project Officer - Community Engagement. Kevin Ward

Transport

35	When will you publish the Countywide Freight Strategy? 42 Timber Lane, Woburn, MK17 9PL	This is still being developed and is due to be put before various Member Committees. I expect to have an endorsed strategy in place by the end of the calendar year. Basil Jackson
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Trees

36	Tree wardens – What is expected from them? Who is responsible for trees on verges? I worked with David Alderman CC he is excellent! Could Bob Morwood let the relevant tree warden know when large trees are to be removed in their village?	Tree wardens look for tree planting sites on private land and highways land, and liaise with landowners accordingly. They also monitor damage to trees and report any maintenance required. David Alderman is part of the Council's Trees and Landscape Team and has responsibility for the highways trees contract. Tree wardens are not usually notified when trees are being removed but the Council's website will show applications for tree preservation orders and conservation area notices. Bob Morwood
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Waste collection

37	Bearing in mind what the World health Organisation recommend, will the Authority revisit the decision of fortnightly waste collection. One must consider the implications of a possible pandemic in the near future. I hope this does not happen.	'The Alternate Week Waste Collection System has been a great success in terms of cost efficiency and significantly increasing the percentage of waste recycled. Expert opinion from environmental professionals in this country is clear that the system does not pose a threat to human health. For these reasons it is unlikely that this Council will revisit current policy. Steve Whittaker
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Customer Service

38	What is the response time imposed on officers to acknowledge / reply to a query from a member of the public?	Our customer services standards state we will acknowledge receipt of a written enquiry (by email, letter or fax) within 1 working day and provide a full response within 5 working days. Clive Jones
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News Central

39	How were we supposed to be getting "News Central"? Our village doesn't get any free newspapers.	Central Bedfordshire Council commissions Royal Mail to deliver its magazine.
40	Never receive the council magazine – the May edition is the first one they have seen! Egginton Parish Councillor	This is because research shows that this method is the most comprehensive and reliable means of getting the publication distributed. It is, for example, much more reliable than depending on distribution via any free newspaper distribution. However, there are weaknesses with the Royal Mail service which we respond to on a case by case basis. We have specifically asked our account manager at the company to provide us with reassurance that the Egginton village is covered by their distribution service and await a response. Georgina Stanton

41	Webpage on CBC website for each parish.	<p>The website for the council is a “work in progress” with planned developments on a number of fronts, including the presentation of information on our partner organisations. We are also happy to support Town and Parish Councils to develop their own websites through Project Involve, which would enable us to link site visitors from the CBC web pages.</p> <p>Georgina Stanton</p>
42	Will you be sending Christmas cards to parish Councils each year? We feel this to be a waste of money. Pulloxhill Parish Council	<p>There are no current plans to distribute Christmas Cards. The views of Pulloxhill Parish Council will, however, be made known to the Chairman, Leader and future Chief Executive of the Council.</p> <p>Georgina Stanton</p>

Ward Councillors

43	Will ward councillors have any budget for spending on chosen projects within their areas.	<p>This will need to be a consideration for the new Council and addressed through the 2010/11 Medium Term financial Strategy if appropriate. Matt Bowmer</p>
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Council Tax/ VfM

44	Why increase council tax?! What savings will you make?!	<p>All Councils have set budgets in challenging circumstances for 2009/10 and beyond. The credit crunch and health of the economy have put a great deal of pressures on local government finances. Investment interest will be less than previously anticipated as are income from planning fees and land charges. Also there will be undoubtedly greater pressure on Central Bedfordshire’s service.</p> <p>There were efficiencies of £8.54m built into the budget which have mainly be driven out through combining the back office functions of Mid Beds, South Beds and Bedfordshire County council.</p> <p>This was Central Bedfordshire’s first budget and it was important to be prudent in setting a Council Tax level that protects service levels in the current economic climate. At the time the budget was set indications were of average Council Tax increases of 3% in the region, Central Bedfordshire’s came in at 2.5%. Matt Bowmer</p>
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45	One of the main selling points of the split in BedsCC was that it would SAVE millions of pounds. This fundamental issue is not one of the five priorities of the new council so how will savings be programmed and reported? David Motion, Pulloxhill Parish Council	The savings are a given and would not be expected to feature as one of the five service priorities of the Council. As set out above efficiencies of £8.54m have been identified and these will be monitored closely and reported to the Executive on a regular basis. Matt Bowmer
46	What justification is there for being a 4% difference in the council tax band between the old South and Mid Beds and when will it be levelled? Totternhoe Parish Council	Ideally harmonisation of council tax levels would have been achieved for 2009/10. This has not been possible and is not forecast to take place until April 2011. Matt Bowmer

Other

47	Apart from the provision of education what does the authority plan to do for the children and young people of Blunham? Blunham Parish Council	<p>All Parish Councils are sent information about 'Street Cred' the Youth Opportunities Fund.</p> <p>Last year £25,000 was awarded to young people (teenagers) in Blunham to renovate the playing fields. This project is still ongoing and its aim is to refurbish the pavilion in order to enable more young people to take part in activities and open the door for additional activities. Ketan Gandhi</p> <p>Ketan has also contacted the Chairman of Blunham Parish Council to discuss any specific concerns/ issues.</p>
48	What does the authority plan to do to enrich the lives of the elderly in Blunham? Blunham Parish Council	The Assistant Director for Commissioning, David Jones, has contacted the Chairman of Blunham Parish Council to discuss any specific concerns/ issues.

49	Why are our schools so parochial with their resources?	<p>During the last decade there has been a tendency for some schools to be in competition with each other, particularly in areas where there are falling rolls. Ofsted inspections and the publication of assessment information means that all schools are under close scrutiny and this may result in some schools taking a narrow, inward view. However, the most developed learning communities, trusts and networks of schools are working closely together and are increasingly taking responsibility for all of the young people in a community. This includes, for example, working closely on curriculum improvement and assessment arrangements to developing shared governance arrangements and employing staff to work across phases. The development of training schools across Central Bedfordshire will further develop such relationships and will particularly facilitate the sharing of best practice. Patrick Shevlin</p>
50	Can we have more time to respond to council notification of meeting/committees etc. and please don't use 2nd class post when time is short. Peter Brown, Stondon Parish Council	<p>We acknowledge that Town and Parish Councils need to be given sufficient time to respond to any requests and, wherever possible, we will take into account the timing of their meetings.</p>

Conclusion

The conference was a great start to Central Bedfordshire's working relationship with Parish and Town Councils. The conference met its primary objectives of informing delegates of the Council's vision, priorities, services and senior officers. We have also responded to each and every question raised on the question cards.

Now it is important that we take all of the feedback we have received, both formal and informal, to continue to improve how we work together.

What's Next?

Over the coming months we will continue to work with you in response to your feedback, and we will report back at the next conference.

We look forward to meeting you all again at our next conference on 4th November 2009 at Priory House, Chicksands. In the meantime, a full copy of this report and the presentations can be found on the Council's website.

Appendix 1:

Verbatim Comments from the Communications Dialogue Mats

Q1. What is working well and should be maintained?

Email (if targeted)
Email
Emails to clerks – quick works well – two way process
Email communication
E-mail – robust distribution system needed
Emails to clerks, clerk as direct point of communication
Post attachments if essential – ask if hard copy is needed
Hard copy planning applications, not purely electronic
Website
Update website
Direct contact info numbers, key contact details (hard copy) updated regularly
Direct contact by phone
Direct – people who can inform/ are informed – tel./ email / face to face
Direct contact and communications
Face to face contact
Face to face – but not always enough
Officers attending T/P meetings, particularly if Highways or planning issues
Officer availability to attend meetings in person on big issues such as core strategy
Top officers and members coming to T & P Council meetings
Daily contact with relevant specialist head of service associated with an inherited buddy system
Direct contact from council officers e.g. watchman scheme is good – where it operates, not reaching all councils
Closer contact with members
Elected district Cllrs and police attending our meetings
Direct contact from district Cllrs attending T&P Council meetings works well
Accessibility to officers and members
Town Councils positive working officer to officer
Monthly surgeries (face to face contact)
Some like direct officer liaison at T/P C meetings

Liked community liaison forum approach – bringing together a number of parishes – works for some but not others
community forums
Landlord forums
Community safety groups used to meet quarterly. All groups sent reps – this has now stopped. Would like to see this again (MBDC)
Community Liaison Group – T & P Council invited. Budgets. Business plans, share ideas. BCC.
Marston Vale planning application- good liaison
Accessibility in local offices/ front desks
Regular newsletter
Magazines - hard information, new facilities – less self promotion
Magazine – News Central
Hard copy newsletters
T& P C events
Wider conferences (e.g. rural conference)
Conferences
Letters to T/P Councils
Communication should be two way
Weekly highways report, web version needs developing
Highways helpdesk
Watchman service
Highways helpline
Customer services number
Customer helpdesk need confidence in system
Bookmark
T & P Council LAA reference group
Notice boards in parishes
Parishes as non-political – com. Via ward member not ideal (some against) where parishes are non-political “news central” depends on distribution forms and people up lanes don’t get it. Also, competing with other literature must be sinking.

Q2. Issue we need to learn from or improve?

Information overload (need executive summaries) for example strategy documents
Too detailed consultation documents
Provide précis of documents to focus attention/ further distribution
Very thick consultation documents
Lack of plain English (including imperial measurement i.e. miles not km)
Time lines for consultations recognising T&P Cs need to meet to give a view
Consultations are often not well timed – too short, in summer recess
Active involvement & participation
Don't spin but do tell the good news
One size doesn't fit all – respect differences
Sometimes feels like "told" not "asked" or consulted
No officialdom please – give mutual respect
Public service responses / language
Fewer glossy brochures
No large electronic downloads
Hard copies most useful way of communicating, but circulate via clerks
Provide single hard copy of important documents for T/P files
Hard copies of agendas, minutes rather than website (could we have them back?)
Cut back unnecessary attachments
Number of emails that aren't directly relevant – use newsletters for general issues, give some indication of importance RAG, consistent format of information emails
Difficulty getting emails
Ensure communications get to the right destination (Eggington)
Distribution lists – needs to be one central database and right T&P Councils
Database management, change of contacts, sometimes takes 3 years to change
Regular updates in different formats
Better use of electronic communication
More notice for meetings – need 6 weeks
Hold meetings in the evenings, not in the day time when people have work commitments
Planning meeting during the day – people can't get there. Planning officers must explain their decisions. Delegated decisions and too little time to respond.
Conferences – focus on one issue at a time
Conference – distance to travel to Priory House
Sharing information through conferences/ workshop

Not keen on voting system on some questions
Local forum for neighbouring groups of T & P Councils
Need to recognise differences between T & P Councils
Website – some bits not work e.g. currently council tax below
No 0800 numbers
Clerks need up to date list of key officers (direct lines)
Customer service – transferring around several staff
Very poor phone system now
Being passed from pillar to post
Been ignored in past or no feedback – need clear explanations
Not always getting response to emails
Highways helpdesk not up to date
Accessible customer services / no hand off
Officers direct lines being diverted to customer services – better to go to voicemail
Letter acknowledgement and email
Parish Council complaints don't get response as a priority
Lack of response from some officers
Particularly difficult getting responses from enforcement team
Responses back to some T/P C enquiries – takes too long, sometimes not answered, service standard would help, at least an up date
Would like CB Cllr to come to T/P C meetings and take issues back
Timing of meetings often on same night – better arrangements to avoid no attendance
Poor S.106 consultation with Parish Councils
Lip service – consultant – especially in planning
Not always getting copies of planning decisions
Engage at issues stage
Get rid of 3 minute rule to speak at planning meetings
Planning a problem – advice ignored, feedback needed as to why decisions changed
No sufficient explanation of the reasons for decision (e.g. decision on allotment never understood – why?). Planning decision audit trail must be there in future generations.
LSP thematic groups
Officer titles don't mean anything meaningful
How to keep up to speed with emerging local issues e.g. licensing charges
Big change LGR – must communicate clearly and quickly. Depends on quality of the communication.
CANs – not well put over at Whipsnade and documentation

Q3. New ideas or information exchange between Town and Parish Councils and Central Bedfordshire Council?

Feedback from tonight quite quickly
T & P Councils and CBC to speak as one voice – key messages
Different formats to A-Z e.g. electronic.
New updated directory of services and contacts (including members)
Contact details – new list of email addresses/ contact soon please
Personal contact, knowing who to speak to, A-Z of services, contact list
T & P Helpline number for customer services
Officers – enable more out of hours contact, conference calling, document sharing
Enable real time communication – when T&P Councils are available
Maintaining continuity of dialogue even when officer changes
Consistency of contact – person keeps changing, right person 1st time, no passing on
Officers attending T&P Council meetings - a formal schedule
Officers attending parish council meetings, particularly re planning more routinely
Face to face – more attendance by officers at meetings
Officer attendance at annual meetings
Officers to regularly attend and speak to parish councils
Role of councillor and T&P Council meetings
Good cascade of information from ward members
Members/ officers coming out to see Towns and Parishes
Greater visible presence
Links from CBC website to T & P Councils
Fortnightly digests
CBC to fund (in part) parish magazines
Communication and facilitation of education debate – what? when? And how?
Need to be listened to – we know the issues
Executive summaries on consultation documents including key questions
Summaries as front sheet for detailed consultation documents
Spell out acronyms, glossary
Don't over do Communication – don't want overload
Alerts for agendas etc to be rolled out to T & P Councils/ stakeholders not just press releases
Group email alert on forward plan of meetings & links
Training need it trade – planning

Planning – clarity to Parish Councils on enforcement – what can and can't do?
Policies from CBC to derive with consultation with T & P Councils
Using newer technology generally
Refreshing parish information district/ county held self service
Right first time NOT 4 x 12 months
Differences between T&P Council – different precepts and capacity. One size does not fit all
Parish Partnership – delegate or keep – not delegate and not listen
Honesty not spin – factual, local to me. “real” facts
Ability to contact small parish clerk

Appendix 2:

Verbatim Comments from the Community Engagement & Development Support Dialogue Mats

Q4. Agree with the concept of working together to solve common issues?

Yes
Yes to concept BUT has to be led by CBC unless neighbouring T&PC
Yes – motherhood and apple pie
Yes (working together on issues)
Yes but most successful where common objectives exist
Common issues
Yes – obviously!
Yes – geographic issue (as relevant)
Yes – agree joint working
Issues not areas? Common solutions may not work given the differences in parishes
Focus on “sharing solutions to shared issues”
Support solving common issues ‘can do approach’
Share solutions
Positive about issue based working
Like concept of working together to solve issues e.g. eco towns, landfill
Yes links should be based on issues but it isn’t a marriage of the two – local & issues. Some towns – Sandy, Shefford can support parishes. Difficult to get us to meet.
No one size fits all – should apply across all services e.g. road salting – therefore find out what individual issues are
Geography can be as important as issues
Both issues and CANs are required not one or the other.
No – unworkable (although concept desirable)
Has to be issue driven with CBC co-ordinating and communicating
Strong leadership required
Independent facilitation
Important to do so – LA officers bringing parish/ towns together
Better liaison on local issues and real problem solving to implement solutions – different / non-standard solutions
Liaison groups quarterly meeting (officers/ councillors) liaison between clerks

NALC and other T&P Council networks within the sector
Would welcome joint commissioning approach e.g. dog fouling – support needed to make this happen, litter (schools, fast food outlets, travellers). Central Beds needs to help co-ordinate the above.
Towns and Parishes are very different so should be separate, treat differently
Rural parishes feel different and often don't have critical mass
Focus on parishes not on towns
Towns happier at the centre
How growth effects parishes b road maintenance
Laurent Marshall "youth"
Issues in Kensworth & Totternhoe – big lorry on small roads & rat runs – get together

Q5. What support can we (CBC) provide to help make Parish Plans more effective?

Council can promote the need to a parish plan, council can promote the identification with the town place, Chalk Arc is a good example
Report template
Admin support
Admin support – minutes, distribution, all clerk duties – virtual clerk
Demographics
Attach more stats to T&P Plans and recognise them as a solid evidence base
Support for towns – research / analysis
Support from CBC
Smaller councils don't have the capacity to produce plans
Some small councils don't want to produce plans
In some cases smaller councils would value support from the council to work together to produce a plan
Facilitate conversations between councils
Straightforward advice – guidance on creation of plans to meet CBC policy aspirations
Parish plan is balanced funding plan – we're able to do it but council make it important
More money!
More money
Money
How do we help T & P Councils resource plans locally?
Town plans – money through BRCC then meet with relevant officers
BRCC – contact given by other town. Common
Not impressed by BRCC approach – people felt pushed with regard to what can / can't do
Seeking guidance – BRCC (Gemma)

Specialist support / sign posting (including HR/ Legal/ Finance)
Improve parish planning process
Parish plans can be difficult to get off the ground
Enormous difficulty getting it off the ground, Key to quality parish and to releasing funds, Ability of parish to engage with community, Commitment of people to develop parish plans
Getting people out to a meeting
Be clear what we want from parish plans
What and why briefing
Should they be aspirational or regulatory?
Come back to parishes and say what is achievable
Take more notice of parish plans
CBC taking note into their plans
Lack of clarity on status with authorities/ Gvnt. Is it worth it? – Investment.
Worthwhile – but is it aspirational e.g. HGV strategy – not in gift of parish
Is there any value in producing plans – not recognised in the past
CBC could support process for plan adoption
How will resources be used to implement the actions and how can we access resources
Could LSP own plans?
After publication of the Parish plans councils can be by-passed re their on going engagement or not given equal weight to their views
CBC should share effective/ adopted plans
Parish councils must be supported to own the plans
Encourage longer term view
Allow T&P C to have a voice to express concerns e.g. traveller sites, housing numbers, transport infrastructure
Portal – success on certain issues – look to see what other councils have done – forum online? Central beds forum for parishes
Listen and understand – planning for example
Communications help – PR, shared magazine
Be prepared to defend resistance to housing growth which is determined to existing communities in an exponential way
Must retain the identity of the villages/ localities
People cannot be allowed to take forward proposals without a mandate/ unelected
Land needed to support initiatives (like allotments)
Do we want SPDs?
Are plans purely – duplication?
Apply a light touch plan approach

Q6. What areas, if any, would Town and Parish Councils want to consider taking on as devolved services?

Limited support/ success, e.g. grass cutting
Street sweeping
Lights/ lighting maintenance
Road sweeping
Highways issues (Minor works)
Traffic wardens
Would like S106 devolved
Issuing bus passes
Grass cutting
Grass cutting, litter picking, street cleaning – easier to arrange locally, could work with neighbouring towns/ parishes
Grass cutting and associated allowances
Grass cutting, grounds/ street cleansing – (possible large town councils)
Grass cutting (but note economies of scale & money), road sweeping & street cleaning, weed killing, no facilities for young people – bus/ provide a way to help young people to get out once every week.
Local policing (PCSOs)
Verge cutting/ highways
Weed control
Weed spraying
Weed spraying – alleyways, footpaths
Roads, drains, highways, footpaths, hedgerows
Planning decisions, street cleaning, minor street maintenance
Road repairs, litter picking, odd jobs, sign maintenance, reporting problems
Uses of offenders re community risks
Amptill – grass cutting, weed killing, salting pavements
Leighton – theatre and market
Sandy – street sweeping, maintaining footpaths
Stotfold – street sweeping, footpath maintenance, grass cutting and weed killing
Issue – equity of service between former MBDC and SBDC areas
Play areas – mixed responsibility
Cranfield, Langford & Potton - Hedge cutting, weed spraying,

Delegate functions best done by towns e.g. town centre management, car parking, grass cutting, some transport & highways functions etc.
Significant issues – no funding or resources
Resources – people/ £ dependent (by individual council)
Non-ring fenced partnership money
No devolved services without money as well up front
Funding – often one year at a time, one off experience of CC fund mixed
Depends on available funding and resources
Funds allocated to parishes – why are we told what to spend it on – CBC might as well do it!
More flexibility on limited funding for PCs to manage
Realising the lack of cost efficiency but seeing “value from money spent”
Have to precept for them
Don’t want to put parish precept up
Experience hasn’t given benefit on devolution e.g. market management
Difficult for small parishes
Depends on size of parish – capacity issues a significant obstacle, councils should not be penalised if they are unable to take on devolved services
Remember Cllrs are volunteers, depends on size, funding needs to come with it, not “services on the cheap”
Very different capacity across the sector
Quality status less relevant for small parishes
Would training go with devolved responsibility?
Skill more than one contact
Skills, experience to explore this – support could help
Still co-opted parish Cllrs – not elected
Devolution – needs a lot more scrutiny – what do you mean?
Devolved services – determine local priorities
Chamber of commerce to help create jobs (in partnership)
Section 106 monies / processes – too restrictive/ not enough consultation with T&P Councils during agreement creation

Q7. What other support can CBC provide to help Town and Parish Councils carry out their community roles more effectively?

Recruitment of clerks – possibly a pool of clerks
Induction training for new T/P Councillors (when they are new)
Responsibilities of T&P Council Cllrs – including code of conduct
Buddy and Mentor who can articulate key contacts
Help clerks complete their portfolios - CILCA
Training – planning, code of conduct, project involve, responding to current events – e.g. Swine Flu
Training increased for clerks, members, refresher courses, encouraging younger Cllrs
Cllr training
Updating revisions of training for Cllrs
Training of councillors and clerks
Training (H&S) joint sessions
Training on planning and other training needs
Quality status – difficult if don't want to meet the criteria e.g. % of Cllrs elected
Quality Status – who benefits?
Quality Status – important to work together to common agenda to again value i.e. CBC, TCs, PCs
No support for “quality status”. All work for no reward/ return
Project involve to continue
Supporting / updating websites – project involve (hosting service)
Promote / market role is T & P Councils in publications
Assistance with production of parish newsletters
Mid Beds used to provide printing services
ICT support
Longer term planning
Listen
More respect for local views, listen, take more notice, or at least be more transparent about CBC position
Association of T & P Councils – contact 1st for advice (Louise Ashmore) – this is the model – clone her - not CBC handled by BATPC
BATPC – positive feedback on support
Beds Acc. Of T & P Councils needs financial support
More money
Funding
Funding for forums

Fund BRCC
Don't undermine other orgs (e.g. BRCC) they are invaluable to help T & P Councils
Face to face meetings
Officers doing information sessions
How the planning system works and housing
106 agreements get ignored
Consultation before 106 agreements
Take notice of what we say
Realistic timescales
More time to respond to consultations
Don't double up
Be honest about whether policies are chosen locally or nationally imposed
No spin, clear facts
Questionnaire/ referendum construction
Please respond to your performance standard
Stop re-housing people where they don't want to live.
Rural policing – failure of it – local authority to have a dialogue with the police. We do not get a response, police fail to attend meetings. PoP in Sandy & Biggleswade/ Ampthill, Leighton Buzzard

Central Bedfordshire in contact



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by email...

customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



on the web...

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



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