

DRAFT  
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Not Council policy

**Central  
Bedfordshire**

# Our strategic plan

## 2022-2027



Find Central Bedfordshire Council online at



[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

## Introduction

Our aim is to produce a plan for the future. Something all of us can identify with.

We don't want it just to come across like a corporate document.

And we want it to be ambitious; not just a statement of what the Council already does.

The Strategic Plan looks to create an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and contribute to our collective wellbeing.

We want to put in place new initiatives which help provide homes for the next generation, while protecting our natural environment and seeking to tackle climate change.

We wish to help provide care for those who need it. We must support education, and we should provide the environment in which businesses can grow, thus bringing jobs for our residents.

Maybe some parts of the plan won't go as far as you would like, but this won't stop us striving to go above and beyond.

Crucially, we want to do this through proactive community engagement. By listening to, and learning from, our residents.

This is about all of us.

### **Our Community. Our Environment.**



Councillor Adam Zerny

Leader of Central Bedfordshire Council

## Central Bedfordshire

We are proud to live in Central Bedfordshire. Our attractive market towns and villages complement the beautiful local countryside which boasts 30 sites of special interest and 14 nature reserves.

On our doorstep are the Chiltern Hills, Dunstable Downs, Greensand Ridge and the Forest of Marston Vale; areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Our area has excellent road and rail transport links. The A1, M1 and A428 connect north, south, east and west. Three major rail lines run through Central Bedfordshire, connecting us directly with two international airports; we can be in the centre of London in 35 minutes.

Amongst our amenities are Woburn Safari Park, Whipsnade Zoo, Center Parcs and Woburn Abbey, which bring people from all over the country to Central Bedfordshire every year. We also boast Cranfield University a post-graduate public research university specialising in science and engineering.

Central Bedfordshire is a popular place to live with a growing population. We are one of the top ten fastest areas of growth in the country. We attract new families, and we want Central Bedfordshire to remain a place that is sustainable, affordable, and family-friendly.

The area is generally prosperous. People living here earn more than the national average, with above average levels of employment and low rates claiming Universal Credit. But we also know that some residents across all parts of Central Bedfordshire are struggling; demand for foodbanks and debt advice is increasing. We want all our communities to thrive, support each other, and be the best they can be.

More and more employers are looking to come to our area. With our fantastic transport connections, we're an attractive location for businesses and have a strong and growing economy, with growth in medium and large businesses outpacing the national average. British Aerospace, Nissan, Lockheed Martin, MBMA Systems and Amazon have chosen to make Central Bedfordshire their home.



## How we work

### As an Executive, we commit that we will:

- Proactively engage with, listen to, and communicate with our residents, communities, and businesses so they shape and inform everything we do.
- Acknowledge the enormous responsibility of spending public money and endeavour to use data to evidence all major decisions.
- Always consider the best interests of residents.
- Work with external bodies to create valuable partnerships.
- Promote community engagement to gather input and feedback from residents, community groups, and businesses.
- Create policies and initiatives that reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of our communities.
- Promote joint working across the Council to ensure departments work together to achieve key aims.
- Not shy away from making difficult decisions in the public interest.

## Our core aims

### We will:

1. Get the right homes in the right places and ensure housing growth and infrastructure are carefully considered.
2. Be ambitious in our plans towards improving and maintaining the roads and travel network.
3. Ensure that environmental, sustainability and climate resilience impact will be at the heart of all council decision-making.
4. Create opportunities for all children and young people to reach their full potential.
5. Enable people to live active, healthy, and independent lives.
6. Enable the right care, at the right time, in the right place for those in need of support.
7. Provide the environment for economic prosperity in which existing businesses can grow and new ones will move to the area.



**Core aim 1: Get the right homes in the right places and ensure housing growth and infrastructure are carefully considered.**

**We will do this by:**

- Ensuring our Local Plan meets the future needs of our communities, while preserving the natural environment and our leisure space.
- Considering our environmental and sustainability strategic aims in all planning considerations.
- Encouraging community input on how best developer financial contributions can benefit their area.
- Urging greater community engagement by developers.
- Encouraging developers to go beyond their statutory obligations to create well designed, affordable homes and Homes for Life, in our thriving communities.



**Core aim 2: Be ambitious in our plans towards improving and maintaining the roads and travel network.**

**We will do this by:**

- Ensuring the Council's highways network is developed considering the needs of residents and businesses.
- Ensuring a timely response to all serious potholes, especially in winter.
- Providing an accessible system for the public to give feedback (and receive feedback) on road issues.
- Improving and expanding our travel network to promote safer and more accessible neighbourhoods, and active travel.



**Core aim 3: Ensure that environmental, sustainability and climate resilience impact will be at the heart of all Council decision-making.**

**We will do this by:**

- Supporting renewable energy and community energy schemes.
- Promoting recycling, re-using and repurposing.
- Seeking increased climate resilience and renewable energy measures in future development.
- Introducing kerbside glass waste collection for all households.



- Seeking to decarbonise transport through developing our public electric vehicle charging network, and encouraging active travel and the use of public transport.
- Continuing retrofitting Council properties with insulation and green energy.
- Promoting the growth of the green-tech sector and aspire to make Central Bedfordshire a hub for green innovation.
- Remaining committed to addressing the climate crisis and develop plans to reverse the depletion of nature.
- Ensuring the Council's Sustainability Plan is kept up to date to incorporate new ideas and new technologies as they emerge.

#### **Core aim 4: Create opportunities for all children and young people to reach their full potential.**

##### **We will do this by:**

- Expanding the provision of SEND support based upon the need of the child.
- Working with schools, health providers, and other agencies to help provide the support our families need.
- Ensuring the quality of our safeguarding supports the needs of all children.
- Developing sufficient local provision for children in our care.
- Seeking to include the views of children and young people in Council discussions and decision making.
- Developing plans which allow children and young people fair access to educational and extracurricular opportunities.
- Working with all neighbouring local authorities and other partners to promote an effective joint safeguarding approach.
- Working with all partners, in our role as corporate parents to strive for the best possible outcomes for our children in care and care leavers.
- Committing to improving educational attainment by supporting our schools and moving towards the 2-tier education system.



**Core aim 5: Enable people to live active, healthy, and independent lives.**

**We will do this by:**

- Tackling loneliness amongst our residents.
- Working in conjunction with the NHS to improve access to health services.
- Supporting initiatives that promote independence and healthy lifestyles for all.



**Core aim 6: Enable the right care, at the right time, in the right place for those in need of support.**

**We will do this by:**

- Collaborating with local organisations and service providers to create a comprehensive support network that addresses diverse community needs.
- Striving to meet the growing need for more specialist and independent living accommodation.
- Using a data-driven approach to understanding the care needs of residents.



**Core aim 7: Provide the environment for economic prosperity in which existing businesses can grow and new ones will move to the area.**

**We will do this by:**

- Creating opportunities for businesses to thrive, ensuring the economic wellbeing of the community.
- Exploring ways to work with neighbouring local authorities which benefit our residents.
- Supporting and developing our rural economy.
- Recognising the complex needs of our urban areas and town centres.
- Refreshing our Economic Strategy to reflect the potential of our geographical location.
- Providing opportunities to improve life and work skills.



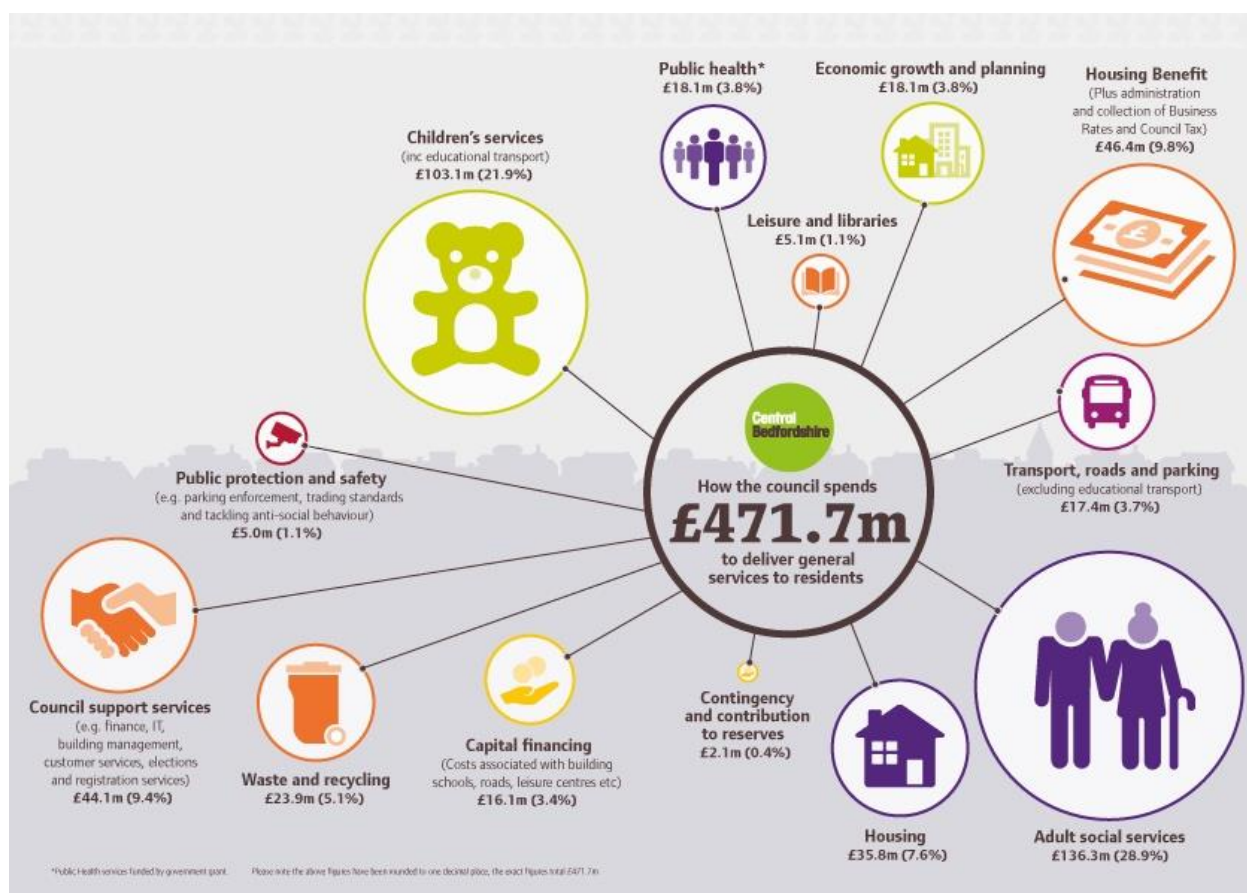


## Council funding and spending

In 2024/25, the Council expects to be spending around £267million on services across Central Bedfordshire, such as refuse collection and recycling, leisure, libraries, parks, planning, parking, licensing, trading standards, public health and social care services.

The diagram below, sets out how the budget will be spent on different services.

**Note: this diagram is for 2023/24 so will be updated for 2024/25 when the budget is agreed.**



Along with many other councils, Central Bedfordshire Council is under some financial pressure as there have been substantial increases in costs (including inflation) and demand for some for services. The Council's draft Medium Term Financial Plan forecasts an improvement in the financial health of the Council the four-year term (from 2024/25 to 2027/28).

We've not only maintained our frontline services like libraries, leisure centres and roads, we're investing in them too.

We have an ambitious capital programme with a plan to invest more than £500M over the four years from 2023/24 to deliver key infrastructure projects including roads, schools, care homes, leisure facilities and much more.

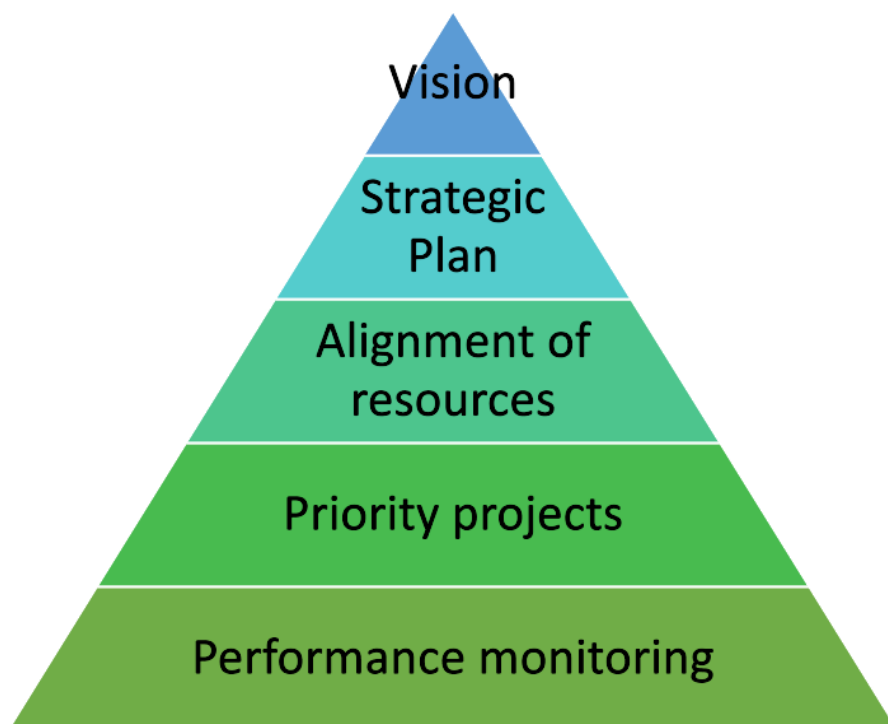


## Monitoring our plan

The Vision and Strategic Plan sets out the priorities for the Administration and how they will be delivered. These priorities guide decisions and choices within Medium Term Financial Plan based on areas of importance.

Strategic priorities are translated into priority projects and deliverables which are monitored, and progress is tracked through associated performance targets.

Key performance indicators will be considered by the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committees every quarter and reports published on our website.



# **Central Bedfordshire in contact**

**Find us online:** [www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

**Call:** 0300 300 8000

**Email:** [customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

**Write to:** Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,  
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ