

# Total Place

Luton and Central Bedfordshire Pilot



## Briefing note A: January 2010

### Total Place is...

Central Bedfordshire and Luton are one of 13 pilots across the country, set up to transform public services through improved working between central and local government agencies and a more effective alignment between community needs and the total resources available.

### Why do this?

The Total Place pilot will:

- have significant impact
- be deliverable within time and resource constraints
- be of interest across local organisations
- be customer focused
- change the way we do business
- deliver efficiencies

**Organisations involved:** Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council are the joint leads. Partners also include: Bedfordshire Police, Probation Service, Ministry of Justice, Crown Prosecution Service, Luton and Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, NHS Luton and NHS Bedfordshire, the Chamber, Department of Work and Pensions, JobCentre Plus, HM Revenue and Customs, together with a wide range of local third sector agencies and organisations.

### Progress so far

Rapid progress has been made within extremely tight timescales. In November an intensive schedule of workshops involving over 250 stakeholders were held. These analyzed the current position for each of our two sub-themes (see below), and delivered our proposed future models for these, identifying the improved customer experience and efficiencies that could be achieved through these changes.

**Our theme: “From dependence to self-reliance.”**

**Sub theme: “Access to benefits”. Findings so far:**

- The welfare benefits system is complex and full of duplication.
- Nearly a third of local Citizen’s Advice Bureau time is spent helping people understand what they are entitled to and how to complete forms.
- Claimants answer the same questions in at least two different benefit offices and face delays before getting any money.

- High marginal tax rates mean that benefit is cut between 60p to 90p for every £1 earned over a basic needs allowance - actively discouraging many people from coming off benefit and returning to work.
- Streamlining administration and simplifying the benefits system will speed up benefit payments to those in need, enable them to re-enter work more easily and cut the cost of providing and administering benefits
- Ultimately, we will be looking at how we encourage people off benefits and into gainful employment, but the streamlining of the current system for those entitled to some form of benefit is the first phase of the work

***Sub theme: “Integrated Offender Management”. Findings so far***

- Current procedures for dealing with offenders are expensive and often completely fail to break the cycle of re-offending.
- A mere two per cent of persistent offenders are responsible for a large percentage of crime in our area, mainly burglaries and car theft.
- Average cost of dealing with these offenders is around £600,000 each per year.
- Over eight out of ten of these have a drug dependency and five come from one local family alone.
- Ultimately, we need to provide support at critical stages in the journey through the system for these offenders – this will enable them to break out of the cycle of re-offending, potentially saving the above amount for every repeat offender

**What Total Place has identified**

The Total Place team have identified over 50 service improvements and new ways of working that could be implemented from now or in the near future - some at little or no additional cost, others requiring further investment which would then be re-cooped from savings:.

- 15 could be delivered locally in the next 12 to 18 months if approved
- 21 could be delivered in the medium to longer term of 2-5 years
- 9 key proposals, involving pooling of resources and would require organisational change
- 12 would require change at central government or legislative level and will be long term changes

**What next**

Our final report to Whitehall will be delivered on 5 February 2010, and will outline the overall business case for how we propose to deliver on these two sub-themes in the future.

**Contacts**

**Programme director:** Robin Porter 07870 676787  
[robin.porter@luton.gov.uk](mailto:robin.porter@luton.gov.uk)

**Media:** Rik Hammond 07759 393 227  
[hammond@luton.gov.uk](mailto:hammond@luton.gov.uk) and [rikhammond@fusemail.com](mailto:rikhammond@fusemail.com)