

Improvement

**Customer led transformation programme**  
**Case study – Central Bedfordshire and Luton**  
**Access to benefits and Integrated**  
**Offender Management**

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## The Customer Led Transformation Programme

Luton and Central Bedfordshire's work has been funded under the Customer Led Transformation programme. The fund aims to embed the use of Customer Insight and Social Media tools and techniques as strategic management capabilities across the public sector family in order to support Place-Based working.

The Customer Led Transformation programme is overseen by the Local Government Delivery Council (supported by Local Government Improvement and Development).

The fund was established specifically to support collaborative working between local authorities and their partners focused on using customer insight and social media tools and techniques to improve service outcomes. These approaches offer public services bodies the opportunity to engage customers and gather insight into their preferences and needs, and thereby provide the evidence and intelligence needed to redesign services to be more targeted, effective and efficient.

## About Central Bedfordshire and Luton

Located in England's eastern region, the area is only around forty miles from London and, via the M1 motorway, mainline train route and London Luton airport, enjoys excellent national and international transport links. Central Bedfordshire Council is a new unitary authority created from the merger of Mid Bedfordshire and South Bedfordshire councils on 1 April 2009. As well as taking over the powers of the two district councils, the new authority also took over the powers previously exercised by Bedfordshire County Council in the two districts.

Central Bedfordshire is a relatively small area and has a population of just over 250,000 people, over half of which live in rural areas. Central Bedfordshire has good transport links including the M1, A1, rail lines and the nearby airport at Luton.

Luton is a densely populated urban area in the east of England. It is about thirty miles from London and has many of the characteristics of a London borough. Around 205,000 people live in Luton and the population is likely to grow by 9 per cent over the next twenty years.

Central Bedfordshire and Luton is a contrasting mix of urban and rural. Out of the combined population of nearly 450,000 people, around half live in the Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis conurbation, one of the largest in the eastern region. The remainder are dispersed through several small to medium size market towns and many rural villages.

In October 2010, unemployment in Central Bedfordshire was 2.3 per cent compared to the national average of 3.5 per cent. This stabilised and started to decrease in

late 2010, following a rapid increase in late 2008 and early 2009. At 4.4 per cent Luton's unemployment level is above the national average. Both authorities have responded to the economic downturn by addressing, through partnership, the needs of increased numbers of new job seekers.

Against this backdrop, the area covered by Luton and Central Bedfordshire has a number of shared challenges for the short, medium and longer terms:

- Deprivation is an issue for both Luton and Central Bedfordshire. The problem is most acute in Luton which has six neighbourhoods in the ten per cent most deprived in England. However there are two urban neighbourhoods in Central Bedfordshire (Downside and Parkside) that are amongst the ten per cent most deprived in the East of England.
- Luton is a successful town but not everyone is able to share in its success. Three wards are in the top ten per cent of deprived wards in the country (as defined in the Index of Multiple Deprivation). The proportion of the working population claiming benefits in Luton is 1.4 times higher than the East of England average. Luton has significant health inequalities with up to 10 years difference in life expectancy for women within the borough and 11 years for men.
- Poverty and associated issues are not just confined to the towns. Just under half of people in Central Bedfordshire live in rural areas, which bring its own challenges around transport, accessibility and isolation. In rural areas, deprivation is more dispersed, and people often experience exclusion from mainstream services, employment, and community life. This is particularly prevalent amongst elderly people, minority ethnic groups such

as Gypsy and Traveller, migrant workers, unpaid carers and anyone without their own transport.

- Luton is a significant centre of employment in the region and has emerged from a period of major economic restructuring. The town has attracted considerable inward investment (£4 billion) in funding infrastructure and private development. It has also attracted a number of new companies, many of them blue chip. Yet in spite of this, unemployment in Luton itself remains above the national and regional average.
- Fear of crime in both Luton and Central Bedfordshire is disproportionate to actual levels of crime and is a key current priority for both councils to address. Alongside the fear of crime, in Central Bedfordshire the current focus is on tackling domestic burglary, vehicle crime and anti-social behaviour. Luton is concentrating on serious violent crime within the town.

To address these challenges, both Central Bedfordshire and Luton Councils work in local partnership with a wide range of organisations, including business, public and voluntary and community sectors.

Luton's local strategic partnership is the Luton Forum. This was formed in 2000 and is responsible for the town's sustainable community strategy as well as the coordinated response to the local area agreement.

Central Bedfordshire's local strategic partnership – Central Bedfordshire Together – was set up in April 2009 at the same time as the new unitary authority came into being. It too provides the strategic leadership to improve the quality of life for all in the area by encouraging partnership working across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors.

## Background

The customer insight work profiled in this case study was undertaken as part of Central Bedfordshire and Luton's Total Place pilot. The focus of the partnership's pilot was on moving customers "from dependence to self reliance".

The sub-themes – integrated offender management and access to benefits – reflect some major concerns for residents.

The area covered by the authorities is one of striking contrasts. Some parts are relatively prosperous; others are amongst the most deprived in the country. Poverty is not confined to densely populated towns: Central Bedfordshire's rural environs also have, dispersed through them, low income groups who face the additional problems of poor public transport, isolation and problematic access to services.

Unemployment rose throughout the area during 2008 and 2009, and an ongoing rise in the elderly population, particularly amongst the over 75 age group, is expected. Hence, a considerable rise in demand for benefits is forecast – placing a further strain upon an already creaking system. In addition, the increased poverty is perceived to have an adverse impact upon crime levels. Although crime rates have fallen in recent years, fear of crime remains high.

The cost of crime is also high. Local and national studies show that a high number of offences are committed by just a small number of people. The partners found that the most prolific five per cent of offenders – around 250 – were likely to be responsible for a quarter of crimes committed. Based on this, the pilot sought to establish the costs of prolific offenders on the locality and local public services and – together with



researching ex-offenders' experience of the 'system' – develop a model for Integrated Offender Management (IOM).

Given the aggressive timescales of the Total Place pilot, the Access to Benefits (A2B) and IOM work-streams were progressed separately but in parallel, beginning with a succession of stakeholder workshops.

A Customer Insight Working Group was established to support the two work streams, which commissioned and contributed socio-demographic and social research-based insight to both work-streams as they progressed. However, the two work streams required different types of insight and different approaches to generating it. Hence, this case study describes how the insight work was progressed separately but in parallel before summarising how the overall findings have been used in practice.

“Customers that are able and have the skills and motivation to be self reliant are easier, and less expensive to provide good quality services to. If we were able to successfully promote self reliance in a supportive, balanced and motivational way, the prize could be happier customers, more efficient services, lower costs and therefore more resource options for decision makers to provide the good quality targeted services that the community needs.”

**‘From Dependence to Self-Reliance’, Central Bedfordshire and Luton’s Total Place Pilot final report (page 40)**

To ensure that the pilot delivered customer service improvements while at the same time realising efficiencies, the Central Bedfordshire and Luton Total Place pilot determined to place the ‘customer experience’ at the heart of their thinking and recommendations.

They set out to understand the customer experience of the current array of partner organisations to see if they could better redesign the support customer’s received. By conducting socio-demographic profiling and in-depth interviewing with target customer groups (detailed later in the document) the partners hoped to learn directly from customers and develop an evidence base which would enhance their Lean-systems based approach to service improvement (see box ‘Lean Systems Thinking’) with quantitative and qualitative research techniques including

As this case study reflects, the customer insight work undertaken has proven enlightening and provided the officers and members involved with a clear evocation of the nature of customer needs across

the area. The insight generated is making a difference to offender management and access to benefits through informing and shaping new models of service delivery.

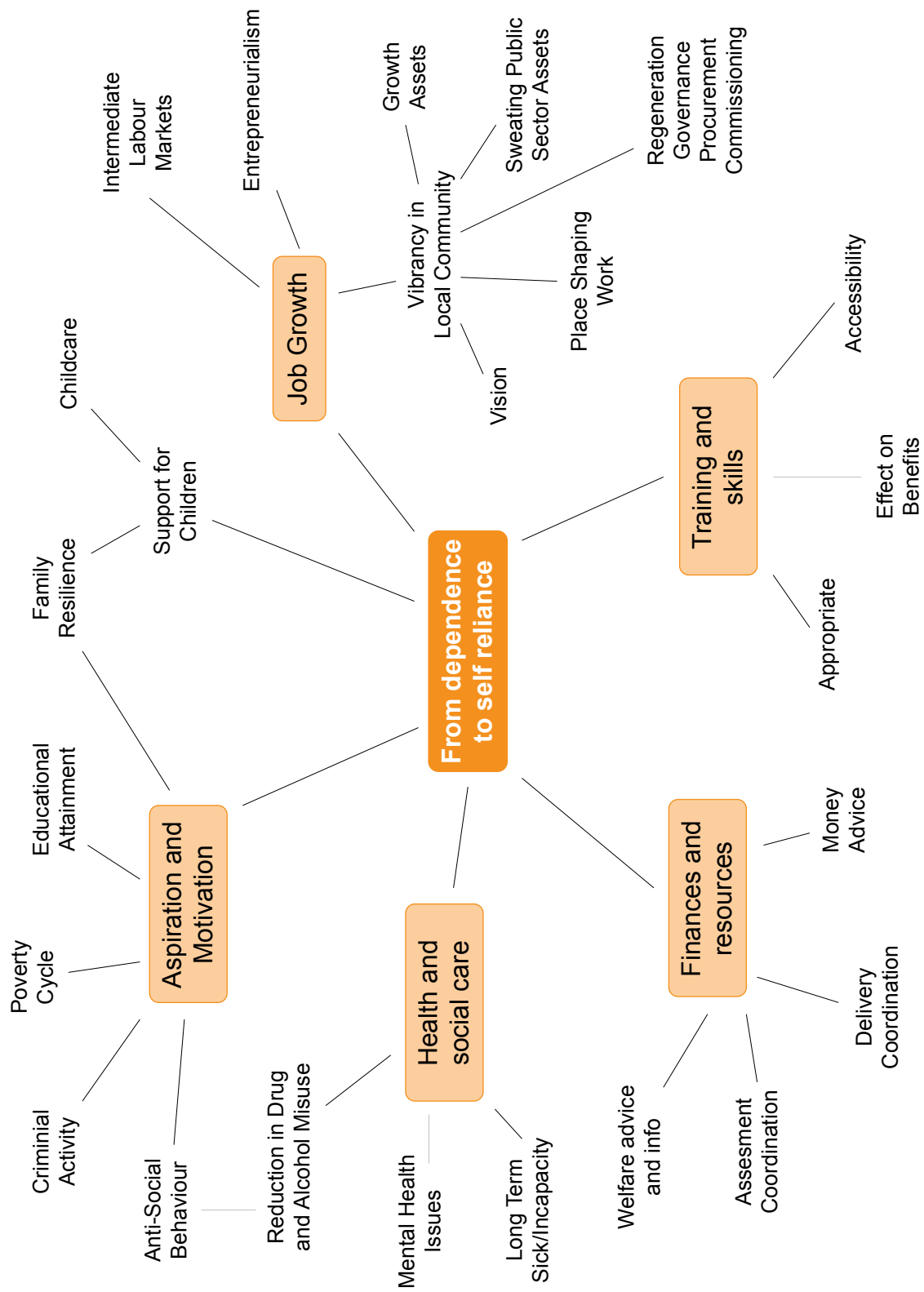
The partnership decided in August 2009 to take work forward focused on two sub-themes as part of their Total Place programme. They used the funding from the CLT programme to specifically use customer insight (CI) tools and techniques to help them understand and then redesign services relating to:

- integrated offender management
- access to benefits.

Both sub-themes reflect areas where partners felt an impact could be made on the lives of people in Central Bedfordshire and Luton. Offender management and paying benefits are activities which input into a number of the themes and links in figure one (eg offender management links to health, poverty and benefits, anti social behaviour, training and skills, etc).

Both are complex problems, which have many dependencies and inter-relationships with other issues, and yet are areas where improvements to service quality and delivery were seen as achievable; where significant partnership working was already taking place and could be further developed; and where opportunities were apparent to make efficiency savings across the wider public sector at both local and national level.

Figure 1. “From Dependence to Self-Reliance”: Issues Map



Source: Luton and Central Bedfordshire Total Place Pilot

## Integrated Offender Management

IOM introduces a coordinated multi-agency approach to offender management with the aim of significantly reducing crime, improving public confidence in criminal justice and reducing the social exclusion of offenders. The key partners with responsibilities relating to IOM include councils, Job Centre Plus, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), The Probation Services, HM Prison Service (HMPS), safeguarding boards, children's trusts, youth offending services, and Luton and Bedfordshire PCTs.

By aligning, strengthening and widening current offender management activity, Bedfordshire is aiming to reduce the reoffending of the county's most prolific and damaging offenders.

## Access to Benefits

By redesigning the process of getting on benefits, the partnership is aiming to simplify the process of coming off benefits to ensure a more fluid process of moving into work (where work is the appropriate option).

The desired outcomes of the pilot's vision are to:

- speed up and simplify the delivery of benefits
- simplify the process of claiming, including changes of circumstances
- reduce benefit administration costs
- ease the process back into work
- reduce benefit dependency and worklessness
- reduce poverty.



## Objective

Central Bedfordshire and Luton's customer insight project had three key objectives:

### **1. To gain insight into the profile, experiences, and aspirations of customers.**

The partnership sought to achieve this through the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative (social research) data in order to build up an understanding of the current pattern of activity by customer profile.

Through collecting quantitative information, the project sought to answer questions about the nature of customers: who they are, where they live and how they access services. The project also pursued qualitative research in



order to understand their behaviours and preferences and engage them in the design of a new system.

**2. To use the knowledge gained via the analysis above to feed into the Lean redesign of services.**

The project has used the understanding of customers developed in the insight work to complement the Lean process re-engineering (see ‘Methodology’). The customer insight work is used to corroborate and/or challenge the proposals developed during the Lean redesign processes (as seen in figure 2 below).

**3. To support the development of a culture of excellence in customer insight.**

The project sought to demonstrate the importance of integrated and timely customer insight input into service design, and provides the partnership with a platform for developing an effective partnership approach to customer insight in the future.

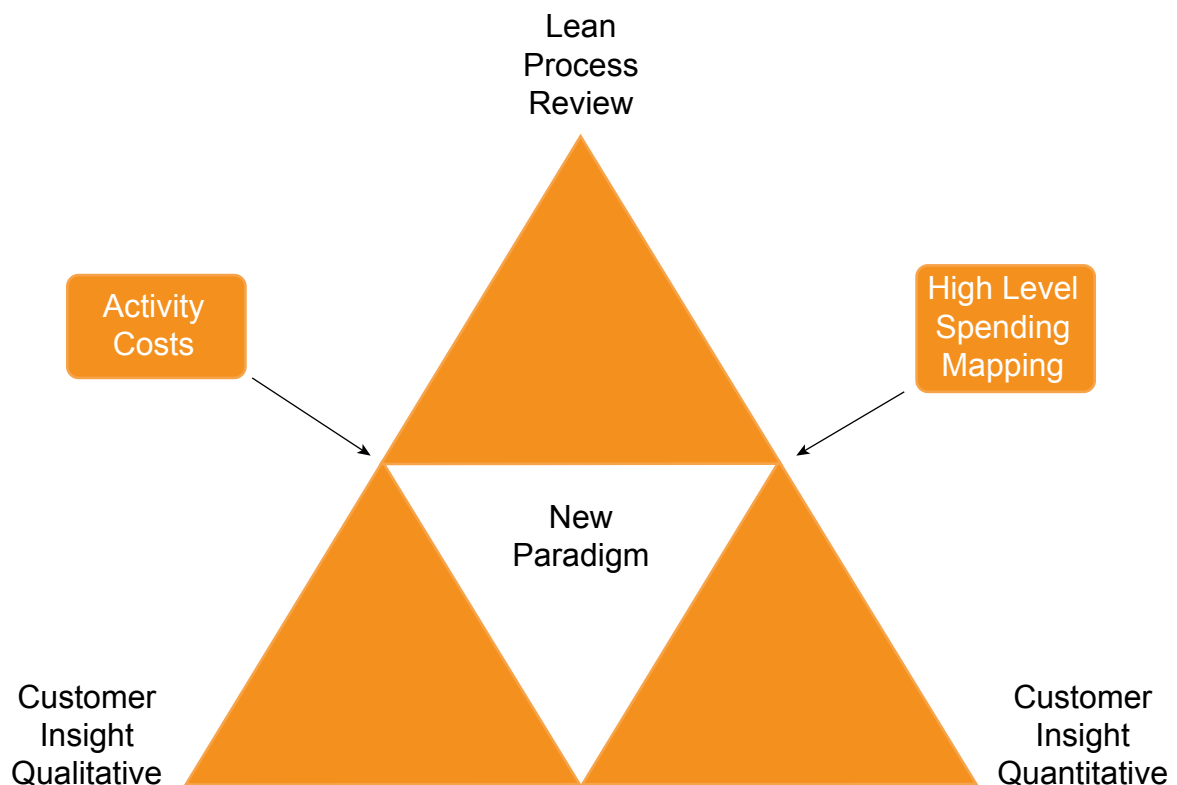
## Lean Systems Thinking

Lean systems thinking is a way of designing and managing work that sees and treats the organisation in terms of process rather than hierarchy.

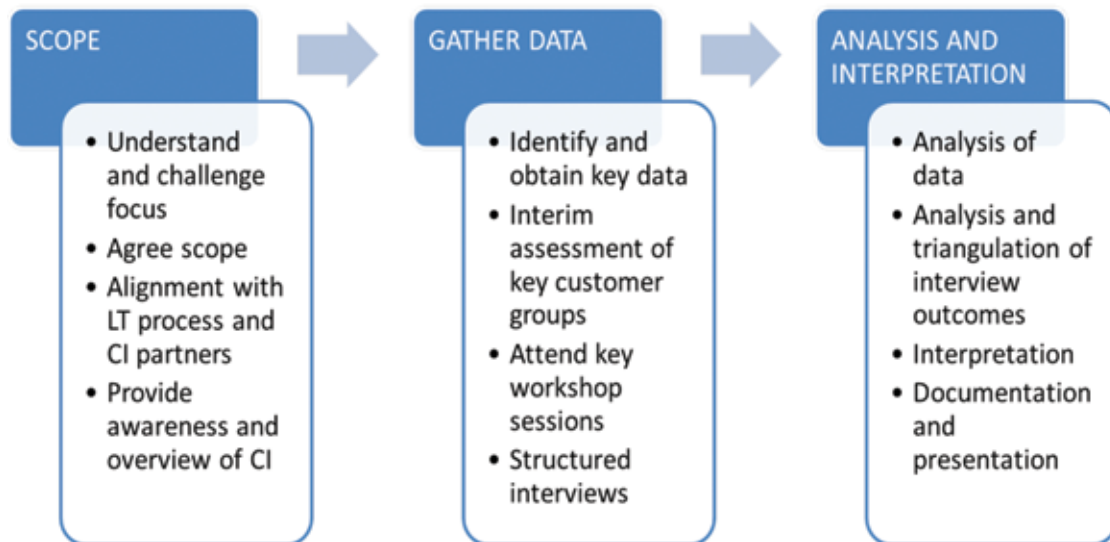
Approaches based on Lean systems thinking:

- focus on customers and what they value
- intervene to ensure that all the activities that affect customer value are optimised as a system
- embody the first two points into the culture of the organisation

**Figure 2. Combining Lean process review with qualitative and quantitative research**



## Approach



Activities were completed in the three phases set out below:

### Scope

The scoping phase entailed the following steps:

1. Understanding, challenging and refining the scope of the programme and individual sub-theme elements working with sub-theme leaders and other key stakeholders. The scope was informed through an iterative process informed by the early stages of the 'Gather Data' phase.
2. Ensuring alignment and integration with the Lean process redesign approach.
3. Raising awareness and common understanding of customer insight methodologies and tools amongst the project team (a CI overview document was developed and provided to the project team for this purpose as the programme brought together a wide range of people from many organisations with different levels of awareness and understanding of CI).

### Gather Data

The purpose of this phase was to gather relevant, existing, customer related data and to identify customer insight already available to partners. The scoping phase identified that segmentation and analysis of customer segmentation was likely to be a statistically robust approach for the Access to Benefits subtheme, whereas this would not be appropriate for the IOM sub-theme due to the small numbers involved. Hence the customer insight work for the IOM theme was qualitative social research – the data gathering phase comprised working with partners to recruit respondents.

The data gathered was fed back into the service redesign process on an iterative basis, to both challenge and inform solutions arising from the process. This phase therefore involved the following steps:

1. Identifying and obtaining key data for the agreed core benefits for the Access to Benefits work-stream.
2. For A2B, carrying out profiling of the agreed benefits to understand consumption by different customer segments. This was done using the

Mosaic customer segmentation technique. (An interim analysis was promptly undertaken to help inform and target qualitative research to ensure alignment of CI activities for the programme).

3. Developing 'topic guides' to inform the questions in the group and in-depth interviews, recruiting appropriate customers (eg for A2B in areas with significant concentrations of the target population) and undertaking a structured set of interviews with key customer groups, stakeholders and practitioners in both Access to Benefits and Integrated Offender Management sub-themes.

### **Analysis and Interpretation**

This stage involved the following steps:

1. Analysis of data relating to both sub-themes. This was undertaken working with external partners and also with in-house Customer Insight teams (see 'Resourcing').
2. Triangulation of the outcomes of the structured interviews undertaken in the 'Gather Data' phase. This enabled key themes to be identified, and clarity to be sought where any inconsistencies arose from discussions across the different parties.
3. Interpretation of the above to develop core CI and key themes that were then used to challenge, corroborate or identify gaps in the service redesign proposals. This was achieved by regular series of conference calls (between the Customer Insight team, customer insight consultants and business process leads) and more formal presentations and workshops.
4. Finally, the analysis, interpretation and learning were documented. A multi-agency customer insight group was established to guide this process, and to deliver learning back to the Project Board (see 'Governance').

### **Combining Lean process reviews and customer insight**

#### **Access to Benefits**

During the first two weeks of November 2009 a series of process mapping workshops were held involving process owners from a number of organisations with an interest in the A2B sub-theme, including Jobcentre Plus, Luton Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Luton Rights and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in both local authority areas.

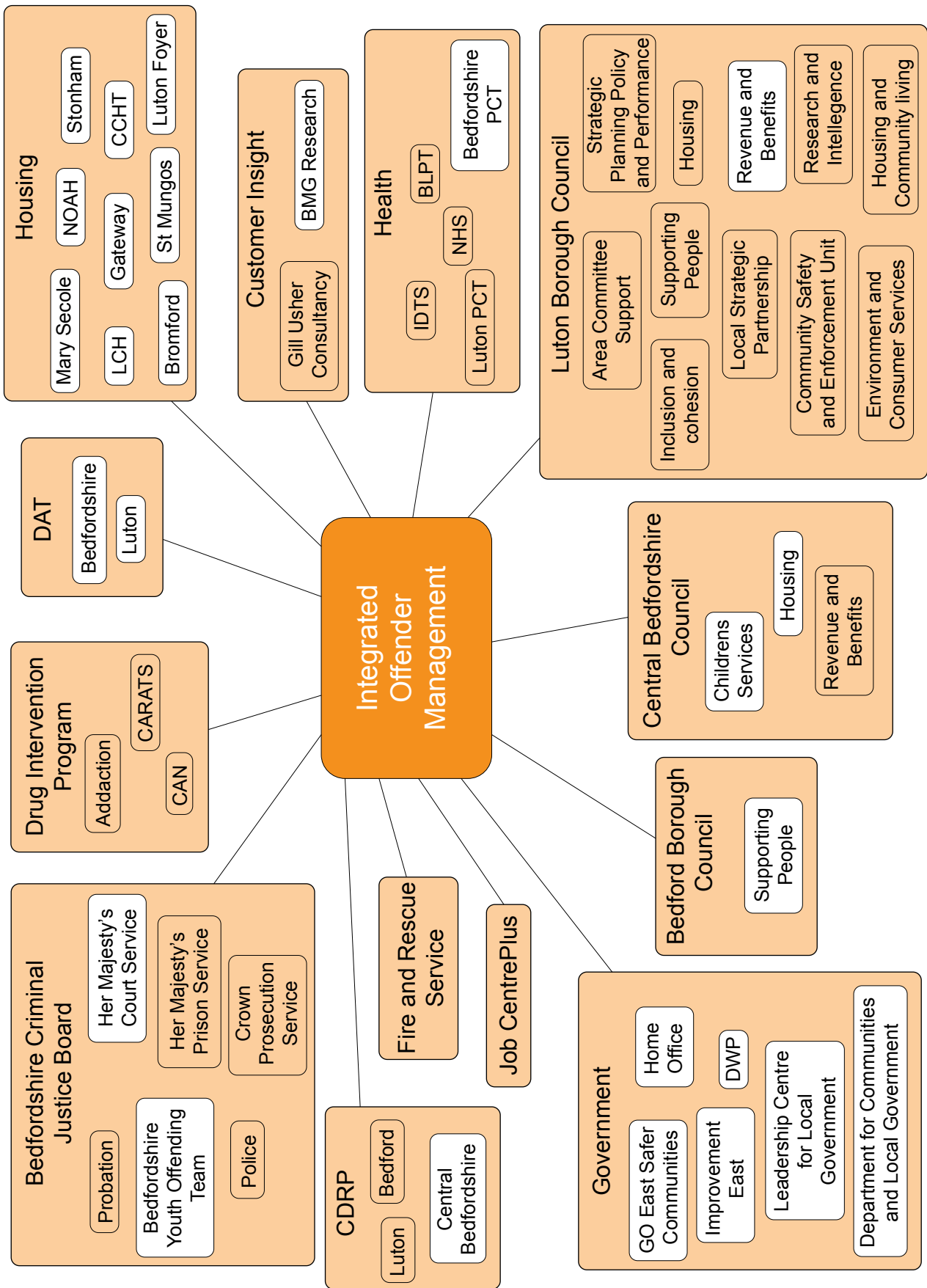
Each process owner engaged in understanding the current benefits system. This working team created a visual representation of the process flow so that everyone could understand, who does what, where, when, why, and how, for the various types of benefits. Simultaneously, the process owners gathered supporting detailed data and information. This process involved:

- business process mapping – key process steps
- paper trail analysis – what documents are used and information required
- geographical analysis – charting organisations' physical locations
- voice of the customer – understanding the customers needs
- noted issues and barriers
- associated costs.

#### **Integrated Offender Management**

A similar process was conducted in parallel for the IOM sub-theme, with specialists from 53 different agencies attending, offering input across the criminal justice arena, public sector and voluntary and community sector (VCS). The stakeholder map overleaf illustrates the range of participants and input.

Figure 3. IOM Stakeholder Input Map



## Socio-demographic profiling

To complement the “inside-out” Lean process reviews of benefits, “outside-in” socio-demographic profiling and in-depth interviewing was undertaken to provide key insight and information on core benefits claimants to:

- Enable partners to understand where existing and potential claimants live together and any ‘hotspot’ areas that may exist. This is fundamental to understanding the optimum location for service delivery points.
- Enable partners to better understand their customer’s lifestyles and behaviours. This is fundamental to designing services which best meet customer needs.
- Enable partners to understand claimants channel preferences for consuming the available services. This is fundamental to designing and delivering services which best match customers preferences.

As part of the socio-demographic profiling the project mapped Council Tax and Housing Benefit claimants at postcode level and a range of data from the DWP relating to Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Income Support to output area.

The project then combined, where appropriate, the above data with Mosaic socio-demographic profiles of the area to build a more detailed picture of the needs, preferences and behaviours of the target customer groups. The resultant maps and profiles informed the sub-theme’s approach to interacting with the target customer group, ie helped them to identify times and locations where interviewers could approach the target segment.

The project held a series of focus groups with members of the target customer group. The maps generated for the Access to Benefits sub-theme, and the feedback from these interviews, are included under ‘Findings’ on page X. The location of key facilities and services used by customers were also mapped and compared with the spatial distribution of customers. For example, this spatial mapping revealed that while the benefits services were being provided from Ampthill, in terms of population the demand for those services centred on Flitwick – over two miles away.

## In-depth interviewing

The project conducted in-depth interviews for both the A2B and IOM work streams. The project interviewed six Prolific and Priority Offenders (PPOs), and three families of PPOs, using the ‘Interview Guide’. The key lines of enquiry focused on their experiences of accessing help and support, and some of the key questions are summarised in the box below.

### Key questions to PPOs

- Before your sentence ended, do you recall receiving any information about the help and services available to you upon release?
- What actual help did you/have you received since sentence ended?
  - Was this help offered to you or did you need to seek it out?
  - Was it easy to access?
  - How useful was that help ultimately?
  - How could it be improved?
- What caused you to reoffend?
- What would have made it less likely that you’d reoffend?

## Findings

### Access to Benefits

The customer insight work has provided the partnership with a rich data source of information and analysis about benefits claimants in the area. The maps overleaf illustrate the existing hotspots (high concentration of benefits claimants) of local authority administered benefits and future potential hotspots centred on areas of potential unemployment.

Understanding future demand is critical to knowing where to locate services. Note how the forecast map highlights areas that do not currently contain benefits claimants – particularly the north eastern areas of Luton.

Analysis of the data indicates that the two areas, Luton and Central Bedfordshire, have different benefit claimant profiles. In both areas benefit claimants in Mosaic groups D, F, G, H and I are over-represented. In Central Bedfordshire the over-representation in all of these groups is more pronounced. In addition, in Central Bedfordshire Mosaic

group J is over-represented.

These differences between areas highlight that claimants are likely to have different needs and expectations, which need to be taken into account when designing services.

This social demographic profiling also supported the approach the partnership took to interviewing benefits claimants, helping to determine where and when appropriate people would be available for interviewing (based on where they shopped and socialised, etc).

The interviews with benefits recipients highlighted a number of issues (which were simultaneously also being raised internally by the Lean process review), which the project grouped into the following three categories:

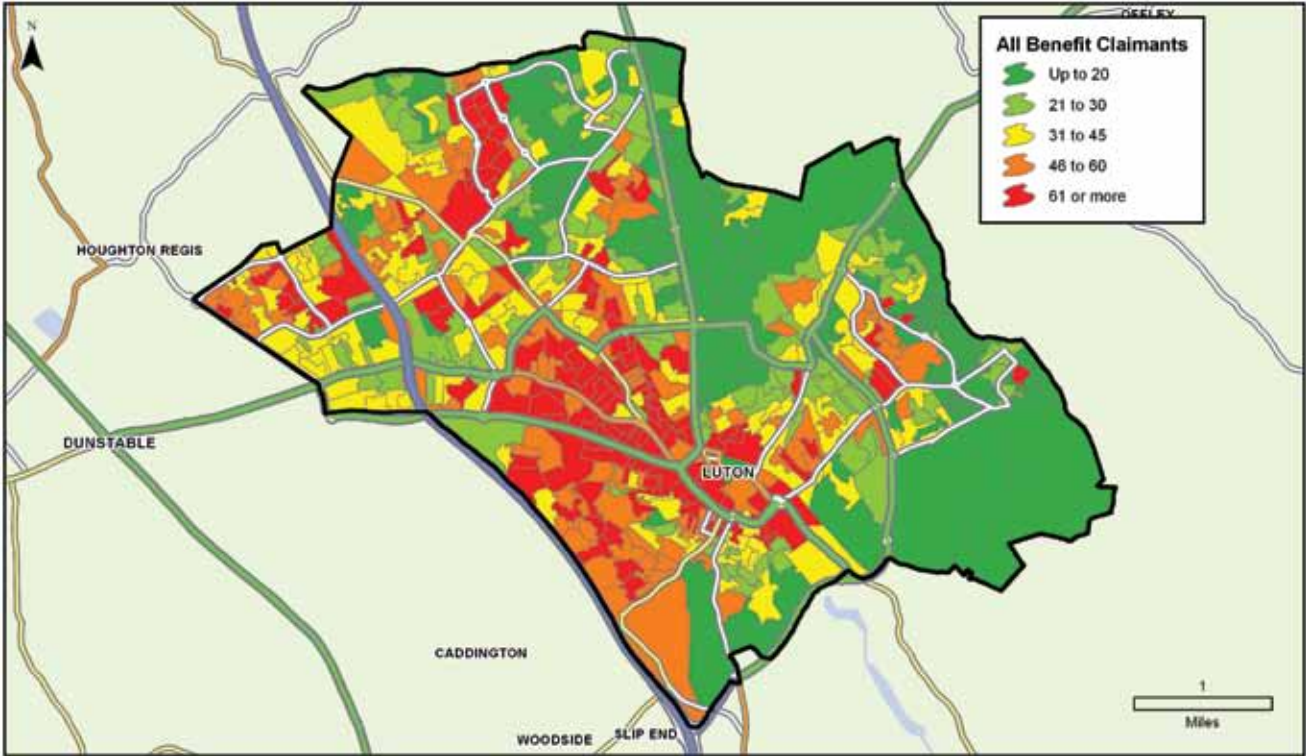
- how difficult citizens found the system to navigate
- communication and information provision (including data sharing between service providers)
- access channels.

**Figure 4. Claimants in Central Bedfordshire and Luton according to Mosaic Group**

Mosaic Group	Definition	Luton %	Central Beds %	Combiined %
A	Career professionals	0.93	3.01	2.02
B	Younger families	10.07	16.26	13.31
C	Older families	9.56	10.67	10.14
D	Ties of community	33.55	13.08	22.83
E	Young and single	5.86	2.82	4.27
F	Welfare borderline	11.28	3.23	7.06
G	Municipal dependency	5.21	5.94	5.59
H	Blue collar enterprise	17.44	28.35	23.16
I	Twilight subsistence	3.99	7.67	5.92
J	Grey perspectives	2.11	8.32	5.36
K	Rural people	0	0.65	0.34

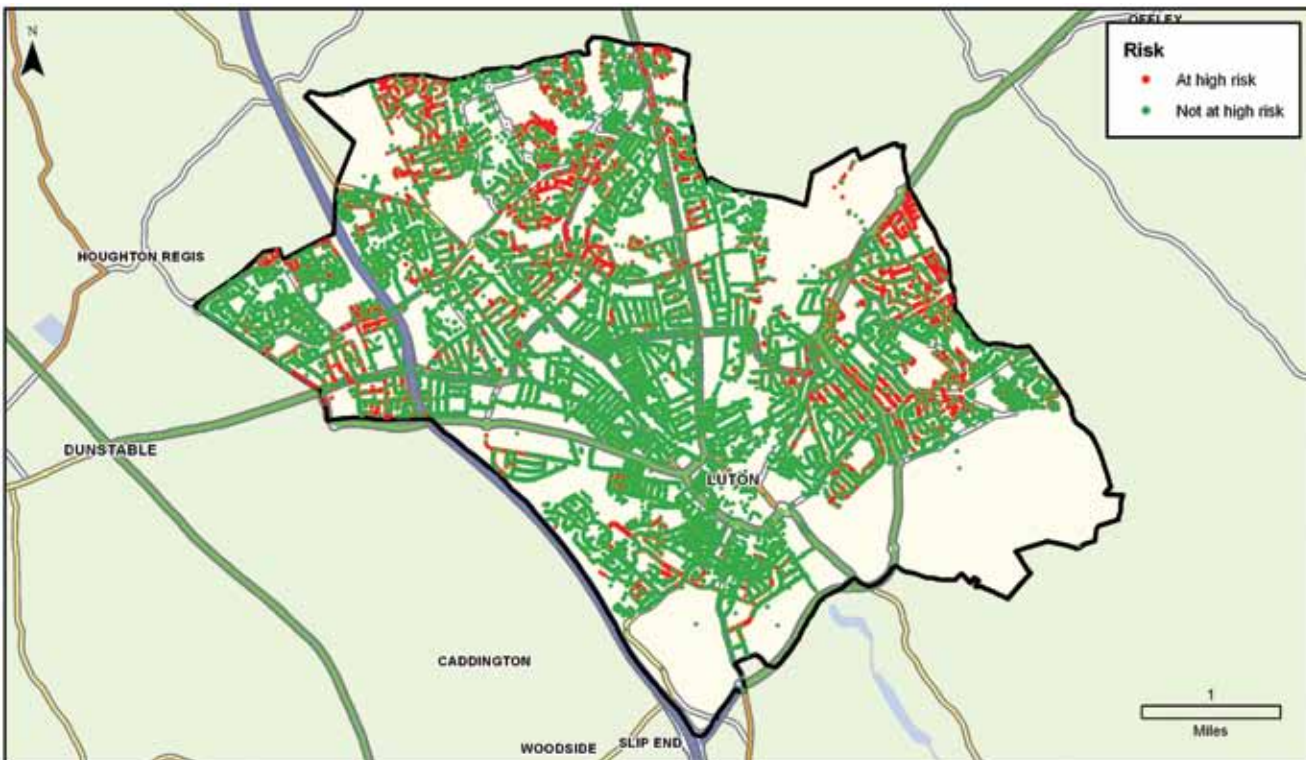
# Understanding Luton

Actual Benefit Claimants - All Benefit



# Understanding Luton

Risk of Long Term Unemployment



## System and process complexity

The customer insight interviews with benefit recipients revealed the extent to which existing and new benefit claimants consider the system to be opaque and at times incomprehensible, leading to confusion, mistakes and wasted time and resources.

“I found it difficult with job seekers as they didn’t explain what income based and what national insurance based was. My national insurance ran out and I had to make a new claim for income based. It took them nine weeks to reassess the claim. So I had no money but still had to get to the job centre and call them during the day.”

**Flitwick**

The insight work highlighted many instances where ‘the system’s’ inability to respond effectively to a change in claimants’ circumstances lead to greater indebtedness and arguably greater dependency.

“It’s a nightmare. When [my father] went into hospital you can’t claim Jobseekers because you’re not able to work and he was without money for five weeks and then he finally got onto this ESA it was another couple of weeks of going here there and bloody everywhere. It is out of order that he has worked hard for a long time and put into the pot that he has to go through all this when he needs help.”

**Leighton Buzzard**

The voluntary and community sector provides a crucial and valued contribution to assisting potential vulnerable applicants

understand their entitlement and the complexity of the claim process.

“I had lots of debts. For a free service they [CAB] told me what to do, gave me letter templates to write, prioritise my debts... really helpful.”

**Flitwick**

## Communication and information provision (including data sharing)

Communication between agencies and customers, as well as information provision, was highlighted as an issue. The insight work highlighted the extent to which claimants are required to provide the same information to numerous different agencies, without necessarily being confident that they were providing the right information to the right person. This leads to costly mistakes for both the system and its customers.

There were many examples throughout the customer insight work where claimants described the duplication of application processes for various benefits (administered both nationally and locally), and the time and effort this wastes for both themselves and the agencies concerned.

“The forms are very repetitive. There are all different forms for different things but it is all going to one town hall. You have fifteen to twenty pages to one department and the same to the next. It is a waste as it is all on the computer. It is the same process three times for JSA, Council Tax and Housing Benefit.”

**Luton**



## Access channels

The interviews indicated that the location of services can cause problems in some areas and for some claimant groups. The customer insight research undertaken highlighted that people who access the benefits system require local service delivery.

The graphic below illustrates that the internet channel is a relatively poor option for both information and service delivery for most groups except the B group (see 'Channel preferences by segment'). This illustrates that the partnerships' main customer groups will require some form of face-to-face facilitation within the solution.

"I had to go to Bedford, then Luton, then Dunstable then back to another office in Luton. I visited [the office in person] as no one knew what to do with me and kept passing me on because I was in receipt of a war pension."

**Flitwick**

**Figure 5. Channel Preferences by Segment**

Mosaic Group	Communications Channel - Information			Communications Channel - Service		
	Internet	Telephone	Branch/Face to face	Internet	Telephone	Branch/Face to face
B Happy families	Neutral positive	Strong	Weak	Strong	Strong	Weak
D Ties of community	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
F Welfare borderline	Neutral negative	Weak	Neutral positive	Weak	Weak	Neutral positive
G Municipal dependency	Weak	Neutral negative	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong
H Blue collar enterprise	Neutral negative	Neutral negative	Strong	Neutral negative	Neutral negative	Neutral positive
I Twilight substance	Weak	Weak	Strong	Weak	Weak	Strong
J Grey perspectives	Neutral negative	Weak	Strong	Neutral negative	Neutral negative	Strong

# Integrated Offender Management

## Focusing on persistent offenders

The stand-out finding from the quantitative analysis was that a small proportion of offenders within Bedfordshire commit a disproportionate amount of the crime, with the most prolific 250 people being named as the accused on over 2500 offences between 2007 and 2009. These 250 are the top five per cent of offenders locally and are named on 25 per cent of the offences committed from 2007 to 2009. The activities of these 250 persistent offenders are estimated to cost the taxpayer as much as £112 million a year.

## Understanding need – the Seven Pathways

If IOM is to provide and commission interventions which address and prevent persistent offending behaviour and its underlying issues, it is key to understand the causes of persistent offending.

The project used the ‘Seven Pathways’ identified by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU)<sup>1</sup> as influencing re-offending to categorise the feedback from PPOs, and associated recommendations. The seven “pathways” include:

- accommodation
- education, training and employment (ETE)
- drugs and alcohol
- finance, benefits and debt
- attitudes, thinking and behaviour
- children and families
- health.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Reducing reoffending by ex-prisoners’. Report by the SEU. 2002

## Accommodation

Stable and suitable accommodation is a key basic need for offenders, yet is one that many struggle to obtain and maintain, with nearly half of offenders in custody having an accommodation need.

“I wouldn’t live in a hostel – that’s going to mess you straight back up. If you’ve got a history of taking drugs, you’re going to end up straight back on drugs. Hostels don’t help anyone.”

**Ex-offender**

In the interviews, PPOs expressed profound disappointment with what they see as the current absence of help whilst they are still in prison to line up suitable accommodation which will be ready on their release.

“Nothing’s really been done. I’ve had to do it off my own back. They say they are going to help you, but I’ve never had any help from them... Every time I’ve been in, I’ve had to do everything myself.”

**PPO**

## Education, training and employment (ETE)

All those interviewed accepted that the number of custodial sentences that they served in their youth have prevented them from gaining skills and qualifications. Nonetheless, all say that they are very keen to find a job; that this, along with suitable accommodation and rapid initial benefits payments, is the building block that would keep them ‘straight’. Those interviewed state that they want jobs not just for the money but also for the self-respect, self-confidence, structure and stability that they think it would bring.

“When you stop taking drugs, you are left without confidence. You’re left with a big empty void. So you need lots of things to fill that. It’s a big and empty feeling.”

**Offender**

## Drugs and Alcohol

“Two hours talking about drugs, you just want to use them again. Mixing with drug addicts, you’re making more contacts.”

**Offender**

All of the PPOs interviewed had self-reported drug abuse issues. Specific needs cited by those interviewed include:

- Wrap around prescribing of methadone on release from custody – PPOs report it can sometimes take up to a week to get their methadone script. Some, who have been released from prison on a Friday, describe how their methadone addiction is so strong that they are unable to do without drugs for a whole weekend and so steal in order to buy heroin.
- Individually tailored drugs counselling – interviewees stated they would like to see drugs counselling tailored around the individual, and feel that this would be more valuable. Some queried the value that they obtained from group sessions.

“I was clean but getting euphoric recall [in the meetings] about using drugs, but if I didn’t go, I’d be back in prison.”

**Offender currently in prison**

## Finance, benefits and debt

Despite this increased need, many offenders interviewed reported delays in applying for and receiving benefits. With some describing

delays of between three and five weeks before they received their first cheque, meaning that most had, technically, to survive on their £46 discharge grant. Few had claimed Social Fund loans or grants.

Some had lost all of their possessions whilst in prison, and others owned only one set of clothes. Most described how they turned to crime, almost immediately on their release, to put money in their pockets.

“You have to commit crime to get a place. I have to, otherwise I’m stuck – I’ve got nothing and I have to wait five weeks for some money, so I have to commit crime to eat, to live, to keep warm. It’s my lifestyle... I have to do it from day one – I may not get caught for a few months, but I do it from day one.”

**Offender**

## Attitudes, thinking and behaviour

All offenders, their mothers and victim support workers stress that the attitudes of offenders play a huge part in the success of rehabilitation, with offenders really having to



want to stop offending – they have to have reached a point where they themselves are ready to break the cycle. Most accept that there were many years – during their teens and early twenties when offending was what they wanted to do and no amount of support from any agency would have succeeded in stopping them at this stage.

“I was uncontrollable. I wanted to do what I wanted to do and I’d do it.”

**Offender currently in prison**

Offenders describe the main triggers in wanting to change their lives as getting sick of the ‘madness’ and ‘chaos’ of their lives, wanting stability, to settle down with their partner and children, or generally sensing that life was passing them by and they were missing out.

“I wanted to sort my life out. I’m just sick of it.”

**Offender**

### **Children and families**

PPOs interviewed highlighted the role of family in changing their behaviours.

“Courses aren’t going to help you. It’s down to your personality and where you are in your life. If you want to continue you will. It’s all down to circumstances as well. When you’re in that lifestyle, when you come out of prison if you don’t have good family round you and stuff like that – if you haven’t got any proper people around you, you’re going to come out of prison and go straight back to drug taking.”

**Ex-Offender**

### **Health**

Research shows that offenders are more likely than the general population to experience mental illness, learning disabilities and physical health problems<sup>2</sup> but are less likely to access the support they need to manage and treat these conditions.

Offender managers report that the transient nature of high volume offenders, who often have multiple periods in custody and regularly change addresses when in the community, can create challenges in obtaining healthcare. This is exacerbated when offenders have no fixed address and/or transitions points from or into custody.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of the insight generated by the work, the project recommended that the partners:

- include the needs of offenders and their families as a priority in their strategic plan
- identify policy and procedural changes required to address issues identified relating to IOM offenders
- commission services which meet the needs of IOM offenders
- identify resources/staff to contribute directly to the IOM team

These suggestions have been considered in the creation of the Integrated Offender Management propositions (see ‘Outcomes’ next page).

<sup>2</sup> ‘Improving Health, Supporting Justice – The National Delivery Plan of the Health and Criminal Justice Programme Board’, November 2009. Department of Health

## Outcomes

Among the major outcomes of the customer insight and Total Place work include:

- an Integrated Offender Management programme agreed by Bedfordshire's Chief Executive's Forum in January 2011
- a new customer access strategy for Luton Borough Council.

"Our Total Place pilot has embraced an entirely new way for central government, local authority and voluntary agencies to address key community issues. Its recommendations present challenges, some for us locally and others for central government, but we are confident this project is a forerunner to the way all public authorities will do business in the future."

**Robin Porter, Project Director**

### **Outcomes: Integrated Offender Management**

In early January 2011 Bedfordshire's Chief Executive Forum signed-off the business case for Integrated Offender Management across the area. IOM will bring together partners in the public, private and voluntary and community sector to effectively manage and rehabilitate the county's most prolific offenders.

The stated objectives of IOM are to:

- reduce crime by reducing re-offending
- improve confidence in the criminal justice system
- reduce social exclusion of offenders and support reintegration into society
- deliver better value, more effective services.

To inform decision making, a comprehensive IOM cost benefit analysis was commissioned to explore financial viability of a range of delivery options. The analysis included:

- identification of three year costs for each delivery option, including capital expenditure, staff costs and operating costs
- identification of additional costs that would be incurred across each option
- a costing of direct economic benefits attainable by achieving reductions in crime of a proxy cohort.

The chief executives choose to approve a model that will deliver a "rehabilitation gateway" for offenders offering access to lead professionals and key services and interventions from one site. The gateway will also create partnerships and joint working with wider public services and locally based voluntary and community organisations. The gateway will also be innovative by incorporating specific services for citizenship programmes, complex families, restorative justice, and health training.

For further information, see 'Benefits' on page 20.

### **Outcomes: access to services**

Taking on board the lessons from the customer insight work on Access to Benefits, Luton Borough Council have agreed a new operating model which embeds the role of customer insight in end-to-end service improvement.

The design principles and objectives underpinning the new model include:

- building on the segmentation work and collecting further data to inform service access and delivery
- using customer consultation to shape the services around customer wants

- providing a joined up approach to customers requiring multiple service provision
- centralising customer contact across council services including housing and council tax benefits, housing, adult social care and children's services, within customer services
- improving signposting between the council and voluntary and community sector partners and building the end-to-end customer journey into our training and service design processes
- rationalising access channels so that customer can access all services in one place
- mapping end-to-end processes to reduce complexity and their number of steps
- providing and migrating customer towards self-service channels
- achieving at least an 80 per cent resolution at first contact and minimising avoidable contact.

## Benefits

### **Integrated Offender Management**

Bedfordshire's most prolific 250 offenders (and those likely to become the core IOM cohort), have been convicted of nearly 4,000 offences for the three years from 2007 to 2010. The partnership's local cost analysis conservatively estimates that the direct costs of offences committed by this group are in excess of over £64 million in the same time period.

Through delivering the range of benefits outlined in figure 6, the business case for the model approved by the partners forecasts net financial benefits worth (benefits minus total costs) of between £3 - £3.5 million per year.

### **Access to Services**

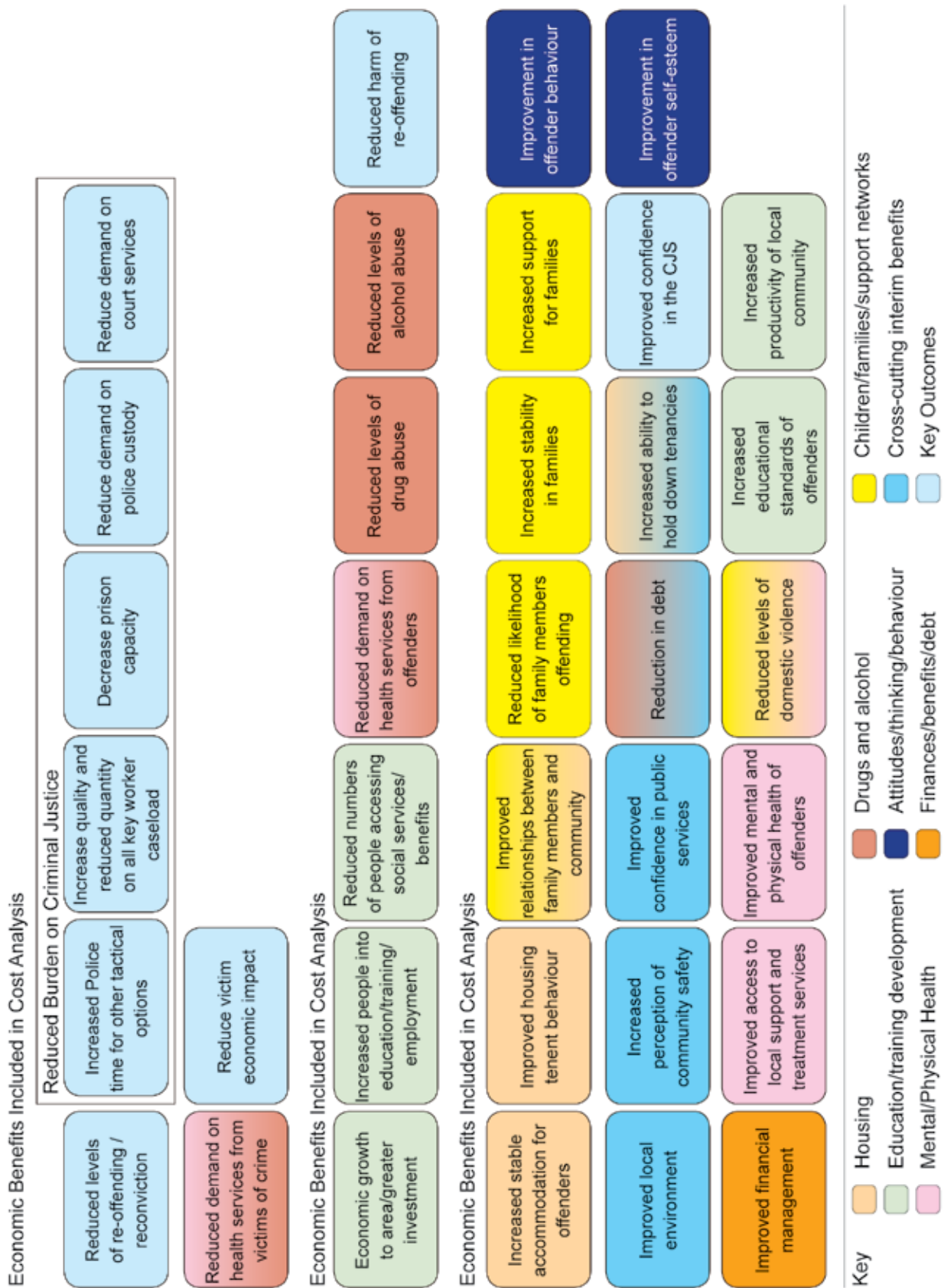
While most of the benefits from transforming access to services will be delivered by the new access strategy once agreed and implemented, the insight and lessons learnt have already supported improvements in the Revenues and Benefits Service.

For example, Housing Benefits claims processing took over 50 days in 2007/08. Following the insight generated by the Total Place work, the average claim now takes less than 10 days. Moreover, the Total Place insight suggested the development of a new "Fast Track" service whereby the service captures all the information required from the claimant, and using this new system claims can be process in just two days.

The improved understanding of customers has also led to an improvement in Council Tax collection rates, with the percentage successfully collected rising from 92.3 per cent in 2008/09, to 96 per cent 2010/11.

Looking forward, Luton Borough Council expects a minimum of £400,000 per year worth of savings arising from channel migration planned in the new strategy.

Figure 6. Bedfordshire IOM Benefits Mapping



## Governance and Resourcing

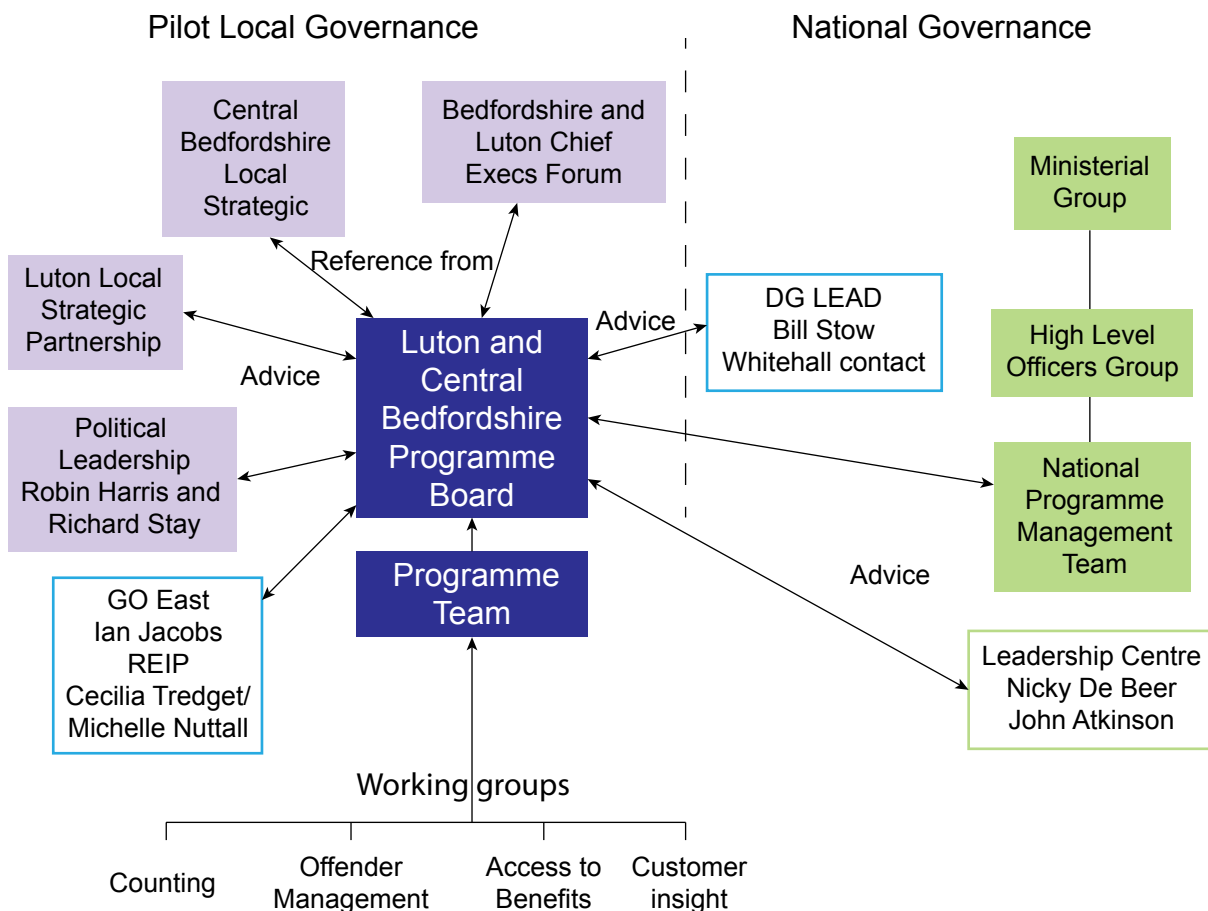
Central Bedfordshire Council and Luton Borough Council jointly led on this work. Partners involved included: Bedfordshire Police, The Probation Service, Ministry of Justice, Crown Prosecution Service, Her Majesty’s Courts Service, Luton and Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, NHS Luton and NHS Bedfordshire, the Chamber, Department of Work and Pensions, JobCentre Plus, HM Revenues and Customs, together with a wide range of local voluntary and third sector agencies and organisations.

As depicted in the diagram below, the partners established a Customer Insight Group comprising representatives from Bedfordshire Police, Central Bedfordshire Council, Luton Borough Council, Luton PCT, Bedfordshire Probation Trust, and Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service.

Also as part of the group were the lead officers for the A2B and IOM work-streams, and consultants from BMG research and Gill Usher Consultancy. The group oversaw and managed the work of the consultants.

The insight work was funded by the Customer Led Transformation Programme.

**Figure 7. Governance during the Total Place Pilot**





## Challenges and lessons learnt

The pilot identified the following lessons learnt:

### **Customer insight at the start of programme**

Ideally, the insight work would have been funded and instigated from the outset of the programme. This would have had the dual benefit of supporting a collaborative approach and stronger integration with the Lean process reviews.

Sufficient time was also needed to allow for the identification of, and access to, relevant datasets from partners, as well as review published and readily available research and analysis. Furthermore, the partnership reports that customer insight tools and techniques would have proved valuable in identifying sub-theme areas and in gaining consensus on the scope of each sub-theme.

### **Defining the customer**

The pilot emphasised the need to clearly define and identify customer groups at the start of the activity is essential to future success. Initially there was a lack of clarity of 'who the customer is' for both sub-themes. The recommendation for the future is that customer insight is the first element of any service redesign, and that stakeholders reach firm agreement and consensus on the definition of the customers to be focused on.

### **Insight provides 'challenge'**

Customer insight has enabled the pilot to challenge the outcomes of the Lean process review. For example one of the messages from the social research interviews highlighted staff attitudes towards claimants – redesigning services from a purely 'process' perspective would have missed this important insight.

### **Understanding customer insight**

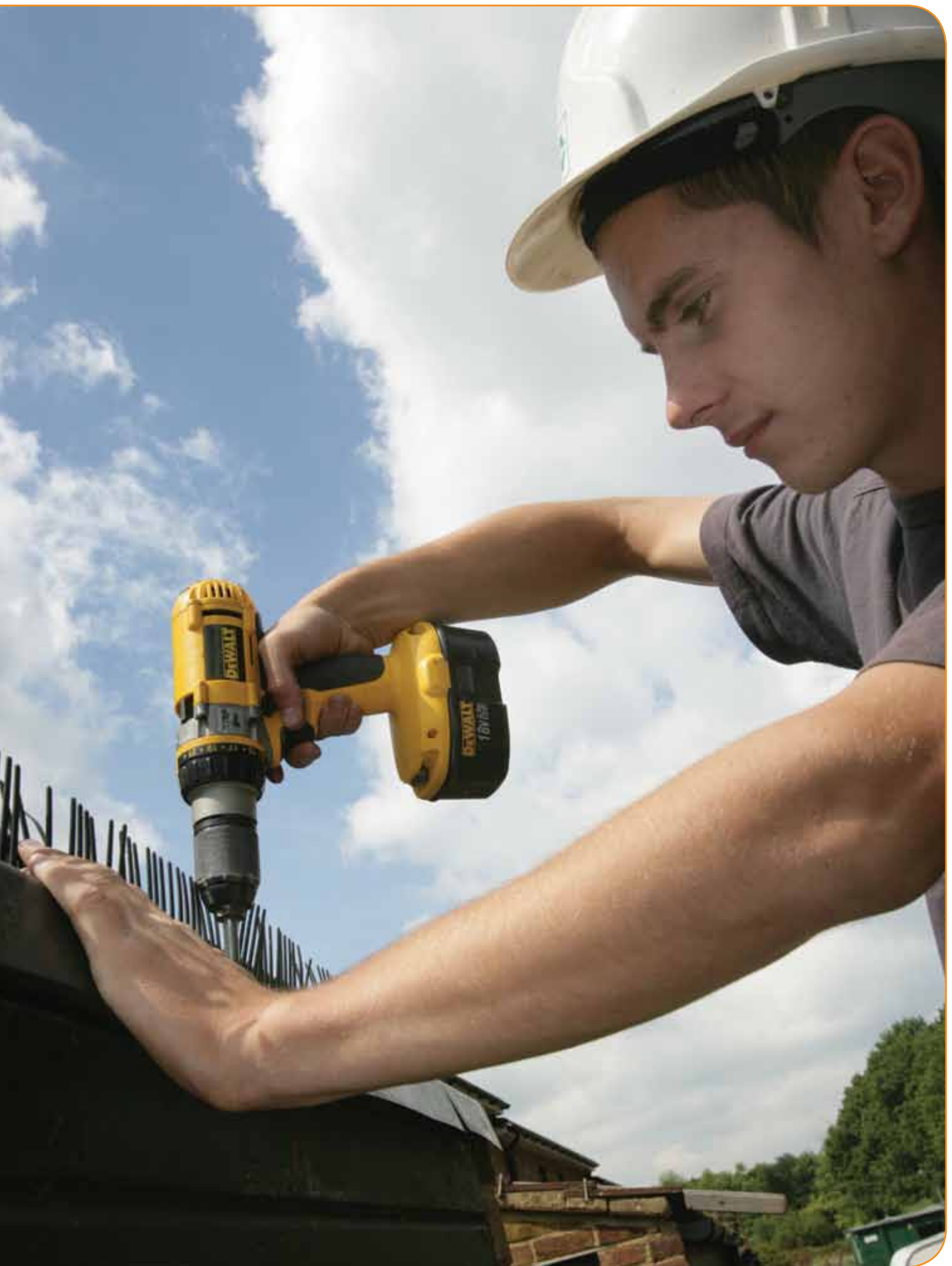
The pilot notes a need to promote an understanding of customer insight and its importance with partners. Without high quality insight about customer needs and their feelings about services, organisations may find it challenging to think about redesigning how they operate to deliver real value for money and improve the customer experience. Having seen the benefits arising from having this insight has helped the partners make this journey. However, ongoing effort is required to embed this thinking.

To help address this lack of understanding of customer insight the programme produced a "customer insight key concepts" document. Efforts to embed insight into the organisations include the continuation of the Customer Insight Working Group, the development of customer insight capability within the Research and Intelligence Team at Luton Borough Council and the recruitment of an analyst by Bedfordshire Probation Trust.

Equally, customer insight should not be considered a standalone activity – it must be embedded in the service design and delivery and be seen as an integral part of 'the day job'.

### **Promoting collaboration**

Central Bedfordshire was a new unitary council at the time of Total Place and the pilot represented a significant piece of work for the new organisation. However, it also enabled collaboration and a joined up approach to tackling the issues identified.



## Accessing data

In order to truly reduce duplication, save money and improve service delivery the data sharing issues identified will need to be addressed in future. In the experience of the project, a more pragmatic approach to data sharing would greatly benefit future Total Place-style initiatives.

Guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office, as well as organisational and legal restrictions were not well understood, interpreted differently amongst different stakeholders, and resulted in barriers that perhaps could have been prevented. There is a partnership Information Sharing Working Group that has developed an overarching Information Sharing Protocol for public services in Bedfordshire. Whilst this has focussed on sharing individual records relating to, for example, criminal investigations and safeguarding children, it is now also looking at sharing micro level data for strategic level analysis, including customer insight work.

Accessing data from the DWP proved problematic due to their restrictions of use of personal data and legal restrictions relating to the Social Security Act. These issues were resolved through provision of a table of rounded data at Output Area level (approx 150 households) rather than the preferred postcode level (approx 20 households). This data could not be matched against Mosaic and hence was not used in the customer profiling work.

The pilot recommends that for future success in the development of Total Place themes partners should sign up to a high level protocol that recognises that – while protecting customer information is paramount when sharing data – public service providers also have a duty to use data to deliver better services to customers.

## Next steps

The partners are continuing to build on the segmentation work developed as part of the Total Place programme, with an emphasis on:

- embedding customer insight and consultation into the partner's ways of work, and specifically
- using insight and evidence as the starting point for Lean systems-based approaches to improvement and transformation.

The IOM Business Case was approved in January 2011, with implementation of the model expected to commence early spring 2011. Similarly, Luton Borough Council's Access Strategy is expected to be approved in early 2011.

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The logo for the Local Government Group features the word "Local" in white on a purple background, followed by a white silhouette of a person's head in profile. Below this, the words "Government Group" are written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

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The six member organisations are represented by small logos arranged in two rows. The top row includes: Local Government Association, Local Government Improvement and Development, and Local Government Employers. The bottom row includes: Local Government Regulation, Local Government Leadership, and Local Partnerships.

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