



Rt. Hon. Angela Rayner MP
Secretary of State for
Housing, Communities & Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P

Date: 12th June 2025

Dear Secretary of State

Central Bedfordshire has seen significant growth in recent years. Year on year, the Council has consistently overseen the construction of more homes than almost any other area of the country. Employment rates are very high, and the council has offered innovative public services, working closely with the government on its key aims.

We have worked proactively and successfully with our health partners, for example to bring about Grove View, a £25 million health and care facility in Dunstable, built and funded by the Council which allows residents to meet with GPs and receive a variety of other health and social care services close to their homes. This is in line with the Darzi Report which urges 'care closer to home' to keep people healthy and out of hospital.

We have worked with Homes England, UK Power Networks and the National Grid to deliver a £60 million investment in grid capacity in Biggleswade, securing the power supply for the area now and into the future, and in doing so developing the blueprint for such investment for others to follow.

We are a place that has brought about great outcomes for our residents, and we could do much more if the Government is prepared to back its own goals and help mitigate some key issues we face.

Despite our proactive approach there remain significant issues with healthcare provision, and healthcare funding per head in Bedfordshire is well below the target level of spend, the merger of ICBs makes this even less likely to be addressed.

Per pupil funding for education is amongst the lowest the country. It is no coincidence that pupil attainment is similarly low. A SEND pupil in a Central Bedfordshire School attracts half the level of funding that the same pupil would if they lived in Camden. This is not fair, and this inequity is increasing as the population here, including the school age population, grows faster than almost anywhere else.

These are policy-based inequities which are in the Government's gift to fix.

With talk of a new town in our area alongside the proposed major development of Luton Airport, East West Rail and the Universal theme park, all on our doorstep, there will be significant infrastructure demands in the years to come.

We are well placed to deliver the Government's ambitions, but it is neither feasible nor appropriate for a single local authority and its residents, to fund this on their own.

There is demand for health and care facilities similar to those built in Dunstable in Biggleswade, Leighton Buzzard, Wixams, and the rural areas around them. We, and our local ICB, BLMK, would appreciate clear financial support from the government.

The Council has embarked on an ambitious programme to switch from 3-tier to 2-tier education and align with the rest of the country - this will not come cheap and is expected to cost upwards of £200m. Meanwhile, we have pockets of severe rural deprivation which have had a notable effect upon schools' performance. The council also has significant and growing SEND costs. Moving to 2-tier, supporting SEND, and improving performance will also require extra significant support from the government.

Rail and air expansion will have a big effect on our region. With all that is planned, it is imperative we prepare our roads for a massive increase in vehicle movements. For example, the removal of roundabouts on the A1 from Biggleswade to Black Cat and upgrading Junction 13 of the M1 are imperative. Residents rightly expect a far-reaching bus service. We will need government commitments to support these transport aspirations.

With climate change and such a significant change in land use across the area, flood prevention and resilience will be critical. We need to prepare now to deal with current and future flood events. The proposed BMK Waterways Park would significantly contribute to nature recovery and natural flood defences. We need to know we have financial backing from government for such projects.

All of these developments are needed now and will become essential within the next 5 years.

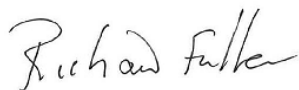
We would be eager to meet to discuss these issues, and this would give us the opportunity to provide further detail including the costs, timings and impact of what we have already achieved, and what we would like the government to support, going forward, in order that we can continue to deliver great outcomes for all the residents of Central Bedfordshire.

We are eager to work together, and we hope you will be prepared to join with us and help find the funding on a national level, to ensure our residents get the health, roads, education and environment they deserve.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Adam Zerny
Leader, Central Bedfordshire Council



Richard Fuller MP
Member of Parliament for North Bedfordshire



Blake Stephenson MP
Member of Parliament for Mid Bedfordshire