

AREA BOARD: CENTRAL LUTON

DATE: 24TH OCTOBER 2012

SUBJECT: AREA REPORT

REPORT BY: HEAD OF POLICY & PERFORMANCE

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IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES	ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL	CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING	OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: BARNFIELD, BISCOT, HIGH TOWN & SAINTS WARDS

PURPOSE

1. To bring before the Board an update on the issues that were raised following the last Area Board held on the 13th June 2012.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. The Central Luton Area Board are recommended to note the report and make recommendations on further action where required.

BACKGROUND

3. The inception of the Central Luton Area Board and the other four areas came about following the then Governments 2001 White Paper on the Modernisation of Local Government. In 2006 this was followed later with the Local Governments White Paper entitled Stronger & Prosperous Communities and until this year all these current Boards were called Area Committees. However, in the last two years and following the publication of the Localism Bill which received Royal Assent on the 15th November 2011 and became an Act, the Council have been working on a Neighbourhood Governance (NG) programme, which for many of you will recognise from the title 'Your say, Your way'.
4. The NG programme was piloted initially in the West area and over time is now embracing four areas i.e. West, South, North & Central

and it is anticipated that East will commence in the 2013/2014 Municipal Year.

5. There is currently work taking place to bring together the work of what were Area Committees and that of NG, with Area Boards just being one phase of that of that joined up approach.
6. This report encapsulates the progress of this area board which is supported by additional reports from other areas of the council and partner organisations and agencies. In addition it includes information on projects and activities supported by the board and following liaison and mediation with both internal and external service areas, pursues the concerns raised by both the local community and Members of the council.

REPORT

7. Members of the public who appear on the current database were informed of this meeting by post on the 8th October 2012 and publicity for this cycle of meetings appeared in the October edition of Lutonline, the Luton on Sunday and Luton & Dunstable Express during week commencing 29th September 2012. Additionally, posters in keeping with the new style advert and corporate approach to area committees were also dispatched to every General Practitioner, Dental Practice, Chiropodists, Chiropractors, Educational establishment, Library, Sports Centre, Community & Youth Centre, Day Centre, Places of Worship and Sheltered Housing provision, across the borough. The information gave dates for every Area Committee and was then followed up with specific information about the Area Committee, relevant to that area.
8. The Area Board web site is regularly updated and can be accessed on www.luton.gov.uk/areacommittees ** (web site address to be changed in due course)

COMMUNICATION

9. I would like to remind the Area Board that the web pages on www.luton.gov.uk/areacommittees ** are regularly updated and members of the public can access all of the following on these pages:-
 - Information – What are area boards? What are ward forums?
 - Dates of all meetings
 - Dates and information of all area tours
 - Ward Forum issues/updates
 - Agendas
 - Minutes
 - Reports
 - Area project proposal form

The actual address to the above web page and of coursed email address will be changed in due course to come into line with the new title of Area Boards.

AREA COMMITTEE ATTENDANCES

10. The following are up to date attendances at the Central Luton Area Board for the period September/October 2010 to June 2012.

Area Board cycle	September & October 2010	January 2011	July 2011	October 2011	January 2012	April 2012	June 2012
Central Luton	53	120	56	2	30	20	25

BUDGET UPDATE

11. The following table shows the budget for the Central Luton Area Board.

<u>Central Luton</u>		
<u>Barnfield, Biscot, High Town & Saints Wards</u>		
Allocation 2011/2012		£10,000.00
Carry over from 2010/2011		£20,140.00
Balance brought forward		£30,140.00
BA 409	<u>Bushmead Play Project Group</u> The development and improvement of Bushmead Community Centre play area. This will attract additional WREN Funding.	£4,765.00
	Commitment in 2011/2012 to the Neighbourhood Governance Project.	- £10,000.00
Central 418	<u>Central Young Voice</u> The Project is a weeks residential in France.	- £1,000.00
ST 421	<u>Saints Community Centre</u> Saints Summertime Splendor – Saturday 30th July 2011 1pm – 5pm	- £1,035.00
ST 422	<u>Saints Community Centre</u> To provide the opportunity for families to enjoy an affordable day out at the seaside. To provide a day to promote inclusion, social interaction of families in the community, create cohesion, understanding, unity and fun.	- £260.00
HT 429	<u>Gating scheme to the side of 8 & 14. North Street, Luton and to the rear of 2 to 6. North Street, Luton</u> To supply and fit 2.1 mtr tri-point palisade gate, coated green with lock which will be welded to the gate. Keys to be supplied to respective residents. Gate to be installed between 8 & 14 North Street Luton,	- £875.00
BU 432	<u>Heron Drive Neighbourhood Watch</u> To erect a Community Information Board outside the Bushmead Community Centre whereby the Neighbourhood Watch group, Police and the community centre can post	- £350.00

	information concerning matters around community safety and other activities.	
HT 435	<u>High Town Diamond Jubilee Celebrations</u> A Diamond Jubilee Street Celebration involving as many organizations who are in High Town, including the shops. This will bring everyone together for an afternoon of fun and fellowship. Eating & Greeting; Races; Activities; Historic Exhibition in the church. The planning will be starting in September 2011 coming to fruition on Saturday 2 nd June 2012.	- £2,000.00
ST 399	<u>Blundell Road Gating Scheme</u> Reimbursement to two residents who contributed towards the scheme. The scheme did not go ahead.	- £120.00
	<u>Neighbourhood Governance</u> Further contribution to the Neighbourhood Governance budget to support projects in the Biscot and Saints Wards.	£1,500.00
HT 429	50% contribution from Housing towards this scheme.	+£437.50
BA 409	Refund from WREN Funding	+£286.07
	Balance requested to be brought forward:- (Subject to approval by the Executive in June 2012)	£8,958.07 (Rounded down to £8,950.00)
	Budget for 2012/2013	£10,000.00
	Brought forward	£18,950.00
HT 446	<u>Peoples Park – Improvements to the County Wildlife site.</u> This is a partnership project to undertake some improvements to the County Wildlife Site (CWS) area of People's Park, led by Groundwork Luton & Bedfordshire, working with Luton Borough Council (LBC) and the Friends of High Town. In 2011, Groundwork was commissioned by LBC's Natural & Built Environment Team to consult and produce an Action Plan for the CWS. The Action Plan was completed in September 2011 and identifies a number of improvements some of which can (and already have been) undertaken by volunteers and a number of more substantial improvements which require capital expenditure. The aim of this project is to undertake some of the capital improvements identified in the Action Plan. The improvements include installation of park name signs and improvements to the appearance of the four entrances to the CWS at Havelock Road, Wardown Crescent, Woodbury Hill and Sunridge Avenue; design	£4,992.00 (Commitment towards the Country Wildlife site in Peoples Park)

	and installation of three interpretation boards at appropriate locations within the CWS; replacement of five old / damaged bench seats; installation of a set of timber steps to facilitate access to / from the CWS from the north eastern corner of the Bell's Close part of People's Park, restoration of the existing cast iron fencing (340 ms) and coppicing some elm scrub to prolong it's life. The estimated cost of these improvements, including fees and VAT is £45,382 and a funding bid is being submitted to the WREN Landfill Communities Fund for this amount. This requires third party funding of £4,992 which is the amount that we would be grateful if the Central Luton Area Committee could provide.	
	Balance brought forward	£13,958.00

PEOPLES PARK – IMPROVEMENTS TO THE COUNTY WILDLIFE SITE

12. In March of this year the Central Luton Area Board approved the sum of £4,992 (Reference Project No: HT 446) for third party funding for a WREN application by Groundwork for improvements to the People's Park County Wildlife Site (CWS). Unfortunately the application to WREN was unsuccessful, but if possible Groundwork would still like to use the funding towards some aspects of the work together with funding from other sources. Following discussions that have taken place with Luton Borough Council's Parks Division, the work for which funding is now being sought are for improvements to the four entrances to the CWS – Havelock Road, Wardown Crescent, Woodbury Hill and Sunridge Avenue. Our estimate for these is £14,500 including project management costs.
13. Groundwork has identified two other funding sources to which they and the Friends of High Town will be applying; one is the Biffa Award (Landfill Tax) Small Grants Scheme (max £5,000) and the other is the Luton Airport Community Fund (max £3,000). With the £4,992 of Central Luton Area Board funding this will give a total of £12,992 of which £250 will be required as third party funding for the Biffa Award funding (only 5% for their small grants). This will leave a shortfall of £1,758
14. Groundwork would therefore like to request that the Central Luton Area Board:
 - (i) Allow them to 'keep' the £4,992 previously allocated;
 - (ii) Approve an additional £1,758 to cover the full costs of the project.

15. Groundwork fully appreciate that the Central Luton Area Board may have reservations about the additional funding request and if that is the case they would revisit the suggested improvements to see what savings could be made.
16. I will be asking the representative from Groundwork to address the Board on this project.

AREA PROJECTS

17. There are four applications for Members to consider at the meeting this evening:
 - Project number ST 466 was circulated to all Members of this Area Board on the 4th October 2012.
 - HT 470 circulated on the 10th October
 - HT 446 is embraced as part of this report.
 - BI 471 circulated on the 10th October 2012

Project Number	Project	Cost of project	Amount requested
HT 446	<u>Peoples Park – Improvements to the County Wildlife site.</u> Please see paragraphs 12 – 14 above.	£14,500	Further £1,758.00
ST 466	<u>St Joseph's Scout Group, Blundell Road, Luton</u> To replace damaged double glazed windows at the Scout Hut (Quantity x 4) complete with four security grills.	£1,200	£1,000
HT 470	<u>Gating scheme to the side of 74. Reginald Street, Luton</u> To supply and fit 2.1 metre tri-point palisade gate, coated green with lock which will be welded to the gate. Keys to be supplied to respective residents. Residents at this location have been complaining about issues with prostitution and street drinkers in the area. One of the areas identified as being an issue is the alleyway that runs to the side of 74. Reginald Street. The area has clear signs of street drinkers as the area is littered with empty cans of beer and other alcohol. We are hoping to put a gate up at the start of the alleyway to stop people being able to get access unless they have a key. We will then provide a key to the residents that have right of access.	£800	£400

Project Number	Project	Cost of project	Amount requested
BI 471	<u>Montrose Path – Improvements</u> The footpath called Montrose Path has been subject of serious anti-social behaviour. This has included a group of youths congregating in the alleyway, behaving in a rowdy manner, causing criminal damage to peoples fences, have started fires, been verbally abusive, thrown items into residents gardens etc. This has been on going for a number of years with incidents escalating in 2012. As part of an action plan to reduce the anti-social behaviour the priority anti-social behaviour team have been looking to improve the general area. Trees have been cut back in the alleyway, increased litter patrols. Residents have reported that they are unhappy with the condition of the fencing in the alleyway. They believe it has contributed to the look of the alleyway deteriorating and will encourage more incidents of criminal damage and anti-social behaviour.	£473	£473

HOUSING ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT FUND

18. A new approach has been established for the identification, prioritisation, selection and delivery of Council Housing environmental projects **at a ward level** and it has been agreed to distribute the current £40,000 budget available for tenants' improvements across wards on a per property basis. Wards with less than 100 properties would 'partner' with another ward.

The decision on spend will be made by ward councillors and local council tenants, incl. any council tenant representative for that area in the ward forum and agreed by the respective Area Board.

The distribution across wards is as follows:

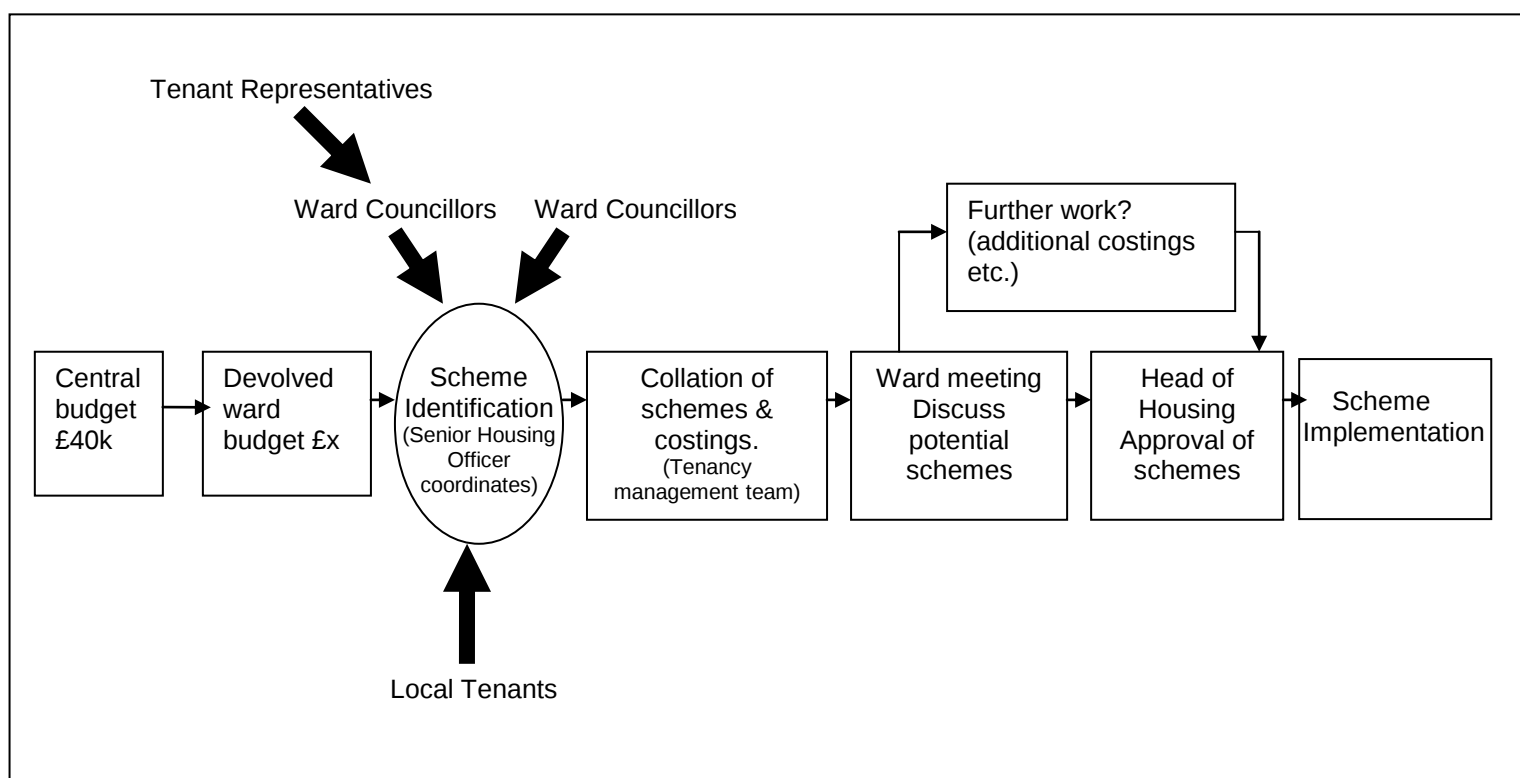
<u>Ward</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Ward</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Ward</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Biscot	£593.47	High Town	£1,562.81	Round Green	£2,294.76
Bramingham	£326.41	Icknield	£1,320.47	Saints	£875.37
Challney	£316.52	Leagrave	£4,634.03	South	£4,223.54
Crawley	£1,350.15	Lewsey	£5,865.48	Stopsley	£959.45
Dallow	£652.82	Limbury	£964.39	Sundon Park	£2,576.66
Farley	£5,123.64	Northwell	£4,530.17	Wigmore	£1,829.87

NEW APPROACH

19. The relevant Senior Housing Officer (SHO) consults with local ward Councillors, local council tenants and council tenant representatives on ideas for suitable schemes on which to spend their share of the budget.

20. The Tenancy Management Team to collate schemes for each ward and arrange for costs to be obtained.
21. Approved schemes will be commissioned through BTS or other approved contractors.
22. Schemes that are identified but cross ward areas will be highlighted and managed appropriately by the Tenancy Management Team on a case by case basis (e.g. discussion & consultation with both ward Councillors etc.)
23. Ward councillors will ensure that schemes approved benefit Council Tenants and or estates and are an appropriate use of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding.
24. Details of scheme spend will be kept to facilitate appropriate auditing as required.
25. Final sign off /approval of schemes through Head of Housing.

Proposed Process for agreement of Environmental Schemes.



AREA TOURS

26. The new dates for the 2012/2013 Municipal Year have now been set and have been circulated to all Members of the council. These dates are also accessible on the area committee web pages.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

27. It is proposed that Members of the Central Luton Area Board note the report.
28. In terms of the application under the Area Board Projects Scheme
 - ◆ Reference HT 446
 - ◆ Reference ST 466
 - ◆ Reference HT 470
 - ◆ Reference BI 471

Members may consider the following:

- (i) Granting the full application.
- (ii) Making a different contribution towards the scheme.
- (iii) Deferring the application for future consideration.
- (iv) Refusing the application

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

29. Much of the work conducted by the Area Board will have an impact on Council services and will address issues such as accessibility, local participation and the general quality of life within the Borough.

COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

30. A large amount of the work being pursued and undertaken by service areas and other outside agencies will make a major contribution to community safety and need to be considered alongside other schemes that may be under consideration or being implemented.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

31. Any contribution made by this Area Board will be met from existing budgets.

ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

32. The implications of the work being undertaken will address and improve the environment, create safer communities and address the quality of life for local people.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D

- The Modernisation of Local Government 2001
- Stronger Prosperous Communities 2006
- Localism Act 2011