

EAST LUTON AREA COMMITTEE

19th March 2007 at 7.45p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Skepelhorn (Chair); Councillors P. Chapman, J. Davies, R. Davies, Dolling, Franks, Howes, Patterson, Siederer and Wates.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Rutstein

15 MINUTES (REF: 2.1)

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9th January 2007 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16 COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE (REF: 8.1)

The Area Community Safety Co-Ordinator informed those present that she was also now responsible for the South Luton area.

She advised that she had visited the Ward Forums and reported the results of the recent multi-agency Environmental Action Days that had taken place. Further information on the Environmental Action Days and the results were available at the meeting.

The Area Community Safety Co-Ordinator informed the Committee in respect of the Safety Squad initiative. This was another multi agency project aimed at primary school pupils. Amongst its aims, the Safety Squad initiative sought to teach children to say no to drugs, administer first aid, information about fire safety, road safety, how to avoid becoming embroiled in acts of criminal damage and anti-social behaviour and much more. Nine primary schools had participated from the Luton area and the results had been extremely positive.

She further reported that she had recently delivered the Community Safety Survey to a number of residents (randomly selected) in the East area, and additional copies of the survey were available at the meeting. She urged those present to complete this survey as it presented an excellent opportunity to make the Council aware of the issues considered to be of most importance by local residents, which would then be taken into account when considering future action plans.

Resolved: That the report (Ref: 8.1) be noted.

17 POLICE QUESTIONS (REF: 8.2)

Police Officers and Police Community Safety Officers (PCSO's) were present to take questions from members of the public.

Sergeant Paul Lowe introduced the three newly appointed PCSOs for the East area and informed the Committee which wards they would be serving. He further advised that the PCSOs were now working in smaller areas and on shift patterns between 8.00am and 11.00pm.

Sergeant Lowe advised that his team had now moved from their previous base at Luton Airport to Suite 102 at Jansel House on the Hitchin Road (Tel: 01582 473456).

He commented that callers to this number would receive an ansaphone messaging service when all the officers were on patrol. He stressed the importance of leaving a message so that he and his team could gauge what was happening in the local area, even if they had not been in a position to respond immediately to the initial call. He further advised that if direct contact with Police Officers was required for non-emergencies, the public should dial 401212 and for emergencies – 999.

He advised that the Area Community Safety Co-Ordinator would also be based at this location along with a community worker from the Fire Service. A future aim was to have periods during the day when, via an appointment system, members of the public could visit Sergeant Lowe and his team to discuss any issues they wished to.

In response to an enquiry as to whether the Call Centre could transfer calls to the local PCSO number, he responded that this was possible but it was more likely that messages would be received via e-mail. Sergeant Lowe advised that the address for the generic site for Luton East PCSOs could be found via the Bedfordshire Police website, and further advised the Committee of his direct e-mail address should people wish to contact him using this.

A member of the public enquired as to what would be the full compliment of Sergeant Lowe's team, and on what basis this was calculated and he advised the following:

- 1 x Sergeant
- 5 x Police Constables (PCs)
- 9 x PCSOs
- 1 x Crime Reduction Officer (covering East and South Luton)

Sergeant Lowe advised that the full compliment of PCSO's should be in place within the next two months, whilst in respect of PCs, a more realistic figure for the short/medium term was three. He further advised that the calculation of officer requirements was based on area demands.

A member of the public enquired what the "555111" telephone number referred to that he had seen on vehicles around the town, and Sergeant Lowe advised that this was the Crimestoppers national number.

Resolved: That the report (Ref: 8.2) be noted.

18 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (REF: 9)

There were no questions raised by members of the public on this occasion.

19 EAST LUTON CORRIDOR - UPDATE (REF: 11)

Alan Jones, Public Liaison Manager for Birse Civils Limited updated those present on progress made with the East Luton Corridor scheme.

He advised progress had been good and the project was still on target to meet its original date of 21st December 2007.

He further advised the following:

- The bridge beams have been erected on the Midland Mainline railway bridge and the Airport Sliproad Bridge.
- Bridge abutments were currently under construction on the Lower Harpenden Road Bridge with the beams due to be erected on the weekend of 30th March 2007.
- On Park Street, bridge beams would be erected weekend commencing 16th April. Park Street would be required to close underneath the bridge for the weekend. A letter-drop would take place shortly to all residents in the area.
- Widening works were recently undertaken on the east-bound slip lane from Capability Green business park. Completion would result in two lanes exiting the park enabling vehicles to merge more easily onto the main A505.
- Percival Way was closed to through traffic on 5th February 2007 to allow construction of the larger roundabout at the entrance of the Airport by the Holiday Inn Express hotel. Percival Way was expected to re-open in May 2007.
- Several meetings took place with Luton Airport in order to minimise disruption to traffic and all users of the airport were informed so plenty of advance notice could be given, particularly with warning signs for airport parking etc.
- Road crossing work was currently ongoing to install ducts for services on Eaton Green roundabout and Harridan Road – unfortunately it would not be possible to undertake these works during the daytime due to traffic volumes.
- The cut for the airport slip road would commence in the near future with all excavated materials used on building embankments on other parts of the project.

- The Council provided regular updates on its websites in respect of forthcoming diversions and road closures.
- All local businesses would be notified by email and local residents by letter-drop to ensure the public are kept informed of construction activities.

In response to concerns expressed regarding temporary speed restriction signs and speed cameras, he advised maps were available at the meeting showing the parameters of the limits for the 30 and 40mph speed limits. Copies of the draft orders from the Council's solicitor were also available. He advised that the correct number of signs were set out and checked regularly by traffic management patrols.

He further advised that the temporary warning signs in place complied with temporary traffic orders under chapter 8 of the traffic signs manual. An inspection had been carried out on 19th March, and compliance had been confirmed.

A member of the public commented that the warning signs in respect of the Airport on Crawley Green Road and Eaton Green Road were not clear enough – you could not read the information on them until you were right on top of them or had missed them. Mr Jones advised he would investigate.

Resolved: That the report (Ref: 11) be noted.

20 BUTTERFIELD UPDATE (REF: 12)

The Head of Planning had submitted a report to the Committee in respect of the Butterfield Development.

In the absence of the Head of Planning, the Head of Regeneration Services advised that she would report back any comments/concerns to him or other relevant officers and obtain any information required.

A Member expressed on behalf of local residents their deep disappointment in the way the developers did not appear at any stage of the development to have considered their needs or adhered to agreements that had been made, and sought written responses, as soon as possible, on each of the following points:

- In respect of new planning application no. 07/00154/ADV for the display of 5 freestanding illuminated signs – a Member requested that this matter not be dealt with under the delegated powers scheme but be submitted to Development Control Committee to allow those residents wishing to object to the opportunity to do so.
- The layout of the roundabout onto the Butterfield Development – Members and members of the public commented that the approach

was too quick with insufficient warning signage.

- The level of light pollution to local residents – several had complained of the need to install blackout blinds to keep the light out at night.
- More planting required towards ensuring the protection of the privacy of local residents.
- Why were bollards only installed at one of the lay-by by the Butterfield development? This has led to the use of the lay-by by lorries as a rest stop with rubbish discarded in the lay-by.
- Warning signs should be installed in respect of deer roaming the area to prevent further danger of accidents both to the deer and motorists.
- Insufficient signage onto the Butterfield development has led to problems with lorries turning into Butterfield Green Road in error. This has led to damage to the grass verges that should be repaired as soon as possible.
- Sunday working – this had taken place on occasion (contrary to previous agreement).

A member of the public commented on the poor state of repair of the former filling station opposite the Butterfield development. Although not part of the development, the Head of Regeneration Services was requested to check with the Development Control Manager if anything could be done to request that the owner of this site be requested to fence it off from public view.

Resolved: (i) That the report (Ref: 12) be noted.

(ii) That the Head of Regeneration Services be requested to check with the Development Control Manager if it would be possible to request the owner of the petrol filling site fence it off from public view.

(Note: Councillor Howes disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest in the above item as, in his capacity as director of a small high technology Company, the Butterfield development would become his main place of work on completion and left the meeting during discussion of the item.)

21 LUTON YOUTH SERVICE (REF: 13)

The Head of Centre, Putteridge Youth Club reported on the current Youth Service activities and developments in Crawley, Round Green, Stopsley and Wigmore Wards.

She advised that lunch and breakfast clubs had been launched alongside a campaign geared towards promoting healthy eating.

The Boom Bus had been launched on 18th March and had visited Raynham Way Community Centre - approximately 40 young people had attended the launch event. She was delighted to report that the young people were pleased with the Boom Bus and the facilities on board it e.g. DVDs, games etc. She confirmed that the Boom Bus would be out visiting "hotspots" during the Easter holidays and was due back at Raynham Way shortly.

Activities had been undertaken with young people around raising awareness levels of sexual/drug related issues and these had proved successful.

Representatives from the Youth Voice Group had conducted site visits of the local area to gain an understanding of the issues younger residents in East Luton faced and had applied for funding for a shelter in Ashcroft Park.

The Head of Centre, Putteridge Youth Club further advised that work was also ongoing with the police in visiting schools.

Resolved: That the report (Ref: 13) be noted.

22 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE (REF: 14)

The Unit Development Manager for Raynham Way Community Centre confirmed that the Centre now had a full compliment of staff and that daytime opening hours had now been extended.

She further advised that the Centre Programme was under review with a benchmark comparison to activities undertaken at the Centre during the same period in the last year.

The Committee was informed in respect of some of the issues that had arisen in the East area around younger people, and was advised that an Area Youth Worker was now also part of the team. She referred to the role the Boom Bus would have in working with young people in the East area and reiterated that very positive feedback in respect of the bus had been received from young people themselves to date.

She reported on ongoing projects with the Art Shop involving young people, which were also proving successful.

Work was ongoing to expand the summertime programme of activities at Raynham Way Community Centre and future updates would be provided.

Resolved: That the report (Ref: 14) be noted.

23 LAND AT FALSTONE GREEN/WIGMORE (REF: 15)

The Area Committee Support Officer updated the Committee, following on from the Executive's Decision at its meeting on 22nd January 2007 (EX/25/07), with regard to the latest status on progress made in respect of the purchase of land in Wigmore from the original developer to enable more effective estate management.

He advised that the owner's solicitors had now agreed that all enquiries on the areas of land had been cleared and it was now in order to send out the draft contract for sale. The Capital and Asset Management Division were now organising for this to be done and it was expected that the matter would now proceed to a speedy conclusion.

A member of the public enquired if there were any restrictions on the land to prevent building once the land had been acquired. Members advised that there was an existing covenant that required the land to remain as open space for the public, and confirmed that there was no intention to build on the land.

A further question arose in respect of maintenance of the land, and Members confirmed that responsibility for maintenance would remain with the Council, as was currently the case.

The Chair commented that he hoped to be able to confirm at the next meeting of the Committee that the land sale had successfully completed, and that the matter was now concluded.

Resolved: That the report (Ref: 15) be noted.

(Note: Councillor Patterson disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest in the above item in that the owner of Falstone Green was also the landlord of the property in which he resided, he left the meeting during discussion of the item.)

24 AREA REPORT (REF: 16)

The Area Committee Support Officer informed the Committee of the latest position in regard to the area projects budget and reported on four applications that had been received.

| Project No | Project | Cost of Project | Amount Requested | Decision |
|------------|--|-----------------|-----------------------|----------|
| CR 226 | <u>Buchanan Drive (Phase 2)</u> Installation of palisade gates and fencing. Supply lock with suitable number of keys for garage owners. Members will be aware that this project was put before the East Luton Area Committee at the last meeting held on the 9 th January 2007. The cost of the | £3,682.0 | Additional £750.00 | Agreed |

| | | | | |
|--------|---|---------|---------|-----------|
| | project at that time was submitted as 'guess' and as a result has come out way below the official estimate that have now been received. Therefore a further application in the sum of £750.00 is now being made in order to subsidise the project. This would now reduce the cost to £148.70 per household. | | | |
| CR 232 | <p>Sophie Rahim Education Welfare Officer <u>School Attendance Scheme – Crawley & Wenlock Schools.</u> Addressing truancy and non-attendance at school. Taking ownership Raising the profile of school attendance. Raise attendance levels. Reward for classes with best attendance levels. Reward pupils with the best attendance. Reward significant improvement. Tutor group talks.</p> | £750.00 | £750.00 | Refused |
| RG233 | <p>Sophie Rahim Education Welfare Officer <u>School Attendance Scheme – Ashcroft High School.</u> Addressing truancy and non-attendance at school. Taking ownership Raising the profile of school attendance. Raise attendance levels. Reward for classes with best attendance levels. Reward pupils with the best attendance. Reward significant improvement. Tutor group talks.</p> | £750.00 | £750.00 | Refused |
| SP243 | <p>Laura Henman Area Community Safety Co-Ordinator – East and South <u>Lothair Road Playing Field</u> To provide a lockable gate at the entrance to the recreation ground due to the car park being used at night by youngsters playing loud music etc.</p> | £1,300 | £1,300 | See below |

Resolved: (i) That approval be given to the expenditure of £750.00 with regard to project number CR 226.

(ii) That project number CR 232 be refused, as it was the Committee's view that the requested funding should be met from the Education budget.

(iii) That project number RG 233 be refused, as it was the Committee's view that the requested funding should be met from the Education budget.

(iv) That approval be given to the expenditure of £1,300 with regard to project number SP 243, subject to attempts first being made to secure alternative funding for the application from other funding streams i.e. the Community Safety Team budget.

In response to an enquiry in respect of the Committee's budget for the next financial year, the Area Committee Support Officer confirmed the budget had been approved by Council and set at £12,000.

Members expressed concern that an increasingly high number of the applications received were requesting the full amount of project costs. Members re-iterated that requests for support from Area Committee budgets should be for "top-up" contributions towards projects, and not full funding, as this would allow the support of more community projects.

Resolved: (i) That the report (Ref: 16) be noted.

(Note: Councillor Wates disclosed a personal and prejudicial interest in the above item in that he is a resident of Lothair Road and left the meeting during consideration of the item).

14 AGENDA PLANNING (REF: 16)

Resolved: That the following reports be provided to the next meeting of the East Luton Area Committee:

- Falstone Green - Update
- Butterfield Development - Update
- Wigmore Valley Park – update on car parking plans
- Petition – Tenants and Residents of Williton Road in respect of requests for parking bays.

(Note: The meeting ended at 8.55 p.m.)