

COMMITTEE: WEST LUTON AREA

DATE: TUESDAY 26TH JANUARY 2010

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICE REPORT
(BULLET POINT UPDATE)**

**REPORT BY: SHAMSUZ ZAMAN
UNIT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**

As part of the Community Development Service's commitment to improving communication, each area committee will now receive a report on the service as a whole, as well as specialised items of their particular area.

- **The Community Development Service (CDS)**

The CDS engages borough wide and is responsible for supporting communities with their delivery programmes at all 11 council run sites. In addition, CDS along with colleagues in Environment and Regeneration Department provides essential back up support to 'Community Based Not for Profit Trust Like Organisations' that operate in specific parts of the town to help manage their businesses. Discussions are ongoing looking to address future support to the trusts including secretariat provision, maintaining a database, risk management, trouble-shooting and signposting, whilst at the same time enabling them to maintain their independence and focus.

The CDS also manages Sylam Hall in Marsh Farm, which is a small community building, used mainly by the local school working with young people who have been excluded from school.

The CDS' work with The Early Years Partnership and Pre-School Learning Alliance in relation to establishment of Children's Centre provision will be covered in future area committee reports.

- **‘Community First’ Newsletter**

The attached newsletter is a new initiative from the CDS and aims to provide information on what the service does and opportunities for communities to get involved in activities that can shape people’s lives and their environment. The Autumn 2009 edition focuses on:

- the launch of the ‘Your Say, Your Way’ Neighbourhood Governance pilot project in Area West (Challney, Leagrave and Lewsey) whereby CDS staff and resources played a key role in enabling communities to work with the Council and its partners to shape services and influence change in their neighbourhoods.
- the Festival of Flight project
- Community Cohesion
- what’s on at Farley Community Centre

- **Community Cohesion**

Community Centres across the town contribute to the cross Luton work with the communities to help reduce tension.

During activity around the town and in the Bury Park area, Community Centre staff made a significant contribution to maintain communities sense of pride and provided positive working solutions whilst working with groups like “Hear My Voice Project” (a national Charity) and “Developing Brighter Future” (a local community organisation). All of which create opportunities for sharing information; networking and promoting the good work.

Emergency Evacuation Centres - Community Centres are called upon in times of emergencies as Evacuation Centres as in the case of a fire in the centre of Luton on a Sunday evening, which led to staff being called in to open up Bushmead Centre as part of the Town’s evacuation procedures

Community Hubs- Some Community Centres may become community hubs in the future and starting with Hockwell. The plans have now been submitted to the Planning Department and we hope work will commence as soon as planning permission has been obtained.

The new Hockwell will provide a modern, accessible, flexible building that has the potential to be shared with partners and give the local community access to a wider range of services than most of the existing premises currently can offer.

Services on offer could include:

- Delivery of agreed frontline services such as day activities, youth services, or community health services and support;
- Flexible community space that could be used for and by different activity groups.
- Office accommodation which would support moving existing services and staff closer to the communities they support
- Customer Access points supporting access to a range of services through a local one-stop shop or 'virtual' approach.
- Opportunities for social enterprise e.g. Cafes, training, support, advice/advocacy, health related activities.

Holiday Events- All our Community Centre staffs' have taken full advantage of the holiday time to organise Christmas parties, Eid events and New Year Parties, while the team in Farley went even further and organised a two coach trip for pensioners in their area to special pre-Christmas events.

- **CDS Projects**

Neighbourhood Governance Pilot Scheme: This project has now been up and running in West Luton for over nine months. With the dedicated support of CDS staff working alongside local Councillors and volunteers, the project has organised and run Community Festivals at the Chaul End Centre (for Challney Residents) and Hockwell Ring Centre (for Leagrave Residents) as well as the Lewsey Festival. These attracted more than 2500 people, with 348 people contributing their views about priorities in their neighbourhoods through a community mapping consultation. 6 Ward consultation meetings (2 per ward) were also held with 113 attendees in total. In addition, working with the Safer Neighbourhoods Teams, 150 face to face surveys were completed with local residents (50 per ward).

This in-depth consultation on local priorities was taken to community planning events for each ward. These were attended by 110 people, who identified and voted on local priorities for improving their neighbourhoods within the LAA framework. Feedback on self-declared ethnicity, age and gender indicates high levels of diversity and relative representation amongst people involved in opportunities for influencing decision making through the pilot. 81% of participants in the community planning events strongly agreed that they enjoyed the events, 15% agreed, 1% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed, and 69% of participants in the community planning events strongly agreed that the events were a good way for local people to influence decisions in their area, 27% agreed, 1% neither agreed or disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed.

The current work of the project team has been establishing an Area Neighbourhood Board made up of local agencies and Councillors, which is negotiating and taking forward a work programme to address local priorities agreed at the community planning events. The Neighbourhood Governance Project Manager (Marek Lubelski) has submitted the Draft Area Neighbourhood Plan for the review of the West Area Neighbourhood Board, scheduled to meet on 14th January 2010.

The team is currently also organising Luton's first Community Participatory Budgeting events, which will see citizens actually voting on applications from community groups to carry out projects in the West Area. The £30,000 fund is supported by a variety of partners including, Luton Borough Council, the NHS (PCT), the Police, Government Office East and also Circle Anglia Housing Association. A panel of local residents is helping to shape the Participatory Budgeting process and events, and we are currently working with community groups/ members and local organisations to support them in putting forward project bids for 'Your Say, Your Way' funding. We currently have around 16 groups applying for funding and the number is increasing.

The overall Decision Days are being held between January and February in the 3 wards (23rd Jan Challney, 6th Feb Leagrave, and 20th Feb Lewsey). We aim to get 50+ residents in the room for voting on projects. There will also be an opportunity to vote on local schemes for community payback teams to work on. We are currently working on this through press releases, letters to residents and advertising within key locations in the wards.

There will be an opportunity to discuss progress in Area West with this work in more detail at the next Area Committee

Members are considering approving the extension of this type of Neighbourhood work to one further Area in Luton for 2010/11.

Health Projects CDS is working with partners across town, in wards selected by the NHS, supporting Health Checks Steering group to raise awareness of the NHS LifeCheck, which is an online health service that will help citizens in Luton assess and manage their own health.

Luton Generations Together project CDS joined with partners in successfully securing funding for the Luton Generations Together project. This partnership involves:

- Social Inclusion team
- Community Development
- Planning and Partnership team (Older People)

- Integrated Youth Service
- Police
- Luton Cultural Services Trust

Luton Generations Together project will work with all 11 LBC community centres in Luton where there is potential to create and develop intergenerational work linking all age groups to work together. This will mobilise the statutory and voluntary sectors to work in partnership to celebrate community cohesion and promote diversity of Luton communities by organising community festivals in Biscot, Bushmead, Farley, Hockwell, Marsh Farm, Lewsey Farm, Limbury, Parktown, Raynham Way, Saints, Sundon Park neighbourhoods in 2010 – 11.

- **Luton Migrant Project**

As part of this programme, CDS hopes to employ a worker for 1 year who will help newly arrived and arriving migrants settle into Luton. Quarterly updates are provided to the 'Migration Impact Fund' Officer's Working Group.

- **Connecting Communities Fund**

CDS and partners are awaiting approval for funding from Government Office to help deliver a series of projects as follows:

1. **Luton in Harmony – Hear my Voice** Through training local community mediators / facilitators, communities will be enabled to actively direct and engage in local neighbourhood events to discuss issues and matters of concern to their area. Training will be delivered through Adult Community Learning under the Train the Trainer model so that those community members who successfully undergo the training will be enabled to become trainers in this area and cascade knowledge onwards
2. **Neighbourhood Governance** Through community engagement, empowerment and planning improved democratic involvement and governance at local ward level, led by local members – provide a more responsive and joined-up area working for Council /Partner services and the LSP.
3. **Youth Engagement** Through a series of themed workshops which will focus on integration, citizenship and tackling anti social behaviour. The workshops will be run as part of an overall sport (including a Luton Mini World Cup) and arts package to engage 14-16 year olds. These combined events will allow young people to improve their confidence

and skills to work with adults and be involved in local issues. The work is designed to develop young leaders who can act as mentors for other young people.

Bullet point report for Leagrave Challney and Lewsey wards

Responsible Unit Development Manager(West) - Shamsuz Zaman

- **Lewsey:**

- ❑ Lewsey Christmas Fayre – this well established event in Lewsey took place this year on Saturday 28th November 2009. Like previous years it was well attended by the public featuring a wide diversity of stalls in the centre. It is estimated that around 200 people of all ages participated.
- ❑ Halloween Play Day – 28th Oct 09 – 64 children – Cllr Joan Bailey in attendance.
- ❑ Children Christmas extravaganza on the Monday 21st December 2009 attracted around 50 children from 5-10 years old. There were entertainers and a clown performing various acts. Children also enjoyed a disco and various games supported by staff and volunteers on the day
- ❑ Paradise Club for the Blind Christmas Party 12th Dec 09 was held in the centre with over 50 people in attendance supported by staff.

- **Community Centre's 50+ Day Launch**

Hundreds of over 50's across Luton enjoyed an exciting range of free activities as part of national Older People's Day in October.

The free activities were organised by the Council, Active Luton, Luton Libraries and the Dallow Development Trust and provided an ideal opportunity for older people to try out new activities and to socialise with groups from other areas.

A big focus of the day was to get people aged over 50 enjoying physical activity and promote the benefits they have for their health and well-being.

As part of the overall activities across Luton, Lewsey Community Centre played host to a special free event that centred around short mat bowls, but also included other activities, raffles, a cake and even a special visit from the Mayor of Luton, Cllr Mohammed Riaz, and local Ward Councillors Hazel Simmons and Tom Shaw.

The Mayor of Luton, Cllr Mohammed Riaz, said: "I really enjoyed my visit. It is great to see older people taking part in these sorts of activities because they are having fun and keeping healthy at the same time. This just shows that it is possible for everyone in Luton to stay active, independent and integrated in the community, whatever their age and individual needs".

The Older People's Day is the third annual event and particularly encourages older and younger people to get together to create better understanding and respect.

- **Leagrave**

Hockwell Ring Community Centre played host to Play-schemes which attracted on average 40 children during the October 09 half term.

Make a Difference day (29th September 09) - centre staff worked with partners from Police, Youth Service and voluntary agencies to do a clean up day with young people of the area. Over 80 children and volunteers supported the event.

Black History Month (31st September 09) attracted around 65 attendees at the centre. Staff worked hard to put on the event to celebrate this global event. The aims of the event were to:

- ☐ Promote knowledge of Black History, Culture and Heritage
 - ☐ Disseminate information on positive Black contributions to British Society
 - ☐ Heighten the confidence and awareness of Black people to their cultural heritage.
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- Older persons 50+ activities held on the 30th September 09 at Hockwell Ring Community Centre. The event saw a traditional old time sing-a-long and dance with Rat Pack entertainer Paul Hayden accompanied by refreshments and some memory boxes from the museum.
 - Christmas trip for Children to Gulliver's land 12th Dec 09 was well attended with over 50 children with parents, volunteers and support by centre staff.
 - Staff have been working with Pirton Hill School and on 18th November 09 they promoted the activities of Hockwell Ring Community centre.
 - The centre held the much anticipated Christmas meal on 14th December 2009

- **Challney**

Chaul End Centre played host to Playschemes during October Half Term and attracted around 42 children on average.

A Halloween party (30th Oct 09) was organised due to popular demand – 62 children attended with Cllr Malik in attendance.

Centre staff are continuing to develop close working relations in the community and are supporting Adult Social day care service in the centre.

Centre Staff are working to support the development of the pilot Neighbourhood Governance project in Area West.

Eid party(22nd September 09) with 250 people attending reflects the diverse nature of the area and the centre is continually looking at innovative ways to promote positive community relations via community celebrations and festivals.

A Joint Christmas party with Community Development Service and Adult Social Care was held at Chaul End Centre with 180 people in attendance. This was one of the highlight events of the year and much anticipated by service users.