

EAST LUTON AREA COMMITTEE

28th September 2006 at 7.30 p.m.

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

45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Howes and Wates

46 MINUTES (REF: 2.1)

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1st June 2006 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

47 COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE (REF: 6.1)

The Area Community Safety Co-ordinator updated the Committee on the activities and developments in the Crawley, Round Green, Stopsley and Wigmore Wards since the last meeting.

She advised the Committee of an intended Action Day at the end of October to clean up the area around Harrowden steps including painting the fencing, removing graffiti and rubbish and painting handrail.

Details of all the Environmental Action Days held in July and August in the East available at the back of the room for everyone. All car registration details and personal information removed.

She advised that work is ongoing to start an Luton Safe:East in the area. This is a smaller scale version of the successful Luton Safe run in the town centre where pubs can communicate with each other and the CCTV control room to warn of any troublemakers in the town. This has reduced violent crime in the town centre by 25%.

She further advised that Luton was the first area in the country to produce a community safety strategy for each area and ward. She asked those present to take a copy of the Community Safety survey and complete and return in the attached pre-paid envelope, as their opinions were important to make the strategy relevant for where people lived.

Resolved: That the report (Ref: 6.1) be noted.

48 POLICE QUESTIONS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD BOUNDARIES CONSULTATION (REF: 6.2)

Police Officers and Police Community Safety Officers were present to take questions from members of the public.

Members of the public sought clarification on which section of the Police Force to contact in different situations.

The Police advised that if an incident was occurring the public should ring Bedfordshire Police and if it was a longer-term problem such as nuisance youths the public should ring the neighbourhood policing team who worked in partnership with the Council and other organisations.

Superintendent Andy Martin drew attention to the maps placed at the back of the meeting hall advising of a new concept in the way of implementing neighbourhood policing, which was about neighbourhoods coming together and working together in partnership. He advised that Luton had established 5 area teams already to work in smaller areas to deliver a localised service. He informed the meeting that the areas defined on the maps were based on statistical information and would not be fixed until the consultation had been completed.

Luton Borough Council's Research and Intelligence Team Leader advised that if there was to be a move to neighbourhood service delivery models it was crucial that all agreed what those neighbourhoods should be. He advised that research had demonstrated significant differences in neighbourhood definitions within and between organisations, politicians and the community and that unless resolved this would prevent effective neighbourhood working. The maps provided were from a statistical basis as a starting point for discussion and were not constrained by minimum or maximum sizes of neighbourhood.

Superintendent Andy Martin requested that those present help themselves to the questionnaires, complete and return them in the box placed at the back of the meeting hall.

Resolved: That the report (Ref: 6.2.) be noted.

49 FEEDBACK FROM MINI-WARD FORUMS (REF: 7)

Feedback from the mini-ward Forums that had preceded the meeting of the Area Committee was provided. The main issues raised were:-

Crawley Ward

- Harrowden Steps - need rubbish cleared and handrail made secure
- Chertsey Close - NTL boxes
 - parking – yellow lines at entrance to Close going ahead within next 2 weeks

- pavements – remedial work needed
- nuisance youths – youth service to get involved
- School parking and vehicles need Action Plan
- Raynham Way Community Centre – cars being sold outside – need to identify the land owner
- Student accommodation – still to be resolved – meeting arranged with agent
- Wigmore Valley Park car park - NTL employees parking
- Percival Way repairs
- Leygreen Close – alley way overgrown foliage – Naval Club to be requested to cut back
- Durham/Blaydon Road – view obscured by parked vehicles – traffic measures required
- Eaton Green Road – 30mph markings on the road

Round Green Ward

- Richmond Hill – parking on junction – traffic management officers requested to attend next Ward Forum
- Heywood Drive – motorcycles – request kissing gate
- Quad bikes on Turners Road footbridge
- Richmond Hill/Kingston Road - dangerous structure – suggested demolition

Stopsley Ward

- Mini-motorcycles continue to be a problem
- Children vandalising property
- Stopsley village – parking
- Brays Court – nuisance youths – storage container used by LBC
- Lothair Road Recreation Ground – nuisance youths - noise
- Butterfield - footpath to cemetery – needs building
- Putteridgebury – wall needs repairing
- Selsey Drive – nuisance youths in cars, loud music, doing handbrake turns

Wigmore Ward

- Laxton Close – daytime parking by NTL employees – Police to supply cones to residents
- Youth worker
- Glass recycling from home – why doesn't the Council do this?
- Attendance sheet – give the public the option of invite by e-mail – need provision for e-mail details
- Roundabout at Frank Lester Way – floods due to camber of road
- Zig-zag path at the back of Asda – trees need trimming, clean mud from bottom – need to establish who owns fence
- Eaton Green Road – stop traffic jam caused by cars turning into petrol station

- Blue Note Club – what is it licensed for?

The Area Committee Support Officer reported that all the issues that had been raised would be followed up and reported back to the next meeting of the Area Committee.

Resolved: That those issues raised at the Crawley, Round Green, Stopsley and Wigmore Ward Forums be noted.

50 REFERENCE FROM EXECUTIVE – AREA COMMITTEE FUNDING (REF: 8.1)

The Area Committee Support Officer presented the report on Reference from Executive – Area Committee Funding (Ref: 8.1) advising that following the lack of contribution from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to the Area Committees there had been a funding shortfall and therefore the Executive at their meeting held on 3rd July 2006 supported the Area Committee Board's recommendation to split equitably between the Area Committees 50% of the shortfall.

He further advised that part of the Executive's decision on 3rd July 2006 was to agree to carry forward the £37,210.00 from 2005/06 budgets to 2006/07 Area Committees budget and to request Area Committees to submit spending plans to Corporate Directors Management Team (CDMT). He advised Area Committees to spend their budgets, as the Executive would not look favourably on budgets being carried forward into the next financial year – the message was to spend or commit their budgets.

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

51 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (REF: 9)

A member of the public enquired about the plans and schedule for the development of the old Vauxhall site and the possibility of a casino on the site.

The Committee was advised that outline planning permission had been granted on the site for hotel/casino/conference facilities in one complex.

A member of the public enquired as to the number of planning permissions granted for one and two bedroom flats in the town centre over the last two years.

The information requested was not to hand but the meeting was informed that the key element to regenerate town centres was to have more people living in town centres. The Council focus was to achieve the highest quality development possible.

A member of the public advised of a beggar on the railway bridge and enquired if this bridge was under Council's jurisdiction.

The meeting was advised that it was actually the jurisdiction of Network Rail but that it would be reported to the necessary body.

A member of the public raised the issue of traffic lights Stockingstone/Old Bedford Road, if in right hand lane the traffic light cannot be seen.

The Street Services representative present undertook to look into the above issue.

Resolved: That the information given and issues raised during the Public Question Time (Ref: 9.) be noted.

52 PETITION - MAINTENANCE OF GRASS AREA IN ABBOTS COURT FLATS (REF: 10.1)

The Parks Manager advised of the receipt of a petition from the residents of Abbots Court flats regarding the poor quality of grass cutting at the rear of the flats.

He advised that in order to rectify the problem it would be necessary to install a gate to allow access for larger machines to cut the grass areas to the rear of the flats. He further advised that the Council's Housing Section had agreed to fund these works.

Resolved: That the installation of a gate to allow access to the rear of Abbots Court flats for the larger grass cutting machines be agreed.

53 PETITION - PARKING FACILITIES FOR RESIDENTS AT ABBOTSWOOD PARADE (REF: 10.2)

The Area Housing Manager, Luton South advised of the receipt of a petition from the resident's and retailer's of Abbotswood Parade requesting the provision of additional parking facilities to the rear of the Parade.

She advised that the site had been inspected and that the garden land was bounded by a metal fence to prevent access from the open land behind and that beyond the fence was an area of hardstanding which did provide parking but that there was no access through the site.

The Area Housing Manager, Luton South suggested that a lockable gate be provided at the rear boundary of the site to allow residents to use the hardstanding area to park on and gain easy access to their homes at a cost of £1,000.

She further advised that the Housing Section could fund half of the cost if the Area Committee could fund the other half.

Members of the Committee were concerned that residents and retailers would be satisfied with the suggested course of action and requested that they be consulted prior to the works being undertaken.

The Police suggested that Housing Officers speak to the Crime Reduction Manager to look at necessary security measures in the area.

Resolved: (i) That the Area Housing Manager, Luton South consult the Police Crime Reduction Manager with regard to security measures at Abbotswood Parade.

(ii) That the Area Housing Manager, Luton South consult the residents and retailers of Abbotswood Parade with regard to the installation of a gate to enable parking on the hardstanding area to the rear of the Parade.

(iii) That subject to the satisfactory completion of (i) and (ii) above, the contribution of £500 towards the installation cost of a gate to the rear of Abbotswood Parade be agreed.

54 FALSTONE GREEN UPDATE (REF: 11)

The Interim Head of Capital and Asset Management submitted an update report to the meeting advising that the developers of Falstone Green believed that two plots of land had planning permission for housing. This was contrary to advice from the Council's Planning Department. The developers had been advised and the Council's Capital and Asset Management Division were awaiting their response.

The Committee suggested that the developers should be asked for a contribution towards the maintenance work undertaken on the site over the last twelve years.

There would be a further update at the next meeting of the Area Committee.

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

55 LUTON YOUTH SERVICE (REF: 12)

The Senior Area Youth Development Worker updated the Committee on the current activities and developments with regard to the Youth Service in Crawley, Round Green, Stopsley and Wigmore Wards.

He advised that:

- From next week the area would have a new full time youth worker based at Putteridge
- Next week Ashcroft Youth Club would be re-opening in partnership with youth service and school staff – Friday 6.30 – 9.00 pm
- Following the BV Review of the service the town had been divided into 3 areas and this area should have a Manager, Senior Youth Worker and at least one other full-time youth worker

Members of the Committee requested details of the youth workers duties.

The Senior Area Youth Development Worker advised that as soon as the youth workers were in post their job descriptions would be passed to Ward Councillors.

Members of the public requested a presentation to identify staff from the Youth Service and to advise what was available for the youth of the area.

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

56 EAST LUTON CORRIDOR - UPDATE (REF: 13)

The Engineering Services Manager presented the report (Ref: 13) on the East Luton Corridor update and introduced Mr Alan Jones of Birse Civils who were the contractors undertaking the works.

Members of the public raised the following points:

- Chalk on the road
- Traffic jam caused by temporary traffic lights – 2 weeks ago
- Road marking require painting over – causing confusion
- Speed limit signs not clear or present – causing confusion

Mr Jones of Birse Civils advised that there were 2 sweepers on site which were used frequently to keep the roads clean. He thanked the members of the public for forwarding their concerns and undertook to look into the issues raised.

It was expected that the works would be completed towards the end of 2007.

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

57 BUTTERFIELD GREEN DEVELOPMENT UPDATE (REF: 14)

The Head of Planning updated the Committee with regard to progress on the Butterfield development:

- Construction was well advanced on the Innovation and Business Base and on the Park Centre
- Both should be operational by Easter 2007
- Planning consent had been granted for:
 - the hotel site
 - the access road
 - advertising on the site – flagpoles and a letting board

The Head of Planning advised that land ownership of the short length of footpath from the new pedestrian crossing westwards to the entrance to the Vale had been resolved and funding was being identified for completion of that link.

A Member of the Committee raised the issue of traffic calming measures in order to dissuade motorcyclists from riding on the site.

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

58 HEDLEY RISE AND COLWELL RISE - TRAFFIC CALMING (REF: 15)

The Engineering Services Manager presented the report on Hedley Rise and Colwell Rise - Traffic Calming (Ref: 15.) advising that consultation had been undertaken with residents in February 2006, which had resulted in a 20% response. He advised that further consultation had been undertaken in July 2006, which had resulted in a 14% response.

He further advised that the bus company servicing the area had raised concern at the introduction of speed cushions and had commented that they would be more likely to remove the Colwell Rise service if they were to be introduced. He further advised that the scheme would cost £65,000 to implement with a requested contribution of £15,000 from the Area Committee fund.

Members of the Committee raised the issue of bus service provision to the new Churchfield Medical Centre.

Members of the Committee were concerned at the introduction of traffic calming:

- when only 14% of residents had responded to the consultation
- benefit of scheme against the cost of the proposed scheme
- the possibility of the loss of bus service to those residents in Colwell Rise
- access implications for the emergency services vehicles

The Committee did not consider that the scheme was viable given the poor response to the consultation exercise, the possible loss of the bus service to the area and the proposed cost of implementing the scheme.

Resolved: (i) That the Head of Engineering and Transportation be instructed to consult the bus company to secure the provision of bus services to Colwell Rise and the Churchfield Medical Centre at Crawley Green Road.

(ii) That the Head of Engineering and Transportation be advised that the Area Committee did not approve the implementation of the traffic calming scheme (Ref: 15.) until there was a clear answer from local residents on their preferred scheme.

(iii) That subject to the satisfactory outcome of (i) and (ii) above, the Area Committee agreed to provide funds of £2,500 per year over two years.

(iv) That the Head of Engineering and Transportation forward the Committee's thanks to Officer for their thorough work with regard to the consultation exercises undertaken and work on the scheme.

59 SHARED USE PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE PATH- KIMPTON ROAD TO CRAWLEY GREEN ROAD (REF: 16)

The Engineering Services Manager presented the report on the shared use pedestrian and cycle path – Kimpton Road to Crawley Green Road (Ref: 16.).

Members of the Committee advised that cyclists already used the footpath and were concerned that due to the bend halfway along the footpath visibility was very poor and the installation of a physical obstacle in order to ensure that cyclists dismount at this point, for pedestrian safety was necessary.

Resolved: That subject to the inclusion of a physical obstacle halfway along the footpath to ensure that cyclists dismount, the conversion of the footpath between Crawley Green Road and Kimpton Road into shared pedestrian and cycle use be approved.

60 AREA REPORT (REF: 17)

The Area Committee Support Officer updated the Committee on issues that were raised following the last meeting and informed the Committee of the latest position in regard to the area projects budget.

He advised that a precise report with regard to the Committee's fund status would be submitted to their next meeting.

Resolved: That the report (Ref: 17.) be noted.

61 AGENDA PLANNING (REF: 18)

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

- Falstone Green
- Butterfield Green
- Youth Service
 - new staff
 - staff's duties
 - Provision in area

(Note: The meeting ended at 9.38 p.m.)