

AREA COMMITTEE: DALLOW, FARLEY AND SOUTH

DATE: 27TH MAY, 2004

SUBJECT: AREA REPORT

REPORT BY: HEAD OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY

CONTACT OFFICER: GARY J. ROBERTS 01582 546985

IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES	ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL	CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING	OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: DALLOW, FARLEY AND SOUTH

PURPOSE

1. To bring before the committee an update on the issues that were raised following the last Area Committee held on the 5th January 2004.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. **Dallow, Farley and South Area Committee is recommended to note the report and make recommendations on further action where required.**

BACKGROUND

3. This report encapsulates the progress of the area committee since the implementation of the initiative in October 2001. In addition it includes information on projects and activities supported by the committee and by 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

4. The issues for this area committee, which has been mentioned in paragraph 3 have been collated and are outlined in the attached plan shown as Appendix A of this report.
5. Members of the public who appear on the current database were informed of this meeting by post on the 6th May 2004 and publicity for this cycle of meetings will appear in the Luton News, Herald & Post on the 19th & 20th May, 9th & 10th June and the 23rd & 24th June 2004. It will also appear in the Luton on Sunday on the 23rd May and the 13th & 20th June 2004 respectively.
6. Additionally, posters 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.
7. The Area Committee web site is regularly updated and can be accessed on www.luton.gov.uk/areacommittees

AREA PROJECTS

8. Members will recall that at the meeting of this area committee on Thursday 29th May 2003 the application made by the 'Reachout' Mental Health Charity was deferred for further inquiries to be carried out by the Area Committee Support Officer. These inquiries, included financial status of the organisation and planning matters which had an impact of the operation of the project in their current premises.
9. Since that date your officer had been working with the organisation to bring all matters to fruition and I am pleased to report all inquiries are now complete.
10. In principle Members were supportive of the project and now that all these matters have been addressed it is requested that this committee give the application formal approval.

Scheme	Ref	Ward	Cost	Contribution Required
' Reachout' Mental Health Charity	FA 97	Farley	£3,000	£3,000

11. It is always nice to report back on success stories. Members will recall that on the last occasion that this committee met they awarded the Farley Amateur Boxing Club the sum of £500 for the purchase of equipment, which included head guards, show vests and show shorts.
12. In the weeks that followed one of their young up and coming stars Charles 'Digger' Williams became champion at the 2004 National Finals of the Schools Amateur Boxing Association Championships.
13. There is two new applications for members to consider at this area committee and that is one made by the Farley Users Association for a contribution towards the Farley Festival which is an annual event held in and around the grounds of the Farley Community Centre, which this year will be held on Saturday 17th July 2004. The event is always popular with the local community and neighbouring areas and as always is expected to attract a great many people.
14. The second application is for retrospective approval of an urgent project, which was completed in the latter part of January this year. The matter was initially brought before this area committee by a member of the public at the meeting, which took place on Wednesday 1st October 2003. The problem revolved around a small area of land between 38 & 38b Tennyson Road, which is a recess slightly set back off the main footway.
15. The area is an entrance way to ten houses which for sometime has been subject to fly-tipping by persons unknown. It has also been a community safety issues for local people as it could be used for people to hide to commit various acts of crime, as the entrance is set back and therefore a east place for people to hide.
16. Following consultation with the Chair of this area committee and subsequent liaison with respective Members, leave was granted to finance the clearing and cleaning up of the area and to install a lockable gate. The job was completed during the latter part of January 2004 and retrospective approval and minute is now sought from this area committee for the £600 spend on this project

Scheme	Ref	Ward	Cost	Contribution Required
Farley Users Association 'Farley Community Festival'	FA 124	Farley	£2,000	£800

Scheme	Ref	Ward	Cost	Contribution Required
Tennyson Road. Clearing fly-tip and installation of gate to prevent further abuse and enhance community safety.	SO 125	South	£600	£600

MINI WARD FORUMS

17. This committee will be aware that during the course of October, November 2003 and January 2004 two pilot schemes, took place within the Crawley, Stopsley & Wigmore Area Committee and the Challney Legrave & Lewsey Area Committee, to test out two mechanisms that could possibly replace the community process, that was then in existence across the town.
18. This came about following the number of concerns that had been raised by Councillors, officers and the public about Luton Borough Council operating two area based democratic / consultation mechanisms, that is to say area committees and community forums. In particular, the issues of resources (time, staffing and funding) and overlapping of work objectives have been highlighted, with some local residents taking the opportunity to use both arenas to raise the same concerns and issues. Officers are also aware that there is a desire on the part of Members of the Council to develop area committees by extending their functions and increasing the frequency of meetings. It was clearly understood by all participants in the area committee / community forum process that what was being suggested was not a proposal to reduce the level of community involvement but rather to improve and enhance this involvement in the most effective way.
19. The pilots commenced at the Challney, Legrave & Lewsey Area Committee on the 21st October 2003 with a Service Surgery. The meeting was attended by 95 people and during the course of the pilot, 36 issues were recorded for action.
20. Those in attendance expressed overwhelming support for the surgeries and said they would like them to continue and be part of the area committee process in the future.

21. The first of the mini ward forum approaches took place at the Crawley, Stopsley & Wigmore Area Committee on the 4th November 2003. Again the meeting was well attended with 52 people present, all of whom actively engaged in the forum process. Having had the benefit of observing the two arenas it was interesting to note that where the service surgery had a more personal touch, the forum setting was far more cross cutting and engaging, thereby creating a more cohesive approach to community issues at a local level.
22. The above format was reversed for the January 2004 cycle of meetings. The Crawley, Wigmore & Stopsley Area Committee, did not attract as large an audience as one would have liked and equally those who attended were not as attracted to the service surgery as they were to the forum approach on the previous occasion. However, the forum model was well received by the community in the Challney, Leagrave and Lewsey wards and a wide majority expressed a preference for this type of arena in the future, which was a reversal from the previous occasion.
23. The recommendation to adopt the 'Mini Ward Forum' approach was supported by Area Committee Board at their meeting on the 30th March 2004 and subsequently formally agreed by the Council's Executive at their meeting on the 13th April 2004.
24. It is anticipated that this new approach will –
 - Use the mini ward forums to inform and shape the agendas for area committees.
 - Inform community plans at an area and ward level.
 - Be a mechanism for capacity building in the community.
 - Proactively address democratic renewal and citizenship.

BUDGET UPDATE

25. Please see (Appendix B)

AREA TOURS

26. The area tours for 2004/2005 are set out below.

Dallow, Farley & South		
Ward	Date	Time
Farley	9th June 2004	10.30 Hrs
South	23rd August 2004	10.30 Hrs
Dallow	12th October 2004	10.30 Hrs
Farley	10th December 2004	10.30 Hrs
South	11th February 2005	10.30 Hrs
Dallow	8th April 2005	10.30 Hrs

PROPOSAL/OPTION

27. It is proposed that Members of the Dallow, Farley and South Area Committee note the report.
28. In relation to the proposal under the Area Based Project Scheme – Ref: FA 97 (Items 8 - 10) Members are asked to give formal approval to the project application.
29. In respect of the application made by the Farley Users Association for the Farley Community Festival (Reference FA 124) Members may opt to grant the application, make a contribution towards the amount requested or refuse the application. There would be no purpose in deferring the request as this will be the last time that this area committee will be meeting before the summer holiday period.
30. Finally in relation to the Tennyson Road Project (Reference SO 125) Members are requested to grant formal retrospective approval of the project, which has now been completed.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

31. Much of the work conducted by the Area Committee 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

32. 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 which may be under consideration or being implemented.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

33. Any contribution made by the Area Committee will be met from existing budgets.

ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

34. 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.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Updates on issues from previous meetings

Appendix B – Budget update.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

There are no background papers relating to this report.