

Luton**Forum**

Our Luton in 2026

Luton's Sustainable Community Strategy

Consultation Draft

Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 to 2026

Luton Forum

Picture:

Young people working on Solutions, LL April.

Quote from workshop:

‘We want Luton to be prettier – friendly and nice’, quote from a younger resident at our community consultation event, February 2008

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Evidence Base	
Impact assessments including Equalities Impact Assessment	
Risk Assessment	
Local Area Agreement	

Foreword

By Councillor Hazel Simmons, Chair of the Luton Forum

The Luton Forum's Sustainable Community Strategy 2026 will set out the issues and challenges for Luton as a whole over the next 18 years, and how all of us will work together to make Luton a better place.

The Luton Forum is a partnership of statutory and mainstream agencies, the voluntary and community sector, and business representatives.

Luton Forum's Sustainable Community strategy will:

- Inform people about Luton, the challenges, opportunities and priorities
- Provide clear direction to develop policy in all partner organisations
- Challenge all Luton Forum partners to deliver the vision.

We chose the date of 2026 in order to give us the time span of 18 years - so someone born in 2008 would be entering adulthood by the end of the strategy's duration – what will Luton be like for them as adults? What life chances would we like them to have?

We have consulted with a small representative group of residents, but now we are circulating this Consultation Draft more widely in order to gain more feedback and partner commitment.

Please take a few moments to complete the questionnaire and return it to us by 30th April.

We will consider carefully all the comments that we receive and the Luton Forum will then adopt the final version.

This strategy belongs to residents, partners and providers. It will give us the direction of travel and its accompanying document the Local Area Agreement provides us with the detailed action plans in order to implement the vision for 2026. We will hold annual stakeholder events in order to measure our progress gain involvement in delivering Vision 2026.

Thank you

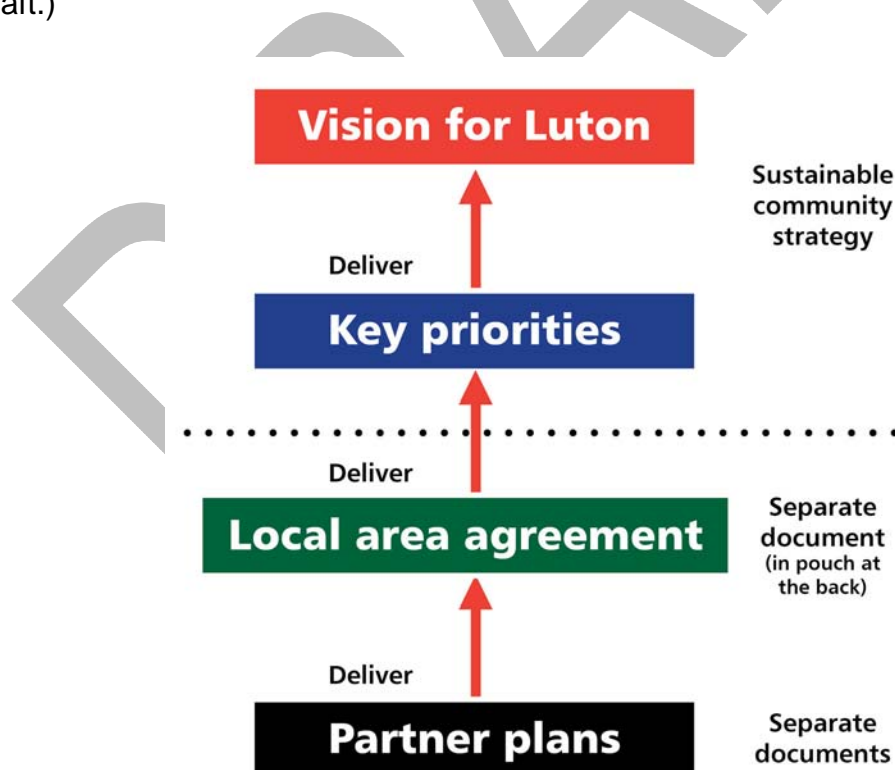
Hazel Simmons

What is Luton Forum's Sustainable Community Strategy?

The Luton Forum's Sustainable Community Strategy describes a shared vision for how Luton will be in 2026, and how we intend to get there. It recognises that social, economic and environmental issues are linked and need to be addressed together. A strong local evidence base has been used to help inform the development of the strategy including a detailed profile of Luton and a needs analysis. Therefore, the strategy is based on our knowledge of Luton and informed by the aspirations of local people.

The key priorities described in the strategy can be realistically achieved within the next six years, and they will move us towards achieving our vision. The strategy will span eighteen years, from 2008 to 2026. This is a dynamic strategy that will change along with Luton's circumstances. We will continually monitor implementation of the strategy, and we will review it in 2014 and again in 2020. We expect future reviews to identify new priorities to keep us moving towards our Vision 2026.

The diagram below shows how plans support the Sustainable Community Strategy. (Note: Local Area Agreement is not included in this Consultation Draft.)



Luton Sustainable Community Strategy
– draft for consultation

The strategy will be underpinned by shorter term (three year) implementation plans in the form of the Local Area Agreement which sets out in more detail how the partnership intends to achieve the key priorities from the strategy. The Luton Forum's proposed priorities for the next three years have been identified following extensive consultation and are based on local evidence. The Local Area Agreement will start in June 2008. Improvements will be assessed annually.

The Local Area Agreement will describe exactly how we are going to make Luton a better place. It is agreed between the Luton Forum and the Government through the Government Office for the East of England.

Partner agencies, such as the council, fire service, police and NHS trusts, all have plans which will support achieving the key priorities of the Luton Forum Sustainable Community Strategy, and the targets for improvement set out in the Local Area Agreement.

Many local partners were involved in developing and delivering the current Community Plan 2002-2012 which supported the delivery of key local priorities through strong local leadership and enhanced partnership working. This will now be incorporated into and replaced by the Luton Forum Sustainable Community Strategy 2026. This arrangement is the result of consultation with local residents and detailed discussions with partners.

The Luton Forum

Luton Forum is Luton's local strategic partnership and it was formed in 2000. It is made up of:

- the Luton Forum Plenary Group, consisting of members drawn from the public, business, community and voluntary sectors within Luton, which meets bi-monthly and sets overall policy and direction
- four Thematic Partnerships, formed around the four key themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy's Vision for Luton which bring together agencies working in the specific thematic areas
- a Local Public Service Board, consisting of a key public sector decision makers and other representatives who ensure delivery of key decisions of the Luton Forum, particularly targets arising from the Sustainable Community Strategy, influence delivery of services in Luton, including public expenditure

Public sector organisations represented on the Luton Forum include Luton Borough Council and other statutory agencies such as the Police, the NHS Primary Care Trust, the Fire and Rescue Service, JobCentre Plus, and education providers such as the University of Bedfordshire, Barnfield College and the Local Education Authority. Representation of Luton's businesses on the Luton Forum includes business interest groups and employers such as London Luton Airport Limited.

Luton's community and voluntary sector organisations are represented on the Luton Forum by Luton's Community Empowerment Network, known as the Luton Assembly. The Luton Assembly itself represents over 650 community and voluntary groups and organisations operating within Luton. It aims to create closer links, greater representation, more joint working, and identify actions to improve quality of life. The Luton Assembly is represented on the Luton Forum by members of its elected committee, making up one third of the total membership of the Luton Forum Plenary Group.

All members of the Luton Forum have made a commitment to joint working to improve the quality of life for the people of Luton.

Principles

A sustainable community is one where all residents:

- enjoy fair access to goods, services and justice - **equality**
- are able to participate in and feel a part of that community - **inclusion**
- feel respected and able to live in with dignity and in harmony with others - **cohesion**

Equality – for members of a community to function and achieve their full potential, it is necessary to establish structures that can promote and facilitate the above. Fundamental to these structures is the need to ensure equality of access to all regardless of disability, race, gender, age, religion/faith/belief or sexual orientation.

Luton Forum partners have public duties with regard to delivering on the equality and diversity agenda. For example, meeting housing needs, raising educational attainment, improving health outcomes, addressing skills gaps, and improving employment opportunities, are all vital in addressing the underlying inequalities that undermine cohesion and inclusion.

The Luton Forum will ensure that the Local Area Agreement is subjected to Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that the priorities identified are based on a sound assessment of need and local aspirations.

Inclusion – a powerful excluding factor is poverty which can impact directly on health and wellbeing and can mean restricted access to those norms, customs, goods and services that are perceived as normal in society. This exclusion can be defined as non-participation in society as a result of constraints rather than by choice.

Cohesion – dignity and respect for all, together with a collective appreciation of rights and responsibilities will help to ensure that we can build cohesion between communities. This incorporates respect for the environment and the principles of sustainability, for example, economic sustainability.

Everything that flows from this strategy should enhance these principles and help to embed them throughout our town.

In addition, this is a strategy for a partnership. Residents, providers, Luton Forum partners will all be working together to deliver this strategy. Partnerships may include those between different agencies, between agencies and the voluntary sector, or between partners in different geographical areas. We work

with our local authority partners in a variety of areas, and a significant piece of work within this strategy is the Growth Area.

The Luton and South Bedfordshire Growth Area is a geographical area identified by the government as an area that will provide housing in order to meet national housing needs. This involves building 45,000 more homes by 2021.

The Luton Forum is committed to working with the South Bedfordshire Local Strategic Partnership on this important initiative, that includes consideration of the related aspects of this development, for example, jobs, health services, education services, transportation.

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Welcome to Luton

Luton is set in the heart of some of the richest farmland in the world. Green spaces including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are accessible nearby. Luton's natural advantages, and its location close to London, have attracted people, initially from the local countryside and later from across the country and the world. The hat industry attracted people from surrounding counties, people from Scotland and the North East were attracted by the opportunities of the car industry during the recession of the 1930s, and the 1950s saw the arrival of many Irish families during the construction of the M1. The expansion of Luton in the 1960s saw a substantial influx of African Caribbean and South Asian communities. Luton now has a population of 186,800¹, although with the recent arrivals, including Eastern European migrants, new estimates suggest that there are over 200,000 people living in Luton with 28% from a black or minority ethnic background. Luton has a younger population than the regional average, with a higher percentage aged under 16 years, and a much lower percentage above pension age. It is also predicted that the number of residents over 75 years will increase by 10% over the period 2006-2011.

The people who have come to Luton have worked hard to develop a wide variety of industry, initially in the use of agricultural by-products such as straw for hats and later engineering. The Vauxhall and West Hydraulic Engineering Company came to Luton in 1905 to create one of the largest car plants in the world. Production ended in 2001 and the site is now being redeveloped as Napier Park. It will have high quality housing, a 5 star hotel, light industry and airport car parking with easy access to Luton Parkway railway station. General Motors still produce vans in the town, maintaining part of the town's engineering expertise. The town's crest includes a beehive, the traditional heraldic symbol for industry.

Luton has some of the best links to its local hinterland and beyond that to the world. Our international airport, built and still owned by the Council in 1938, allows us to fly to places as diverse as New York, Warsaw and Dubai. A ticket from Luton Station, can take you via the new St Pancras International by the Eurostar to Paris, and the M1 provides a direct link to the rest of Britain's road network. Construction is underway on the East Luton Corridor to better link town, airport and motorway.

Luton has an international reputation way above what might be expected of a town of its size. Having been the site of Vauxhall cars for over 90 years and having one of the world's first football clubs, opened in 1885, means that the name Luton is widely known. A branding exercise carried out in 2001 showed

¹ ONS 2006 Mid Year Estimate

that internationally Luton was the sixth most known place in the United Kingdom alongside London, Manchester and Birmingham².

Excellent transport links and a vibrant economy have enabled the town to develop strong voluntary and public institutions, public and private services and diverse opportunities for local people to spend their spare time.

Luton hosts the Regional Sports Centre for the East of England and it enjoys performance and arts facilities in The Hat Factory. St Georges Square hosts a programme of music and performance events in the summer. The Galaxy houses cinemas, bingo, pubs and restaurants. The Wardown Park Museum and Stockwood Park are valued by the people of Luton, with the development of the Stockwood Park Discovery Centre in progress at the time of writing.

The right to hold an annual fair was granted in the 1150s. This tradition has been continued and lives on today in street markets and events in the town centre. The current most well known event is Luton Carnival – the largest one day carnival in Europe - attended by around 120,000 number of people. An international Carnival Centre is currently under construction in Luton.

The first Town Hall was opened in 1847 and the charter for Luton Borough Council was granted in 1876. The Council was a county borough from 1964 to 1974 and became a unitary council again in 1997, taking on responsibility for education and social care from Bedfordshire County Council, and Luton Borough Council was rated as “good” in its latest government inspection (2007). Bedfordshire Police have reported record levels of customer satisfaction, and the Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service was judged by the Audit Commission to be performing and improving well (2007).

The Luton Board of Health was formed in 1834 and the Luton & Dunstable Hospital was opened in 1938 taking on and expanding facilities from a previous cottage hospital and a children’s hospital. In 1948, the various local and voluntary health services were amalgamated into the new National Health Service to ensure that everyone in the town had access to good health care, free at the point of delivery. Our health services continue to develop with a greater focus on primary and community-based care, greater involvement of the voluntary sector and a much closer partnership between the council and the Luton NHS.

There are now 72 schools in Luton, Barnfield College, the Sixth Form College, and the University of Bedfordshire. Results for pupils attending Luton schools

² Interbrand Branding Exercise for the East of England Region

have improved over the past few years and further work is being done to raise standards. Barnfield College of Further Education, which was rated “outstanding” (Ofsted, 2007) trains people for qualifications including arts, hairdressing and construction. The University of Bedfordshire offers a wide variety of courses and was the runner up in The Times Higher Education Supplement University of the Year Awards in 2007.

Luton is constantly changing. This presents us with opportunities and challenges which we must work hard to make the most of. The people who come here are naturally those who have ‘get up and go’, how do we all live together despite our varied backgrounds? As an industrial town our wealth is dependent on a global economy, how do we find good well paid work for all our people as that economy changes? Our story is one of meeting these challenges successfully, and our vision for the future is one of success.

Opportunities and Challenges for Luton

Luton's geographical position nationally and internationally represents a tremendous opportunity to attract new businesses to the town. At the same time Luton's image can be a challenge to its development. Luton's negative image is based around the physical environment and a reputation for crime in the town centre. The industrial environment is no longer a reality with the redevelopment of the car plan site, but Luton railway station and surrounding areas create an unattractive first impression. Partners are working together to tackle negative images of the town based on improving the reality on the ground, particularly through improving the quality of public services, regeneration and the developing cultural industries. This is an opportunity to attract good employers with high quality jobs.

Demographics for the UK show Luton performing less well than its surrounding areas – it is worse off for: enterprise, skills and qualifications, prosperity (Gross Domestic Product), deprivation, health, crime, and geography of social wellbeing.

There are key challenges in adapting and mitigating for climate change, including protection of valuable water supplies, reducing flood risk and carbon emissions. Reducing consumption of energy and natural resources, along with reduction in waste are key challenges.

There are changes in the structure of Luton's population. By 2020 there will be a greater proportion of very old people and very young people in Luton. We all need to keep our services up to date with these changes.

There are some challenges around the expected increase in population in that we want all of Luton to benefit, and some areas to rise out of deprivation (as defined in the Index of Multiple Deprivation).

There is strength in Luton's diverse cultures and ethnic backgrounds but the fluid and changing nature of our communities could present challenges in terms of community cohesion.

The Growth Area provides an opportunity to work in partnership with our neighbouring local authorities to develop facilities, including arts and cultural facilities, that will result in vibrant communities. It is an opportunity to ensure high quality, environmentally friendly, and "secured by design" homes in Luton.

Vision for Luton 2026

People will be proud of Luton. A place that thrives on diversity and change. A people rightly known for their friendliness, ingenuity and hard work. Luton, a lively, hopeful, can-do town. Everything we do will be sustainable, designed to last.

As individuals and communities we will take responsibility for our own and each others' well-being. Everyday, we will be actively tackling deprivation and inequalities and encouraging active citizenship through the way we work together. All our communities will feel strong and safe. Communities will have a shared history of sticking together through good and bad – community cohesion – and they will have the confidence to learn from and with each other.

Our services will be recognised as the best, locally, nationally and internationally. This excellence will be built upon listening to people and responding creatively to their needs and wishes. It will be built upon involving the people who deliver those services in continually improving them. Its foundations will be strong, realistic partnerships between the private, public and voluntary sectors.

Everyone will enjoy and feel at home in all our learning, leisure and community facilities, which we will have improved so that they are accessible to the very highest standards. Our arts will be accessible and inspirational. They will express and explore the shared and diverse cultural traditions of Luton and all of its people.

Young and old will feel safer on the streets of Luton. Fear of crime and its causes will have diminished, replaced by a confidence that together we can effectively tackle crime of whatever kind. Good health for all will be our shared goal. We will have improved physical and mental well-being by pursuing policies and delivering services which support people and promote healthy and creative living, good food and physical activity.

Luton will enjoy strong economic growth. We will have taken full advantage of our location and our easy access to London, the rest of the UK and Europe. Transport links will have improved so that people can travel to work and school, their appointments or to leisure facilities, cheaply and easily, and with the least possible environmental impact. Training needs will be matched to new jobs to ensure that local people get good, well paid work that is satisfying and helps strengthen families and communities. Luton will have grown. We will have worked with our neighbours to provide good quality, environmentally friendly housing, accommodation and sites for all in our existing and new communities.

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We will be alert to the effects of climate change and our impact on it. We will have ensured that all developments have been and will be sustainable, using best practice in their delivery so that environmental impact is minimised creating good prospects for our children, and their children.

By following this Vision through, our young people turning 18 years old will be healthier and safer, have good educational attainment levels and skills in order to take up good high quality well paid employment. They will be committed to good citizenship and environmental and economic sustainability. Luton will be a better place for everyone.

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Where we are, where we want to be and how we want to get there

This section is divided into four headings:

- Stronger and Safer Communities
- Health and Well Being
- Environment and the Economy
- Children and Young People

Stronger and Safer Communities

Where we are now

*Our **panel of residents** feel that we are a multi-cultural town and proud of our how our communities live together in relative harmony. Our communities do not always mix well together and segregation and isolation are very apparent. Greater community cohesion is not just an issue of race, religion and culture but encompasses all aspects of our communities including relationships between generations. For example adults and young people need to be more understanding of each other.*

Luton has serious crime and anti-social problems which lead to many people feeling unsafe in the town, and particularly at night. Certain parts of the town have a reputation for being particularly unsafe and, although residents themselves feel safe in their locality, people from other parts of the town are afraid of going there.

The Luton Forum **Stronger and Safer Communities Thematic Partnership** said that detailed evidence and plans to respond to the evidence can be found in Luton's crime reduction strategies (see Appendix) as well as the Local Area Agreement.

The Luton Forum's **Assembly** feels that some of the public agencies do not have the capacity to engage effectively at a local level, the capacity of local councillors to increase their roles within the grassroots structure is low and some public sector policies need to be worked on to improve levels of active involvement in the community.

Luton has a vibrant voluntary sector with over 650 voluntary organisations, but the organisational capacity of many voluntary and community organisations is low and changes in funding streams and ways of working present a challenge. The provision of funding is often inconsistent and short term and the funding of

key neighbourhood management groups and empowerment bodies is ad-hoc. There is a need for a multi-agency Community Engagement Strategy.

Where we want to be in 2026 (boxed out)

*Our **panel of residents** said that there will be a society without segregation where everyone is treated the same, equally with fairness and respect, and we are all happy. There will be no ageism and there will improved opportunities for community engagement to dispel myths such as 'young people of today have no respect'. Everyone will respect each other and we will live in harmony with the environment, and there will be community spirit in the streets we live in. People will smile and say hello in the street. We will have a more diverse police force. We will be racially tolerant, valuing each other's race, culture and religion.*

There will be no crime and everyone feels safe. Children will be able to play outside and young people will feel safe to walk at night without carrying weapons. We will have more effective rehabilitation of offenders to reduce repeat offending and Luton will be a safer place to live. Families will be safe at home and there will be good services to protect people from domestic abuse. There will be no intimidating gangs hanging around and putting people off from going into specific areas. There will be no knife or gun crime. A town without fear.

Key priorities to 2014

Based on evidence from partners and community aspirations, priorities are:

Increasing the numbers of active citizens: people with the motivation, skills and confidence to speak up for their communities and say what improvements are needed

Strengthening communities

Building the capability and resources of community, voluntary and social enterprise groups to bring people together to work out shared solutions

Creating partnerships with public and private bodies: public bodies willing and able to work as partners with local people

Ensuring young people feeling safe and being safe

Old people feeling, being and perceiving themselves to be safe

Reducing criminal damage and antisocial behaviour

Reducing acquisitive crime

Reducing domestic abuse

Reducing hate crime

Working with prolific and persistent offenders

Tackling alcohol and drug abuse

Improving road safety

Well designed safer and accessible open spaces

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Health and Wellbeing

Where we are now

*Our **panel of Luton residents** said that we waste money and that we need to ensure that both Council and NHS spending is fully accountable to the public. There are not the health professionals in place to meet demand for speedier, more flexible and convenient healthcare.*

Our panel of residents praised our leisure and cultural facilities, for example library and sports facilities, although some felt that the cost of the activities/facilities is too expensive for young people.

Local parks and easy access to the countryside provide opportunities to get outdoors more often. The plants and flowers on the roundabouts within the town were also praised.

The Luton Forum **Health and Wellbeing Thematic Partnership** said that detailed evidence can be found within the Luton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and plans to respond to Luton's needs can be found in Luton's health and wellbeing strategies (see Appendix) as well as the Local Area Agreement.

Luton has significant challenges in improving its health and well-being. Recent successes show that by working in partnership we can successfully improve health. For example, there has been a significant drop in teenage pregnancies and our approach to childhood immunisation has been cited as a model of excellence. However, we need to continue to improve our services focusing on prevention and supporting people to be treated and stay in the community. This means that we need to work on major problems including high levels of child mortality and obesity and improve primary and community care.

There are high rates of health risks in Luton and estimates suggest that smoking in Luton is above the national average and is not coming down in line with the national trend. It is the cause of significant inequalities within the town and accounts for over 260 deaths per year. Obesity rates in Luton are above the national average and are increasing at a faster rate. As well as affecting health, alcohol also contributes to local crime rates and Luton is above the national average for crime which is attributable to alcohol. Alcohol related mortality from chronic liver disease in Luton particularly in men is above the national average. Luton also features relatively high numbers of children with a complex disability, particularly within the South Asian community. Life expectancy in Luton is lower than the national average, and lowest in the East of England region, and there is

a significant gap between the lowest and highest life expectancy rates in different parts of Luton.

Physical exercise levels amongst adults in Luton are among the lowest in the region and are lower than the national average. Levels of participation in exercise by females are particularly low.

Good progress has been made recently in improving performance on the assessment of carers' needs and offering carers support and services in their own right e.g. specific work with black and minority ethnic communities to identify "hidden" carers.

Regarding mental health services some investment has been made in early intervention and preventative strategies. The responsiveness of local mental health services to the needs of the black and minority ethnic communities has improved to some extent.

Luton has a higher proportion of overcrowded households than the average for England and Wales. Despite some success in reducing homelessness there remain around 850 households in temporary accommodation. There are over 13,000 households living in non decent homes of which 4,000 households are considered vulnerable. The key reason for properties failing the decent homes standard being poor "thermal comfort" - they're difficult to keep warm.

Luton has good arts, cultural and leisure facilities, particularly with regard to the Carnival, the new St Georges Square, museums, libraries and parks. There is concern around accessibility of some facilities.

Where we want to be in 2026 (boxed out)

*Our **panel of Luton residents** said that the health service will be better, appointments will be quicker and there will be a 24 hour walk in centre. Our children will be healthy and obesity will have decreased. Speedy health care will be available irrespective of wealth. More cancer treatment facilities will be available so people do not have to go out of Luton for treatment. The Luton and Dunstable Hospital will be state of the art and have all of the facilities that it needs to treat local people – a radiotherapy department of its own. We will have home midwifery services provided to specific cultural needs, for example, involving the whole family.*

More attractions will have been built in the town to try and encourage people to socialise in the town and not outside it and also to encourage non-residents to visit the town. Attractions could include: ice skating, go-karting, paintballing,

theme parks and other sorts of racing. More gyms and 'fun ways of getting fit' will be in place to tackle obesity. Safe transport will be provided for residents to get to and from facilities. Parks will have been made safe so that everyone can enjoy the natural, free space that Luton has to offer.

The Luton Forum **Health and Wellbeing Thematic Partnership** said that the health service will be improved by a greater focus on prevention and services provided in the community, including mental health services. Appointments will be more accessible and there will be improved access to the right kind of care for urgent health needs. Children will be healthier and obesity will have decreased. Health care will be available in line with need. Cancer patients will have timely access to the right kind of cancer treatment in the right place. The Luton and Dunstable Hospital will provide high quality services to meet the needs of local people. We will have better midwifery services with a choice of service to meet specific cultural needs. There will be significant improvements in closing the gaps in health inequalities between different communities.

We will aim to enable vulnerable people to live as independently as possible in their own home, for as long as it safe to do so, leading valued and fulfilling lives. We will focus on enabling vulnerable adults to be treated as equal citizens and incrementally move away from segregated services to more integrated provision, whereby vulnerable adults are enable as far as possible to access mainstream community facilities. We will also develop preventative services to help older people remain outside the formal care systems, such as information and support services, e.g. community alarms, and including those provided by the Voluntary and Community Sector.

The introduction of self directed care and individualised budgets will have had a positive impact on family carers. This more flexible and empowering approach to meeting peoples' needs significantly raises satisfaction ratings for the whole family unit.

Social care services for people with longer term mental health problems will be transformed through the introduction of individualised budgets and self-directed care – focused on improving the life outcomes for people.

The number of homes in the town which fail to meet the decent homes standard will be reduced in relation to both the total numbers and the number occupied by vulnerable people.

In 2026 the UK Carnival Arts Centre will be a widely known for its teaching and workshop facilities bringing students and businesses into the town. Luton will be known for its Creative Industries sector, which will provide an environment for all

types of arts and cultural events. Luton will have a range of facilities that includes free and low-cost provision. There will be a wide range of provision for young people. Luton will have excellent parks and open spaces.

Key priorities to 2014

Based on evidence from partners and community aspirations, priorities are:

Promoting healthy living and tackling the key risk factors which affect health

Supporting people to live independently

Improving housing conditions

Improving mental health services

Improving services for carers

Improving leisure and cultural opportunities for all, and better access

Environment and Economic Development

Where we are now

*Our **panel of Luton residents** said that the cleanliness of the streets has improve. There remains a lot of work to be done to improve transport to meet people's expectations and needs. There is a rift between different groups with, for example, older people wanting the traffic to move faster, and younger people saying they felt that there was too much speeding traffic which made them feel unsafe.*

Local parks and easy access to the countryside provides Lutonians with the opportunities to get outdoors more often. The history and heritage of the town needs to be maintained like Stonehenge e.g. Wauluds Bank and Drays Ditches.

Housing remains a real problem in a town with a growing population with only a few Brownfield sites in the town to build upon. There is a lack of affordable housing, particularly for young people.

While the training and development of young people has been a priority since the closure of Vauxhall, there remains a lack of confidence in the new companies in the town being able to provide high quality well paid work.

The Luton Forum **Environment and Economy Thematic Partnership** said that detailed evidence and plans to respond to the evidence can be found in Luton's environment and economic strategies (see Appendix) as well as the Local Area Agreement.

We have signed the Nottingham Declaration on climate change and are meeting our recycling targets, but establishing what we need to do to adapt and mitigate for climate change, and how we can continue to reduce consumption of resources faces all of us with a real challenge.

There is significant regeneration of the town's infrastructure which will improve the look and quality of life in Luton over the next six years.

Luton has a higher rate of unemployment than the national average and job creation needs to be increased by 2.5 times to ensure full employment. There are also a high number of people with low or no skills. Luton has high levels of Incapacity Benefit claimants than the national average. There are higher rates of economic inactivity than the national average.

There has been good employer engagement in skills development and significant capital investment in learning facilities at the University of Bedfordshire and secondary schools and planned at Barnfield College and Luton Sixth Form.

Distribution of employment is in line with the regional picture although manufacturing, retail, motor related industries and real estate still represent significant areas of the local economy. The area has suffered with the shift of production to Eastern Europe and the Far East, resulting in an increase in the number of small scale redundancies, which are most evident in Luton. Recent growth in other sectors has offset job losses in manufacturing. The area is seeing an increasingly diverse economy with sectors such as child and adult care, transport and logistics, leisure and tourism, wholesale and retail, construction and health and social care all forecast to grow by 2008.

Where we want to be in 2026 (boxed out)

*Our **panel of Luton residents** said that there will still be green fields and countryside around Luton. We will have used what we already have better rather than just building more. We will have preserved what has been handed down to us and be educated about the wildlife and countryside that surrounds us.*

Residents will recycle everything possible and less packaging will be used by local retailers. People will keep their own streets clean and children will be educated about caring for their environment. The number of cars will have reduced because we will have cheap and reliable public transport and a park and ride scheme. People will walk around the town more because they will feel safer.

There will be major employers in Luton that provide flexible working hours, good and equal pay and we will have more time to spend with our families. These jobs will be industries of the future and jobs will be created for Luton's people as well as those that will come from outside the town to work here.

The Environment and Economy Thematic Partnership said that we will improve our existing green spaces, create more green spaces, and ensure cleaner rivers. These will be attractive and safe places to visit and play. We will involve local people in this work.

With the growth of Luton over the next six years we will ensure that best practice sustainable design and construction is undertaken to ensure that consumption is reduced and resources are protected for current and future residents.

Through partnership working we will have reduced our carbon footprint, flood risk and our impact on our local environment.

We will have provided a minimum of 23,000 new jobs in Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis. There will be a better educated, better trained workforce supporting a thriving business sector. Everyone will have NVQ Level 2 qualifications to meet the needs of local employers. Local employers will recognise the importance of qualifications and support lifelong learning and skills development. Local graduates will return to work in Luton.

Luton will be a place where people are supported to overcome barriers to work. There will be high quality provision of care for young people and older people to allow carers opportunities to access employment. There will be local provision of centres to develop skills to match local employment needs. There will be good access by public transport to key employment sites.

We will work closely with our local authority neighbours to manage and deliver growth, both housing and economic.

Key priorities to 2014

Based on evidence from partners and community aspirations, priorities are:

- Successfully adapting to climate change
- Protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment
- Reducing consumption of water, energy, materials and minimising waste
- Creating good local jobs for local people
- Enhancing skills for employability
- Improving public transport, access and mobility
- Increasing economic activity

Children and Young people

Where we are now

*Our panel of **young Luton residents** said that children and young people are not always respected by their elders and feel they are often blamed for the actions of a small minority. They do not always feel that the people who are paid to look after them including teachers, police, youth workers - respect or care about them.*

There are lots of things for young children to do in Luton and these are appreciated. But as they get older this feeling changes. Sometimes this is because some service providers such as the Council don't give good enough information about what's going on, others because the facilities they want such as sports facilities don't exist or are too difficult to get to or too expensive to use.

The Luton Forum **Children and Young People's Thematic Partnership** said that detailed evidence and plans to respond to the evidence can be found in the Children and Young People's Plan and other strategies (see Appendix) as well as the Local Area Agreement.

Public services have been listening actively to the views of young people and using these in planning their services increasingly in recent years. For example, The Being Young in Luton Survey which informed the Children and Young People's Plan and the national TellUs survey which provided information on how to improve the lives of young people in Luton. Luton has a Youth MP and Youth Cabinet which inform youth services and participation in Luton.

Being Healthy – We have increased the uptake of immunisations and vaccinations in young children and have also seen a substantial decrease in teenage pregnancy rates. However the levels of childhood obesity is a major concern and we are working to develop services both to prevent and offer support programmes for obese children. Young people asked us to improve the information they get about sexual health, alcohol and drugs.

Making a Positive Contribution - Currently Active Luton and the local authority are piloting Sporting Chance, a programme to engage children in care and young people in sporting, leisure and out of school hours learning opportunities. Access2sports provides opportunities for children and young people with a range of disabilities to participate in physical activities. Availability of these facilities is an essential component of tackling childhood obesity.

Being Safe - We have a well trained children's workforce which is aware of issues relating to safeguarding. Referrals are responded to rapidly and assessment and review is timely and accurate. Thresholds are understood clearly and referrals are accurate and timely. However, the number of children in care is too high and we are working hard to reduce this. The police have a dedicated domestic abuse team working closely with the social care initial assessment team. Parents and carers are informed about risks and the incidence of fatal accidents and serious injury is significantly below national average.

Children and young people also told us they were concerned about their safety outside school and we are working to develop programmes to make them feel safer and to tackle bullying

Enjoying and Achieving – We have seen the development of childrens centres across the town providing a range of services and childcare for parents. In the future we will be developing extended services in schools to provide opportunities for all outside of the school day.

Attainment at GCSE is improving year on year and is closing the gap with national averages. The performance of pupils from most minority ethnic groups is improving year on year. Attendance is improving and is now above the national average, although attendance of children in care has deteriorated. Very few pupils are permanently excluded from school and a high proportion of young people are engaged in positive activities through volunteering and contributing to decision-making.

Campus Luton, our 14-19 partnership, is recognised regionally and nationally as an effective approach to developing collaboration to improve outcomes for young people.

Luton is well placed to deliver high quality post 16 provision benefiting from a Beacon Further Education College and a Beacon Sixth Form College. Over 5,000 16-18 year old learners are engaged in Luton colleges each year and thirteen providers offer apprenticeships across a diverse range of sector subject areas. Participation on full Level 2 courses has increased above the national and regional average over the past two years³.

For many years Luton has successfully developed an inclusive education policy that has meant that an increased number of children and young people with

³ Source: Learning + Skills Council and refers to Bedfordshire and Luton combined

disabilities/learning difficulties are having their needs met successfully in mainstream schools.

Special schools have been successfully reorganised to cater for those pupils with the most significant and complex needs with six nursery schools receiving additional funding to include children with severe needs. Despite the increase in the complexity of needs of children and young people, Luton educates very few children through costly out-of-borough provision

There has been a significant reduction in the numbers entering the youth justice system. Strong links have been developed between the Youth Offending Service and the specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Where we want to be in 2026 (boxed out)

*Our panel of **young Luton residents** said that children and young people will be respected and positively appreciated.*

All of our teachers and other youth workers will inspire all their students to reach their full potential. Teachers will be fully supported in dealing with bad behaviour and our schools will be characterised by respect and discipline. Young people will achieve better grades and more qualifications.

The streets will be safe and there will be great public transport so that young people can easily take advantage of all Luton has to offer.

Parents will be there for their children and know how to look after them and ensure they behave well. Support will be there for parents to help them be a positive influence on their children and to stop them going down a bad path. Seeking this support will not mean people are judged to be bad parents.

There will be educational facilities where people of all ages will go and study and learn. College and further education opportunities will be combined with job opportunities for young adults by way of apprenticeships and in-house training schemes.

The **Children and Young People's Partnership** said that in 2026 children will be developing within a new learning environment with services across the community, arising from the Building Schools for the Future and Extended Schools work that will have taken place. Technology will be the most advanced for the time. Looked After children will be cared for within the borough thus avoiding having to send them to facilities elsewhere in the county. Services for children will be joined up e.g. health, educational attainment, feeling safe.

Differences in educational attainment between different groups of children will have been eliminated or much reduced.

Key priorities to 2014

Based on evidence from partners and community aspirations, priorities are:

Listening to the views of children and young people.

Improving the health of children and young people

Ensuring children and young people in Luton are safe and well cared for

Supporting our children and young people to achieve skills and experience to enhance their prospects for the future

Reducing the differences in educational achievement between ethnic groups

Providing positive activities for young people and reducing anti social behaviour

Better meeting the needs of children and young people with disabilities/learning difficulties.

Supporting Building Schools for the Future

Appendix

Related Strategies, Plans and Evidence Sources

Bedfordshire & Luton Joint Economic Development Strategy
Being Young in Luton Survey (2005)
Bus Strategy for Luton
Campus Luton
Children and Young People's Plan
City Growth Strategy
Cycling Strategy for Luton
Equalities, Inclusion and Community Cohesion Strategy
Employers Travel Plan Strategy
Environment Agency Catchment Abstraction Management Plans
ERDF Plan for Luton
ESF Co Financing Plan
Extended Schools Programme
Growth Area Strategy
Investing in Communities Delivery Plan
Integrated Development Programme
Learning + Skills Council Annual Plan
Local Area Agreement
Local Transport Plan
Luton & Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy
Luton & South Bedfordshire Integrated Development Plan
Luton Borough Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessments
Luton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
Luton Not in Employment, Education or Training Strategy
Luton Regeneration Strategy
Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Strategy
Neighbourhood Policing Strategy
Rights of Way Improvement Plan
Train to Gain Programme
Voluntary & Community Sector Compact
Walking Strategy for Luton
Water Framework

Partners

Access 2 Sports
Active Luton
Aldwyck Housing Association
Barnfield College
Bedfordshire & Luton Economic Development Partnership
Bedfordshire & Luton Fire & Rescue Authority

Luton Sustainable Community Strategy
– draft for consultation

Bedfordshire & Luton Fire & Rescue Service
Bedfordshire Climate Change Forum
Bedfordshire County Council
Bedfordshire Police
Bedfordshire Police Authority
Building Schools for the Future
Business Link East
Campus Luton
Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service
Chilterns Conservation Board
City Growth Board
Community Legal Services Partnership
Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership
Cultural Services Trust –
East of England Development Agency
Easter Group
Energy Companies
Environment Agency
Green Business Network
Health & Safety Executive
Highways Agency
I 10
Job Centre Plus
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
Learning + Skills Council
London Luton Airport
Luton & Dunstable Hospital nhs Trust
Luton & South Bedfordshire Groundwork Trust
Luton Assembly
Luton Borough Council
Luton Quality of Life Report
Luton Sixth Form College
Luton teaching Primary Care Trust
Marsh Farm Community Development Trust
Natural England
Princes Trust
Probation Service
Shape Your Future Report
South Bedfordshire District Council
Sport England
The Chamber
University of Bedfordshire
Voluntary Action Luton

Waste Disposal Authorities
Water companies
Youth Offending Service

DRAFT