

EAST LUTON AREA COMMITTEE

28th September 2009 at 8.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Skepelhorn (Chair), Councillors Chapman, J. Davies, R. Davies, Dolling, Patterson and Smith.

33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Franks, Rutstein and Siederer. The Chair on behalf of the Committee wished Councillor Rutstein a speedy recovery from his broken arm.

34 MINUTES (REF: 2.1)

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9th July 2009 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

35 MINUTES (REF: 2.2)

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

36 PETITION – REVAMP ABBOTSWOOD PARK AND PARADE NO TO HOUSES BEING BUILT

The Housing Policy and Strategy Manager, Luton Borough Council reported on the receipt of a petition relating to Abbotswood Park. The meeting was informed that a public consultation meeting relating to the Hart Hill Site was due to be held on Wednesday 30th September 2009. A further public meeting relating to the Abbotswood Park area would be held within the following three weeks where all views relating to the matter would be welcomed. Following concerns about the publicity of the meetings, officers advised that they would ensure that there would be extensive publicity for the meeting and that it would be advertised widely.

37 RESOLUTIONS FROM WARD FORUMS (REF: 6)

Stopsley Ward Forum

The Stopsley Ward Forum Members and residents expressed concern that the mature trees along Selsey Drive had been chopped down. Information was requested regarding the number of trees which were subject of a Tree Preservation Order and whether they were likely to be replaced. It was also suggested that when the trees were replaced, well-grown young trees should be planted rather than small saplings, which were likely to be destroyed.

Resolved: That the Parks Manager be requested to provide an update to the next meeting of the Area Committee relating to the replacement of trees in Selsey Drive.

38 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (REF: 8)

1. Following a question at the last Area Committee meeting, a resident informed the meeting that she had an article reporting Government advice which had been issued relating to a limit on numbers of the conversion of family homes into flats and bed-sits and she asked what was the Council's position on houses of multiple occupation in Luton.

Councillor Chapman agreed that the Council should be taken action on this matter and advised that a motion would be submitted to the next Full Council meeting and the matter could be considered then. It was agreed that a copy of the article would be circulated to all members of the Area Committee.

2. Mr Robins, Luton Sports network asked why a well-used multi sports centre was being destroyed in order to build an aquatic centre which would benefit many Luton residents.

Members agreed that there had been a lack of co-ordinated thought on this matter and that there would be an opportunity to consider the issue in more detail as there was a report relating to sports facilities in Luton later on the agenda. Officers also advised that a public meeting in Stopsley would be held before the end of October to discuss the proposals for the Aquatic Centre.

Resolved: That the questions and comments raised by members of the public be noted.

39 PETITION REQUEST FOR SPEED REDUCING FEATURES ON ASHCROFT ROAD (REF: 9.1)

The Committee was advised of the receipt of a petition bringing to the Council's attention the concerns of local residents regarding the speed of vehicles travelling along the length of Ashcroft Road between Turners Road North and Crawley Green Road.

The Committee was advised by officers that Ashcroft Road had been identified by the emergency services as a primary response route, accordingly the installation of road humps and speed cushions would not be considered unless there was a severe safety problem. Officers informed the meeting that a programme of public consultation in the area as part of the Area Studies Initiative was scheduled to start in early 2010 and as part of this consultation, leaflets and questionnaires would be delivered locally and a public exhibition would also be held. Appropriate traffic calming measures for Ashcroft Road would be considered as part of this process.

Residents expressed concern for their safety and the safety of children attending the schools along the road as cars raced up and down the road all day and night. It was felt that a serious or even fatal accident could happen at any time.

Officers agreed to arrange for a speed check to be undertaken and an accident report for the area and to pass the results onto the Police for their consideration. It was also agreed that the Police should be contacted to request speed checks using their hand-held traffic speed equipment on Ashcroft Road.

Resolved: That the report (Ref: 9.1) be noted.

40 INTEGRATED YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES (REF: 10)

A report was submitted (Ref: 10) detailing the current Youth Service activities and developments in the Crawley, Round Green, Stopsley and Wigmore Wards. Andy Calvert who had recently joined the team as Area Youth Worker advised that he had been supporting the team in the development of the summer programme, the mobile bus (Boom Bus) and the general running of the area. In addition, the following activities were highlighted:

- Talk Talk – an opportunity for young people to discuss issues such as serious crime and other offences.
- Set for life SRE – general information about the C-card scheme and how it worked
- Healthy Kick – activities for Young People that addressed issues of health and well-being including healthy eating, looking after the body etc.
- Youth Club Committee – a new committee had been inducted due to the existing committee members studying for exams.
- Alcohol Workshop – giving young people the opportunity to reflect on their own and others attitudes towards alcohol.
- Ashcroft Fun Day – a local event where young people had participated in a wide range of fun interactive team games.

Two Youth Club members addressed the meeting and outlined the activities that they had taken part in throughout the summer.

The chair thanked Andy Calvert and the Youth Club members for their attendance and contribution to the meeting.

Resolved: That the report (Ref: 10) be noted.

41 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - UPDATE (REF: 11)

The Senior Community Development Manager submitted an update (Ref: 11) on the current Community Development Service activities and developments in the Crawley, Round Green, Stopsley and Wigmore Wards. In addition, the following activities were highlighted:

- The Raynham Way Family Fun Day was held in June and had been a great success.
- The Community Sports Night at the Raynham Way Community Centre had been running on a Monday evening and proving to be a success. Over 15 young people were regularly attending and enjoying the football and basketball coaching. The programme was run by staff in partnership with the Police and the East Safer Luton partnership team.

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

42 EAST LUTON CORRIDOR UPDATE (REF: 13)

The Head of Engineering and Transportation, Luton Borough Council updated the Area Committee on the current position regarding the engineering work to the East Luton Corridor scheme, which had now been completed and opened. It was noted that the 18 month contract for the work had overrun by 16 months and the Committee was advised that although no financial details could be publicised due to the legal implications of the contract, the Council was currently in negotiation with the contractors regarding the funding for the scheme. Once the legal dispute between the Council and the contractor had been resolved, a further update on this matter would be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

A question was asked regarding the possibility of extending the right turn from the junction into Gypsy Lane to traffic other than buses. The Head of Engineering and Transportation advised that the no right turn for vehicles other than buses had been a deliberate design for the junction. It was envisaged that if all vehicles were permitted to make a right turn at the junction a considerable backlog of traffic would result. Following a suggestion, officers agreed to monitor the junction to look at the feasibility of allowing all traffic during a specified limited period to turn right at the junction.

43 DRAFT PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY (REF: 14)

The Project Manager, Luton Borough Council presented a report updating the Area Committee on the draft recommendations of the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy. The main recommendations were:

- To establish community sports hubs to act as a focus for investment to make the most of the opportunities from the Building Schools for the Future programme and provide sports development pathways.
- To make more use of under used or unused school playing fields for junior and mini teams.
- To ensure that the new sports facilities provided through the BSF programme were co-ordinated to provide the maximum benefits to schools and communities
- To ensure that grass pitches at BSF schools were available to the community.

Officers advised that Sport England had been involved at all stages of the work and had approved the draft recommendations. Consultation on the recommendations would be taking place with all Area committees, national governing bodies, local clubs, users and residents. The finalised strategy would be combined with the reviewed indoor facilities strategy and would then be submitted to the Executive for approval.

Concern was expressed at the meeting regarding where the exact location that the playing pitches that were at present on the site proposed for the Aquatic Centre would be relocated. Officers advised that the plan was to provide pitches on the playing fields next to Putteridge School. In response to a question, officers advised that they were not aware of any plans for the 17 acres of land adjacent to the School.

In response to a concern from the Luton Sports Network about the consultation on the Strategy, Officers advised that although the consultation programme had been extensive, they would be happy to organise a further meeting with the Network's representative.

Resolved: (i) That the East Luton Area Committee welcomed the draft Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy. In particular, the Committee welcomed the commitment to the use of the playing pitches at Lothair Road, which would seem to indicate that the Council would not after all build a swimming pool on that area. The Committee noted that this would be in accordance with the Labour Group's pledge that:

"So long as it remains in power at Luton town Hall, Stopsley Common will never be built on"

(ii) That clarification be requested of the exact location of the playing pitches which were at present on the site proposed for the aquatic centre and should the centre not go ahead, this would be in accordance with the Labour Group's written pledge that:

"The Committee reiterates its opposition to any development of land on Stopsley Common and to the development of 17 acres in Putteridge Park."

44 AREA REPORT (REF: 15)

The Area Committee Support Officer updated the Committee on issues that were raised following the last meeting held on 9th July 2009.

- The launch of the Safer Streets initiative website would now take place in October. The website was a tool to facilitate engagement between local agencies and local agencies and local communities and would be developed to reflect local priorities.
- The Committee was updated in respect of the delay to the Stopsley Gating Scheme. All residents had been contacted to advise of the delay

and the Area Committee Support Manager was meeting with the contractor to progress the matter.

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

(Note: The meeting ended at 9.35 p.m.)