

## **NORTH LUTON AREA COMMITTEE**

**10<sup>th</sup> January 2005 at 7.30 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Johnston (Chair); Councillors Bullock, R J Davis, Garrett, Harris, Hinkley, Pederson, Titmuss and Worthing.

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Campbell.

### **2 MINUTES (REF: 2.1)**

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2004 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **3 STREET SERVICES PRESENTATION (REF: 10)**

The Head of Street Services submitted a presentation entitled "Luton – A Cleaner Town". The Committee were informed that there had been a significant increase in the amount of litter, fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and other environmental crime. He added that the service had not been meeting the expectations or aspirations of the Council's Vision 2011 statement, and that the service would not improve without additional resources. A 'Time and Motion' study of 1500 streets had taken place, which had determined the number of personnel, type of vehicles and equipment required to improve the Street Services function.

The Committee were informed that Street Services had been awarded a growth funding resource of £840K. He added that prior to June, 2004 there had been 76 employees involved in the delivery of programmed and reactive cleansing operations, employees also supported any shortage in refuse collection.

The Enforcement Manager reported that the Programmed Cleansing operations had introduced in August 2004 two shifts on the Town Centre Crew, which started at 5am seven days a week. He added that crews worked four days on and four days off, and that the workforce now totalled 115 including 19 Area Barrow Beats. Cleansing throughout the rest of the town mirrored that of wards within the Area Committees, with working hours from 6am, Monday to Friday. Each crew was responsible for cleansing of all footways, channels, road sweeping, shopping areas and the emptying of litterbins.

The Reactive Cleansing function provided a litter hit squad, specialist graffiti removal, steam cleaning service, gully cleansing, dawn patrols, weed spraying, leafing and winter maintenance (gritting).

The Enforcement Manager informed the Committee that the service would continue with Joint Enforcement Action Days, with 105 programmed street closures in 2005 to enable 'Deep Cleans' to take place. He added that since April 2004, inspections had shown an increase in cleanliness to 92% at either grades A or B.

Other initiatives by Street Services included:-

- Public Service Agreement for Abandoned Vehicles – meeting target 18 months ahead of schedule
- Refurbishment of Recycling Bus – wider littering message
- Increase in number of litter bins around town
- Chewing Gum Campaign in town centre
- Cancellation Notices on fly posting
- Liveability Capital Funding/Community Wardens

Street services would continue to:-

- monitor and review cleansing operation
- maintain a publicity campaign to advertise new cleansing rounds from January 2005
- operate enforcement activity with a zero tolerance approach

The Enforcement Manager concluded that the Council were committed to the new service and assured residents that every street in Luton would be cleaned at least once every fortnight.

A local resident suggested that there should be more prosecutions for fly posting. The Enforcement Manager replied that companies were targeted and there had been a programme of pasting cancelled notices on posters.

A member of the public suggested that there were not enough dog litter bins in the town.

The Enforcement Manager replied that there were approximately 200 dedicated dog bins within the town, along with 1100 normal litterbins, which could now be used for dog mess as well as normal litter.

A member of the public requested that street sweeping should follow, not precede refuse collection days.

**Resolved:** That the presentation on Street Services be noted.

#### **4 FEEDBACK FROM MINI-WARD FORUMS (REF: 6)**

The Committee were informed of the main issues raised at the mini Ward Forums:-

##### Bramingham/Icknield

Question time to be earlier in the meeting.  
Litter from take-away shop in Riddy Lane (Icknield Ward)  
Stockwood Park Golf Course – Removal of Green Card facility  
Speeding traffic – Icknield Way, Quantock Rise and Riddy Lane  
Ball Games in cul-de-sacs  
Parking outside schools  
Birdsfoot Lane shopping precinct

##### Northwell

Insufficient time for local ward issues  
Responses from feedback not adequate – departments should support  
Area Community Support Office much more  
Alleyways – anti-social behaviour  
Jubilee Centre – removal of bollards

##### Limbury

Poor response on feedback sheets  
Youth Service – lack of support for young people in Limbury  
Snipe Lane – improved lighting required  
Calverton Road car park  
Marsh Road car park – access

##### Sundon Park

Parking – Sundon Park Road  
Hill Rise  
Toddington Road (Commuters and other users of (Leagrave Station)  
Fourth Avenue – Direct right turn into Ninth Avenue. Dangerous and needs to be addressed  
Travellers in Leagrave Car Park  
Sundon Park Community Centre - Insurance – Not insured unless a council officer is on site  
Access road to Sundon Park Community Centre. Pot holes in road  
Heron Trading Estate – Planning Application  
Re-cycling bins too small  
Public transport – relocation of the bus stop for bus number 23  
  
Insurance cover for volunteers at Community Centre

## **5 CAR PARKING OUTSIDE SHOPS 146-156 SUNDON PARK ROAD (REF: 9)**

The Head of Engineering and Transportation reported at the time of writing the report there had been little progress made with the owners of the shops 146-156 Sundon Park Road.

However, he advised the Committee that later in the week Officers from his Division would write formally to the owners of the shops and it was hoped that this would generate some progress.

He would report back to the next meeting of the Area Committee on the outcome of this initiative.

**Resolved:** i) That the report be noted

ii) That a further decision on the future of this scheme be considered at the next meeting of the Committee in the light of responses from the shop owners.

iii) That at the next meeting the Head of Engineering and Transportation gives feedback on the manner in which Section 106 funding for improvement of Sundon Park Road has been spent.

## **6 REPLACEMENT SWIMMING POOL (REF: 11)**

The Head of Leisure, Libraries and Culture submitted a report in regard to two potential sites for the proposed new swimming pool for Luton.

The Strategic Manager for Physical Education and Sport gave a presentation entitled 'A New Pool for Luton'. The Committee were informed that two potential sites had been identified; these were Addington Road (the former Electrolux site off Oakley Road) and Stockwood Park (near to the golf pavilion).

Affordability would be a major factor in the decision making process for the new site, as would be capital costs and on going operational costs. She added that the income from the sale of High Town Recreation Centre and Wardown Swimming Pool were essential to the affordability of the project, also revenue savings from their operation costs could be used to enable Prudential borrowing to occur.

The advantages and disadvantages for relocation to Stockwood Park were:-

### **Advantages:**

- Ground conditions were good
- Local plan says that the land was available
- Good local access and access from motorway
- Compatible with other leisure and sporting facilities in the park

**Disadvantages:**

- Some highways improvements would be needed
- Edge of town location might mean access difficulties for people in other parts of Luton
- Some loss of open space
- Would require changes to the golf course and closure of the golf pavilion during the building process

The advantages and disadvantages for relocation to Addington Way were:-

**Advantages:**

- Large catchments within walking distance; an area of new housing development
- Good access by public transport and close to motorway junction
- Not on public parkland
- Would enhance playing pitch provision with changing facilities
- More schools within 3 mile catchment area

**Disadvantages:**

- Costs of lifting covenants would have to be taken into account (Section 106 agreements)
- Some loss of open space
- A traffic impact assessment would be required

The Strategic Manager for Physical Education and Sport requested that members of the public complete the consultation forms, which would be analysed for reasons of preference. Findings would then be reported to the Executive in March 2005 to ratify the decision on the site. She concluded that building of the new swimming pool would commence during 2006.

The Strategic Manager for Physical Education and Sport in response to a question from a member of the public confirmed that retaining the swimming pool on the Bath Road site was not an option but that it was hoped to keep the current pool open until the new facility had been built.

Members of the public raised concern about:-

- The potential impact on the golf course if the facility is sited at Stockwood Park
- the potential loss of trees

Councillor R J Davis reminded the meeting that the Regeneration and Citizenship Scrutiny Panel would be inviting members of the public to make their detailed views known at a meeting to be held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2005.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

## **7 STOCK OPTIONS APPRAISAL (REF: 11)**

The Head of Housing (Landlord) reported in regard to the housing stock options appraisal, which was an initiative required of a local authority by the Government to review the best way to keep its homes in good condition and provide new social housing. He also noted that it could affect Council owned shops and garages. He informed the Committee that a steering group, which comprised Members, officers, tenants, leaseholders and Trade Union representatives met monthly to discuss the appraisal.

As part of the consultation process, newsletters and staff briefings had been held at various locations around Luton. Also, newsletters had been sent to tenants and articles placed in the local press. The independent tenants' adviser had also provided information to tenants.

He went on to inform the Committee that progress on data collected included:

- Stock Condition survey complete – findings had been verified by independent surveyors before release to Luton Borough Council and would be available shortly.
- The Housing Need survey was underway – an initial report was anticipated to be available by mid February 2005.
- The Tenants Aspiration survey had been completed – a report on its findings was awaited.
- The financial appraisal was still awaited from Price Waterhouse Consultants – this was dependant on stock condition and the HRA Business Plan.

Options that remained were:

- To retain ownership and management of housing stock – no additional funding available.
- Transfer to Housing Association (a ballot of tenants required).
- Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) – the Council retained ownership but management by separate body. It was not yet clear if additional funding would be available.

- Private Finance Initiative (PFI) – it was unlikely that this would be a whole stock solution.

The Committee were informed that initial feedback to the steering group, Members and Tenants Consultative Committee was expected on 25<sup>th</sup> January, followed by staff briefing sessions on 26<sup>th</sup> January. A report would then be submitted to Executive on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2005.

He concluded that the Council would need to consult widely once the financial appraisal had been completed and the options most suitable for Luton known.

**Resolved:** That the report on the Housing Stock Options Appraisal be noted.

## **8 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND YOUTH SERVICE (REF: 12)**

The Area Community Development Officer updated the Committee on the current activities and developments in the Bramingham, Icknield, Limbury, Northwell and Sundon Park Wards.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

## **9 EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN (RSS14) – CONSULTATION (REF: 13)**

The Head of Planning reported in regard to the East of England Plan (RSS14) public consultation. The Committee were advised that on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2004, the 'East of England Plan' or Regional Spatial Strategy 14 (RSS14) had been launched for a 14 week public consultation, which would close on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005.

The Plan set out a draft strategy to guide the planning and development of the East of England to 2021 and set out the policies for how many jobs, people and houses should be accommodated in the communities, where and how people should live and travel to work, improvements in roads, rail and bus services, culture, sport and recreation facilities. It also made proposals for implementing those plans.

The key features of the Plane included:-

- plans for 421,500 new jobs across the East of England up to 2021 to meet future economic growth needs and regeneration needs of less prosperous areas;
- provision for 478,000 new homes by 2021. Nearly 60,000 have already been built since 2001 and, of the balance, more than half already have planning permission or are allocated in existing development plans;

- a major increase – more than doubling – of the supply of social rented, key worker and other forms of affordable housing to address housing shortages and the widening gap between house prices and incomes in the region. At least 30% of all new dwellings should be in the social rented sector.
- proposals for more sustainable forms of transport which seek to reduce the rate of growth in car and lorry traffic and promote public transport, walking and cycling;
- an extensive package of proposals for environmental and social measures such as more energy/water efficient development, investment in education, skills training and health services and cultural and recreation development.

The Plan rejected:-

- proposals for a second runway at Stansted Airport
- Government's request that a further 18,000 homes be built, on top of those already proposed in the Plan in the Cambridge/Peterborough area.

Members of the public raised concern that residents of Luton were not aware of the Plan and how it would affect them.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

## 10 AREA REPORT (REF: 14)

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.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

## 11 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (REF: 15)

Acting Chief Inspector Upex was present along with other Police Officers and responded to a range of questions from the public.

- allotment holders can report crime/anti-social incidents around allotments together rather than on an individual basis
- community policing is progressing well but needs further high visibility
- each area will have 1 Sergeant, 3 or 4 Police Officers and 3 or 4 Police Community Support Officers
- accept that this may not cover all wards but we are working towards that



- subject to individual's personal development needs and promotion it is anticipated that officers will be in these posts on a long term basis
- PCSOs will deal with specific parking/safety issues outside schools and indeed they have already done this with a number of schools
- whilst the Police could pour all its resources into blitz days over school parking issues we feel it is better dealt with through the community policing teams
- the Police, the Council and schools recognise that parking outside schools is a severe problem and we are working together to tackle the issue

A member of the public reported that the bollards on the pavement in Blundell Road opposite St Joseph's School jutted out too far and were a danger.

The Committee and the Police reminded the public that whether or not they expected to receive a response to a crime report it was essential in order to build up an accurate picture of crime and anti-social behaviour that they report all crime incidents to the Police. This would allow more focused deployment of resources.

## 12 AGENDA PLANNING (REF: 15)

**Resolved:** That the following item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting:-

- Parking in Bury Park

**(Note: The meeting ended at 9.32pm)**