

## **CENTRAL LUTON AREA COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2005 at 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT: Councillors Abid (Chair), D. Chapman, Q. Hussain and Magill.

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

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Iqbal, Saleem, Riaz, and Yasin.

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

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2004 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

Feedback from the mini-ward Forums that had preceded the meeting of the Area Committee was provided.

The main issues raised were:-

#### High Town Ward

- Wardown Park – Pathway closed between Old Bedford Road and New Bedford Road
- Cycling on pavements – What can be done
- Suggest feedback from Community Forums be sent out prior to the next meeting

#### Biscot Ward

- Feedback from previous meetings
- Lack of community facilities
- Cleansing
- Police issues on track
- Feedback from Engineers in regard to Saxon Road and Bury Park

#### Barnfield Ward

- Rat Runs – Elmwood Crescent/Wychwood Avenue
- Junction at Inner Ring Road and New Bedford Road
- Propose mobile speed camera along New Bedford Road
- Alley way at Culverhouse Road
- Planning applications – consultation needs to be widely addressed including the Police
- Traffic system – propose one way near Bushmead shops to improve the flow of traffic

## Saints Ward

- Sale of cars by dealers on pavements/lay byes
- Waller Avenue – untidy, parking issues
- Lack of Police Community Safety Officer
- Problem youths – Gardenia Avenue/St. Josephs Close alleyway

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

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

### **4 PETITION – AGAINST ONE-WAY SYSTEM PROPOSED FOR BEAUMONET ROAD (REF: 8.1)**

The Head of Engineering and Transportation reported on the receipt of a petition from residents objecting to the proposed one-way system in Beaumont Road.

The Committee were informed that in response to the petition, it had been agreed that Beaumont Road should remain a two-way road.

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

### **5 PARKING ON PAVEMENTS AROUND WARDOWN PARK (REF: 9)**

The Head of Engineering and Transportation reported in regard to parking on pavements around Wardown Park.

The Committee were informed that a meeting had been held at the Town Hall on 10<sup>th</sup> December between officers and Councillor Magill to discuss the issue and to propose a way forward. It had been agreed at the meeting that an extension of the Controlled Parking Zone along Old Bedford Road should be added to the list of Small-scale Parking Schemes and reported to the Executive for approval as part of the programme for such works in 2005/06. Also, it had been agreed that if the Executive approved the scheme, a public consultation exercise with residents should commence in 2005/06 to ascertain a way forward.

Residents raised concern that if a Controlled Parking Zone along Old Bedford Road was to be implemented parked vehicles would be dispersed to surrounding side streets.

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

### **6 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 Councils 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 Service 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'. 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 dog bins in Luton.

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 proceed refuse collection days.

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

(ii) That the request of a member of public regarding the co-ordination of street cleansing and refuse collection be referred to the Head of Street Services.

(iii) That the request of a member of public for recycling sites to be emptied more frequently be referred to that Head of Street Services.

## **7 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 members of the public to 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.

Members of the public raised concern that the present pool was central to Luton with easy access from the town centre and that any relocation would deprive the Biscot Ward of a valuable facility. Residents also felt that the Bath Road site should remain an option for the new pool. Views were also expressed that if the land at Bath Road had to be sold, an area should be kept for civic use.

Members of the public commented that the public wanted the swimming pool to remain in Bath Road and proposed that a public vote be taken to request that the Central Luton Area Committee convey the public's concerns to the Executive on the relocation of the new swimming pool, and the wish of the public for the pool to remain at the Bath Road site.

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

(ii) That the views and concerns of the public in attendance at the Central Luton Area Committee be submitted to the Executive on the relocation of the new swimming pool, and the wish of the public for the pool to remain at the Bath Road site.

## **8 STOCK OPTIONS APPRAISAL (REF: 12)**

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 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 advisor 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.

## **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 Plan 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 had been raised following the last meeting of the Barnfield, Biscot, High Town and Saints Area Committee held on the 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2004.

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

(ii) That the following application be approved:-

Scheme	Ref	Ward	Cost	Contribution Required
Luton Safety Squad	TW 155	All Wards	£2,300	£300 on the provision that all other Area Committees

				contribute the same amount
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## 11 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND YOUTH SERVICE (REF: 15)

The Area Community Development Officer updated the Committee on the current activities and developments in the Barnfield, Biscot, High Town and Saints Wards.

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

## 12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (REF: 16)

A member of the public enquired whether the police patrolled Wardown Park.

Sergeant. P. Nouch replied that although there were no specific patrols for parks, the Police Community Support Officers patrolled parkland and open spaces daily to act as a deterrent.

A member of the public raised concern that was no signage indicating the operating time of the bus lane along Dunstable Road between Moor Street and Telford Way.

The Engineering Services Manager replied that the Council were aware of the issue.

A member of public commented that although Community Support Officers had been appointed in other Wards, Saints still did not have one.

Sergeant P. Nouch informed the Committee that there were fifteen Community Support Officers based in Luton. He added that forty Community Support Officers were currently being recruited in Bedfordshire, one of which would be appointed to the Saints Ward.

**Resolved:** (i) That the questions be noted.

(ii) That the Local Divisional Commander be advised of the Committee's desire for the early appointment of a Police Community Safety Officer for the Saints Ward.

**(Note: The meeting ended at 9.42p.m.)**