

**AREA COMMITTEE:** **CENTRAL LUTON**

**BARNFIELD, BISCOT, HIGH TOWN & SAINTS  
WARDS**

**DATE:** **TUESDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2005**

**SUBJECT:** **AREA REPORT**

**REPORT BY:** **HEAD OF LOCAL DEMOCRACY**

**CONTACT OFFICER:** **GARY J. ROBERTS 01582 546985**

**IMPLICATIONS:**

<b>LEGAL</b>	<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY</b>
<b>EQUALITIES</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>
<b>FINANCIAL</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS</b>
<b>STAFFING</b>	<b>OTHER</b>

**WARDS AFFECTED:** **BARNFIELD, BISCOT, HIGH TOWN & SAINTS**

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**PURPOSE**

1. To bring before the committee an update on the issues that were raised following the last Area Committee held on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2005.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2. **The Central Luton Area Committee are recommended to note the report and make recommendations on further action where required.**

**BACKGROUND**

3. This report encapsulates the progress of the area committee since the implementation of the initiative in October 2001. In addition it includes information on projects and activities supported by the committee and by liaison and mediation with both internal and external service areas, pursues the concerns raised by both the local community and Members of the council.

## **REPORT**

4. Members of the public who appear on the current database were informed of this meeting by post on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2005 and publicity for this cycle of meetings appeared in the Luton News and Herald & Post during week commencing 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> March 2005 and the Luton on Sunday on the 13<sup>th</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2005.
5. Additionally, posters were also dispatched to every General Practitioner, Dental Practice, Chiropodists, Chiropractors, Educational establishment, Library, Sports Centre, Community & Youth Centre, Day Centre, Places of Worship and Sheltered Housing provision, across the borough. The information gave dates for every Area Committee and was then followed up with specific information about the Area Committee, relevant to that area.
6. The Area Committee web site is regularly updated and can be accessed on [www.luton.gov.uk](http://www.luton.gov.uk)

## **AREA PROJECTS**

7. There are two project applications to consider at this meeting. One is a new application and the second an application where Members are being asked to consider a further contribution to help bring the project to fruition.

<b>Project No</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Amount Requested</b>
ST 153	Al Baytul Mu'minaat (A – Z Kids Club) based at the Saints Community Centre. This service provides an after school club for up to 30 children. The service is provided Monday to Friday from 3.15pm to 5.45pm The club also provides a Sunday provision offering a range of activities, which include IT, sports, arts and craft, homework etc. ◆ The group would like to purchase metal waterproof external storage unit for their equipment and a bouncy castle.	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
IC 84	Bushmead Community Action Group Basketball/Football provision at Bushmead Primary School. ◆ <b>Please see paragraphs 8 – 10 below.</b>	£60,966.00	£6,000.00  <b>Previous contribution of £2,000 made in May 2003</b>

8. Members will recall that in May 2003 the then Barnfield, Icknield, Limbury & Saints Area Committee made a contribution of £2,000.00 towards the development of the community multi-sports area that is being established at Bushmead Primary School.
9. The construction work is due to commence in the first two weeks of April and it is anticipated that there will be an official launch on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2005.
10. The working group have been extremely successful in securing funds from a number of sources to meet the total target of £60,966.00 but now find themselves short of some £6,000.00, which will pay for the security fencing and gates.

### **BUDGET UPDATE**

11. The following tables depicts the budget at the start of this financial year and the projects that have been supported during that same period: -

<b>Central Luton – 2004/2005</b>				<b>Balance</b>
<b>Barnfield, Biscot, High Town &amp; Saints Wards</b>				<b>£30,690.00</b>
<b>Project Number</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Amount Awarded</b>		<b>Budget balance</b>
	Summer Activities for Young People – High Town	£3,000.00 2003/04 & 2004/05	<b>Spent</b> £760.00 £110.45	£27,690.00
HT 114	Fencing & Gating Clarendon Court	Awarded £2,500 £6,972.48		£20,717.52
BI 135	Madrassa Islamia After School Club	£1,000.00		<b>£19,717.52</b>

### **AREA TOURS**

12. The area tours for 2004/2005 have now been completed and new dates for the 2005/2006 Municipal year are currently being timetabled and will be circulated to Members in due course.
13. The Action Plans and issues that were raised during the course of past area tours can be viewed in the folder at the back of the hall.

### **WARD FORUMS**

14. The initiation of the new style ward forums which commenced in May and June 2004 are progressing very well, raising a number of issues and therefore creating a lot of work in terms of recording, distribution, investigation, monitoring and feedback. These issues do not only impact on the council but on a number of our partner organisations that have responsibility for services to the local community.

15. I would like to express my thanks to my colleagues both within the Luton Borough Council and the agencies with who we work closely who do their best to respond as thoroughly as possible and thereby providing the feedback to each of the nineteen forums that meet along with the area committees, four times during each municipal year.

### **The Post Office – Bushmead Branch**

16. The Chief Executive of Luton Borough Council received a letter from the Head of Area (Post Office Limited) on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2005 relating to the closure of the above premises at Unit 9, Hancock Drive, Luton, LU2 7SF. In that letter the officer has referred to the comments that he has received from customers and local representatives during the consultation period. Concerns centred mainly on the interest of a local retailer in running the branch on the Post Office's behalf and the availability of bus services linking Bushmead branch with one of the names alternative branches i.e. Culverhouse Road.
17. In response The Head of Area (Post Office Limited) says “ we are aware of the interest shown by a local retailer in running the branch on our behalf. However, our proposal has been based on factors carefully researched during our extensive planning for this proposal. This has taken into account that the branch has been closed since April 2001 and since the closure many customers have chosen to migrate to other branches in the area. Our review of the area, undertaken by a senior manager, includes providing details of the availability of local transport from the closing branch to the alternatives and our research shows that the two services run between Hancock Drive and Culverhouse Road, namely the 24 and 25 bus routes.
- We have carefully considered our original proposal along with the feedback received during the consultation period and taking into account the overall branch resources in the area, **we have decided that permanent closure of the Bushmead branch is the correct action to take.**
- As a result this branch will remain closed on a permanent basis ”.**

### **PROPOSAL/OPTION**

18. It is proposed that Members of the Central Luton Area Committee note the report.
19. In respect of the application made on behalf of Al Baytul Mu'minaat (A – Z Kids Club) and the Bushmead Community Action Group, Members can either -
- (i) Refuse the application,
  - (ii) Defer for further information
  - (iii) Agree that the total amount be allocated or
  - (vi) Agree to a contribution towards the total cost.

Should Members opt for (vi) above it is recommended that the Area Committee Support Officer be instructed to only release the area committee's contribution once satisfactory evidence has been received that other sources of funding have been found and that the project is ready to proceed.

### **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

20. Much of the work conducted by the Area Committee will have an impact on Council services and will address issues such as accessibility, local participation and the general quality of life within the Borough.

### **COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

21. A large amount of the work being pursued and undertaken by service areas and other outside agencies will make a major contribution to community safety and need to be considered alongside other schemes which may be under consideration or being implemented.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

23. The implications of the work being undertaken will address and improve the environment, create safer communities and address the quality of life for local people.

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

None