

NORTH LUTON AREA BOARD

3RD MARCH 2016 at 8.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Garrett (Chair), Councillors Campbell, R. J. Davis, Green, Lewis, Pedersen, Petts, Rowlands, Worlding and Young

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Inspector Bernadette White and Sgt Louise Bates - Bedfordshire Police;
Dr Nina Pearson (Substitute for Dr Anthea Robinson) and Liz Cox - Luton CCG

01. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)

An apology for absence from the meeting was received on behalf of Dr Anthea Robinson, Luton CCG, who was substituted by Dr Nina Pearson.

02. MINUTES (REFS: 2.1)

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2015 be taken as read, approved as correct records and signed by the Chair.

03. FEEDBACK FROM WARD FORUMS (REF: 4)

Feedback on top three key issues discussed at each ward were noted by Members as follows:

Icknield Ward

- Speeding throughout the ward;
- Nuisance off-road motor cycles, subject of Operation Meteor by the Police;
- Goosebury Hill – motorists using/ speeding along the un-adopted part of the road. Referred to Highways to take action to resolve the problem.

Northwell Ward

- Potential GP surgery closure;
- Parking in the area of the building works causing a problem;
- Big problem trying to get out of Rutland Close due to speed and volume of traffic – roundabout needed;
- Potential closure of Futures House, due to announced withdrawal of Active Luton staff within 6 months. Residents wish to keep it open in some way.

Bramingham Ward

- Nuisance off-road motor cycles, subject of Operation Meteor by the Police;
- No bus services on Sundays being looked at;
- Problems with youngsters on bikes in Sainsbury's car park causing disturbance to shoppers at;

- Problems with discarded needles and contraceptives in track behind Sainsbury's.

Limbury Ward

- Many items that had been on agenda for a while were discharged;
- Suspicious people going through bins;
- Fencing around play area could not be replaced due to lack of funding. Part of the fence would be replaced and funding sought to complete the job;
- 20 mph speed limit now rolled out in the area;

Sundon Park Ward

- Leagrave Park problems with overgrown vegetation and tree felling;
- Nuisance off-road motor cycles along Sundon Park Road, subject of Operation Meteor by the Police. Two arrests made from information provided by residents;
- Problems with people parking outside Sundon Park shops all day in the 10 minutes restricted area. Highways due to conduct consultation in April 2016.

Resolved: That the feedback on the top key issues from the Ward Forums be noted.

04. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (REF: 5)

A member of the public known to Cllr Garrett asked why staff at the Tidy tip did not remove fly-tipped rubbish outside the gate of the tip. Cllr Garrett offered to look into the matter.

Resolved: That Cllr Garrett would look into the matter and give feedback direct to the questioner.

05. PETITION - MAINTENANCE OF TREES – LIMBURY ROAD (Ref: 6.1)

Barry Timms, the Parks and Cemeteries Manager, presented the report (Ref: 6.1), relating to the petition from residents in Limbury Road requesting that the Council maintain the trees in Limbury Road, as these were blocking lights and affecting TV and satellite signals to their houses.

He stated that blockage to TV and satellite signals were non-actionable nuisance and could not be dealt with. He drew attention to a number of options examined by officers that might have required the trees to be pruned, none of which were applicable.

He concluded that, as the trees were last pruned in 2009, as part of the 5-8 year maintenance cycle and inspected in December 2015, the only course of action was to inspect them again in September 2016 and if required they would be pruned in the winter of 2016-17, when they would be out of leaves.

The Board supported the officer's recommendations and requested that the lead petitioner be informed of the Board's decision.

Resolved: (i) That officers' assessment that the trees in Limbury Road did not require pruning at the current time, as they were below the criteria relating to distance of the branches from the properties, be noted and supported by the Board;

(ii) That the Board instruct officers to inspect the trees again in September 2016 to assess whether they had grown to an extent that had reached the criteria that would require pruning in autumn/winter 2016-17, and report back to the Board at its meeting in October 2016;

(ii) That the Parks and Cemeteries Manager be requested to inform the lead petitioner of the resolutions of the Board relating to their petition.

06. LUTON CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP – UPDATE (REF: 7)

Dr Nina Pearson presented the Luton CCG update, as set out in the Health and Wellbeing page of the report within Item (Ref: 10). She said the main issues were the good news about the funding allocation and the consultation for the re-provisions of a number of GP practices.

Liz Cox stated as follows:

- In January 2016, the CCG had been given a 5 year funding allocation, which would make forward planning easier;
- The CCG's allocation was uplifted by 7.5%, the 10th highest in the country;
- Health inequalities was still a challenge in Luton, due to underinvestment for many years;
- In 2015-16, the CCG was investing in psychological therapies to improve access closer to people's homes.

Responding to Members' questions/comments, Dr Pearson provided further information as follows:

- Mental health services now provided within Luton, except for certain rare conditions and women's intensive care, provided at East London Foundation Trust's (ELFT) premises in Newnham;
- 4 GP practices contracts were up for re-procurement by NHS England;
- The contracts were held by NHS England, but the CCG was working closely with them to help shape Primary Care in Luton;
- Consultations for the new contracts were to start in the following week, when local people affected would be able to share their views;
- There were no pre-conceived decisions and no closures;
- Consultation would be for 60 days for The Moakes, Whipperley Ring and Sundon Park and 90 days for the Town centre walk-in-centre, as bigger and affected more people;
- People would be encouraged to think and share their views about what good primary and hospital care looked like, e.g. distance to travel, fitness for purpose, including breadth of skills and different specialties provided, best care for people at end of life;

- There was a wide variety of GP practices currently available, some very good ones and some not able to provide a comprehensive range of services and were in premises unfit for purpose. The CCG had a strategy to improve premises for GP Practices;
- Workforce availability was an issue, as it was difficult to recruit doctors and nurses. Locum doctors could not provide continuity of care;
- A new build was planned for Sundon Park;
- The CCG's estate strategy was slightly behind schedule, but work had started. The plan presented big opportunities. The CCG was bidding for capital money from Government. Any money saved from re-configurations of GP practices would stay in Luton, providing opportunities for investment;
- Dr Pearson agreed to speak to Nicky Poulain about a response to Cllr Worlding's e-mail enquiries;
- About the alleged closure of the Moakes GP practice, she re-iterated that there had not been a decision to close the practice. Consultation was about re-shaping and improving access in Luton, as the building had not fulfilled its full potential and could provide more;
- Patients reference groups requested to contribute their views on how to re-shape primary care services to meet needs;
- It was agreed that the premises in Sundon Park were not big enough for future provisions and that there was an opportunity for a new bigger premises for the teams to work together;
- The Walk-in-Centre re-provision was out for consultation, but there was no plan to close it. A lot of people were seen there, who would otherwise had gone to A&E at greater costs. It was a question of re-shaping for the future, given the limited budget;
- Accepting the need for communications between diverse agencies providing care in the community to dovetail, she stated that the primary care computerised system was the sole repository for all records and work was underway to close any gaps and reduce the time taken to obtain medical histories. Information sharing was moving in the right direction;
- Despite a bad experience by a member of the public about an alleged lack of responses by social services, she said social workers were very good working with the integration team at the hospital to enable discharge from the hospital and delivering well for those in acute needs. (Note: Cllr Green offered to speak to the member of the public after the meeting).

Resolved: (i) That the Luton CCG update be noted.

(ii) That the Board's thanks to Dr Nina Pearson and Liz Cox for attending the meeting, providing the update and answering questions be recorded.

07. CORONATION MEADOW ON RIVERSIDE WALK – PETITION FOLLOW UP (REF: 8)

Barry Timms, the Parks and Cemeteries Manager presented the follow up report on the petition relating to the Coronation Meadow on Riverside Walk (Ref: 8).

He said he had met with the two ward councillors and agreed a course of actions as set out at paragraph 4 of the report. The intention was that the main area of grass would be mowed in the summer.

Members of the public stated that the grass area was not levelled and could not be used safely.

Barry Timms said it had only been mowed once and more rolling would be done.

One member of the public suggested ring-rolling was needed.

In the long term, Barry Timms requested that the Board allocated £3000 to enable full consultation to take place on the future of the meadow.

Some Members believed nothing would be achieved by the consultation, as the view of the local residents, who used the meadow were already well known, and wider consultation of people who did not use the meadow would be a waste of money.

It was suggested that the money should be used to reinstate the meadow to its original state as requested by residents, which was supported by the public and agreed by the Board.

Resolved: (i) That the follow up report of the Parks and Cemeteries Manager, on the Coronation Meadow on Riverside Walk – Petition be noted;

(ii) That because of the already known views and strength of feelings of residents who regularly use the meadow, the Parks and Cemeteries Manager, be requested to arrange for the Coronation Meadow on Riverside Walk to be reinstated to its original state, inform the lead petitioner when done and report back to the October 2016 meeting of the Board.

08. LUTON RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (REF: 9)

Keith Dove, the Service Manager, Transportation Strategy & Regulation gave a presentation on the Luton Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The full presentation can be accessed from the following [Link](#).

He highlighted a number of key points, including as follows:

- Since the first Rights of Way Improvement Plan published in 2008, key achievements have included:
 - Travel Luton;
 - Green Corridors Project;

- Upper Lea Valley Walk Enhancements;
 - Park Run – Wardown Park;
 - Luton Dunstable Busway & adjacent access track;
 - Luton health walks.
- Currently the Definitive Map includes 38 km of public rights of way (22 km of public footpath and 16 km public bridleway) in Luton;
- Routes in the Excluded Area would be further developed by 2026;
- The action plan included five themes, with a number of key initiatives, as follows:
 - Theme 1 - A better signed, maintained & accessible network for the community, developing new routes to plug the gaps, reviewing needs for gates/ stiles and for removal of barriers;
 - Theme 2 - Improved promotion of Rights of Way and Access Routes, promoting public transport connectivity to the network, particularly for key routes and parks and producing map of network and promoting information about walks & events;
 - Theme 3 - Improving Health and Wellbeing, working with GP practices to develop walking routes and promote the benefits of outdoor physical activity to improve outcomes for people with some long term conditions, e.g. mental health, lung disease and Type 2 diabetes;
 - Theme 4 - Promoting Confidence, Safety and Security, ensuring vegetation is regularly cut back, particularly on routes to schools, parks and public open spaces, to provide safe and healthy routes to encourage walking and cycling;
 - Theme 5 - Updating the Definitive Map, Influencing Planning and Growth Key initiative, to resolve/ remove excluded areas and review planning applications for opportunities to extend/ develop/ upgrade the Rights of Way and Access networks and protect routes with local historical context.
- Consultation on the plan was ongoing and due to close on 17th March 2016.

Keith Dove then responded to questions/ comments, providing further information as follows:

- There was an annual budget for maintenance and improvement, comprising around £1m of Government grant and about £1.5 m from the Council;
- Liaison with volunteer groups, including the local Ramblers Association, would be part of the action plan;
- Responsibility for maintenance of the Rights of Way rested on different parts of the Council, depending on whether situated in parks or countryside.

Resolved: That the presentation of the Service Manager, Transportation Strategy and Regulation on Luton Rights of Way Improvement Plan be noted.

09. YOU SAID, WE'RE DOING – NEIGHBOURHOOD GOVERNANCE PROGRESS REPORT (REF: 10)

The Strategic Community Services Manager presented the 'You Said, We're Doing' Neighbourhood Governance progress report drawing attention to the details in the leaflet (Ref: 10).

She said all partners were working well together and would be happy to provide any further information if contacted.

Bedfordshire Police

Sgt Louise Bates and Inspector Bernadette White, Bedfordshire Police gave a presentation, entitled Operation Meteor, on the Police response to tackle nuisance caused by offenders using off road motor bikes in various parts of Bedfordshire and Luton. The full presentation can be accessed from the following [Link](#).

The following key points were made:

- Members of the public were encouraged to give the Police information on the users and where the bikes were being stored, using the 111 number or by e-mail. Over 400 messages received in the previous month;
- Once intelligence built, response to disrupt the offenders could then be organised to target the various hot spots in Luton;
- The problem was seasonal, with trend increasing in the summer months;
- As well as arrests and prosecution, other ways to tackle persistent offenders also looked at, including seeking evictions;
- Where possible the bikes were seized and destroyed.

Responding to Members' questions/comments, Sgt Bates and Inspector White provided further information as follows:

- The police e-mail address was opmeteor@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk;
- The Police needed to catch offenders riding the bikes to be able to prosecute them for no insurance;
- The bikes were seized, as they often proved to be stolen;
- The operation had run at weekends and week day afternoons at Bushmead and Warden Hill areas, depending on availability of off-road motorcycle officers.

Police and Crime Commissioner

Olly Martins, the Police and Crime Commissioner followed on with a presentation of the 'Meeting the challenges of Policing Bedfordshire'. The full presentation can be accessed from the following [Link](#).

Olly Martins provided a range of performance information for Bedfordshire Police, showing the force was performing near the top of the league table, despite

being the 8th lowest funded force in the country, in terms of the average number of police officers per 1000 head of population, which was well below the national average.

He made the point that the force was not funded like large urban forces, although it faced the same sort of challenges, such as gun crime, knife crime, acquisitive crime, high number of vulnerable victims, high risk from extremism, etc.

In term of good news, he said gun crime had dropped from the 2013 high, burglaries had dropped by 25% in the previous 12 months and the force was 11th highest for detecting crime and had the 3rd lowest cost for non- police staff. The force was investing in better technologies to enable officers to spend more time in public and less in the police stations and was looking to double the number of volunteer special constables. The public was asked to be the eyes and ears of the Police, but not to do the job of the Police.

Olly Martins said the force had lost 171 police posts in the previous 5 years and needed 300 extra officers (£12m per year) to tackle its top priorities (under its revised control strategies). He added that he would continue to petition for more resources,

Responding to Members' questions/comments, Olly Martins provided further information as follows:

- The Police was responsible for enforcing red light offences;
- The force would not benefit from fines, as these went direct to the treasury, not the local force;
- The drone trial was in early days of consultation;
- Legislation to cover use of drones was not that advanced. Drone was a cheap option.

Cllr Davis commented that the stats showed Bedfordshire Police was delivering very good performance relative to the resources made available to it, compared with other forces. He added he had not been aware of how difficult matters were and congratulated the Police for doing a brilliant job. His sentiments were echoed by the Board and the public, with a spontaneous round of applause.

Resolved: (i) That the 'You Said, We're Doing Neighbourhood Governance Progress Report be noted;

(ii) That the 'Operation Meteor' and 'Meeting the challenges of Policing Bedfordshire' presentations be noted;

(iii) That the Board thanks to Sgt Louise Bates, Inspector Bernadette White and P&CC Olly Martins for taking the time to attend the meeting and delivering their interesting and informative presentations be recorded.

(iv) That the Board's appreciation for the very good work delivered by Bedfordshire Police be recorded.

11. ITEMS FOR NEXT BOARD MEETING (REF: 11)

Resolved: That items agreed at this meeting as set out below, and any other future items identified be included in the work programme for future meeting of the Board.

- Reinstatement of Coronation Meadow on Riverside Walk: Feedback on progress;
- Petition relating to trees maintenance in Limbury Road: Feedback on progress.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING (REF: 12)

To be announced.

(Note: Provisionally set for 20th June 2016, subject to confirmation)

(Note: The meeting ended at 9.50 pm)