

NORTH LUTON AREA BOARD

15th OCTOBER 2015 at 8.00 p.m.

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

CO-OPTED MEMBERS: Sgt Ruth Connelly - Bedfordshire Police
Dr Chirag Bakhai (Substitute for Dr Anthea Robinson & Liz Cox - Luton CCG

11. 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 Chirag Bakhai.

12. MINUTES (REFS: 2.1)

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings held on 22nd June 2015 be taken as read, approved as correct records and signed by the Chair.

13. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (REF: 3)

Board Members introduced themselves.

The Chair requested that, due to the lack of suitable facilities with some of the school venues used for meetings, e.g. accessibility and provision of adult size tables and chairs, residents and Members consider a suggestion to use Futures House for all future North Area Board meetings. The Area Board Support Officer would look into the matter.

Resolved: That the Area Board Support Officer be requested to enquire into the feasibility of using Futures House for all future North Area Board meetings.

14. FEEDBACK FROM WARD FORUMS (REF: 4)

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

Sundon Park Ward

- Problems with parking near the shops, causing congestion in Sundon Park Road, a main thoroughfare – to be referred to Highways;
- Leagrave Park problems with drainage, which tended to flood – to be referred to Parks;
- Developments in people's back gardens allegedly without planning permission – reports to Planning encouraged;

Limbury Ward

- Problems with fly tipping and littering – residents encouraged to report to the Council;

- Parking on the pavement and corners of junctions blocking line of vision for motorists – to be reported to Highways to look into enforcement;
- Speeding concerns remained with lack of enforcement of the 20 mph speed limit;
- Concerned that Police did not always report back to Ward Forum on issues referred to them;

Northwell Ward

- Fly tipping and general rubbish problems across town and Marsh Farm Area;
- Parking on the pavement;
- Council Houses repairs not done to standard.

Icknield Ward

- Parking problems yellow lines near schools;
- Problems with HGVs in Grasmere Road area;
- Problems with Refuse bins in Birdsfoot Lane;
- Press release seen that Barnfield College might be looking to move from the New Bedford Road site. Something to look out for.

Bramingham Ward

- Problems with students apparently from Barnfield College dropping litter near Sainsbury's, where they tend to go for their take away food and smoke;
- Parking on pavements in Ickwell Close causing danger as sight obscured;
- Speeding in Quantock Rise.

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

15. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (REF: 5)

Police

Sgt Connelly announced she will be moving due being seconded into a new role after 4 years attending Area Boards meeting.

The Chair thanked her for her contributions to the Ward Forums and Board meetings and wished well into her new role.

Pipes Laying Works - Icknield Way

Responding to a question on sewer pipes being laid in Icknield Way, Barry Timms stated the works was for flood attenuation and that the land would be returned to open space afterwards.

Housing

Responding to a question on Council Housing waiting list and allocation priorities, Members responded/ commented as follows:

Cllr Davis

- The housing waiting list was about 10,000 due to population growth and not enough houses being built;

- The priority was to house local people who had been for a while;
- People being housed in Luton by London Boroughs was a cause for concern, as they would become Luton problems eventually, but there was nothing the Council could do, as it was Government policy;

Cllr Worthing

- Many people were evicted from private rentals, as their benefits were not enough to pay the rent. These were classed as intentionally homeless and after a short period in temporary accommodation, they would become homeless. Many were appealing the Council's decision;
- Government policy blamed.

Cllr Garrett (Chair

- This was not necessarily the Government's fault, as there was a lack of space in Luton to build houses. People living just over the outskirts of Luton, did not want to have houses built near them for Luton people;
- There were a few brown field sites in Luton, but these were expensive to build on.

Resolved: That issues discussed as a result of public questions be noted;

16. PETITION - CORONATION MEADOW – RIVERSIDE WALK (Ref: 6.1)

Barry Timms, the Council's Parks Manager, presented his report (Ref: 6.1), relating to the 173 signature petition objecting to the Scheme for wildflowers Meadows on the field adjacent to Limbury Leisure Gardens, submitted by Mrs Diane Cullen of 95 Bosmore Road, Luton.

He drew attention to paragraphs 6 to 9 of the report which set out the events leading up to the decision to go ahead with the scheme. He went on to explain the schemes referring to plans provided in Appendices A and B.

He stated Area 1 and Area 2 in Appendix A had been cultivated to form the meadow, with seeds sown in September 2015, resulting in the concerns expressed by the local residents. In response, a site meeting was held on the 20th September 2015. Residents' concerns included: no room for children to play or for family to have picnics, no access by dog walkers. Further discussions were planned for the Ward Forum and this was switched to the Area Board agenda, in view of receipt of the petition.

He drew Members' attention to Area 3 in Appendix A, an alternative grass area available for children to play football 50 metres away.

He further added that it was the intention to provide a mown pathway network for walkers through the meadow to enjoy the flowers and that a small areas could be also be provided for people to have picnics.

He proposed three options for the Board to discuss and decide on, reproduced in full as follows:

Option 1

Members to accept that the balance between general parks access and conservation improvement is acceptable including the introduction of the meadow and take no action thus safeguarding the income to maintain the conservation areas of the riverside walk whilst also contributing positively to this authorities statutory duty to conserve bio diversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Option 2

Members to consider reducing the size of the new meadow by 1000 square metres as shown on Appendix B to provide a kick about area, with a pathway network mown into the meadow to facilitate walking through the meadow to enjoy the flowers. Small areas could be mown for people to have picnics. .

Option 3

To accept the petition request and return the area shown as area 2 on the attached plan to grass land (10,000 square metre) leaving the Coronation Meadow to the area 1. This would mean a loss of income of £8,000 and in addition and the council funding the required reinstatement.

Cllr Rowlands stated she had not been aware of the scheme and that it was regrettable the consultation was in 2009, when she was not a councillor. She suggested it might be a good place when developed, as it had just been started, but appreciated the concerns expressed by residents about the area being taken away. She believed residents would still be able to use the area.

Cllr Lewis said he shared the concerns that the matter could have been handled better, but in principle thought the area could still be attractive if people could use it as before. Although people felt the area could not be used, he stated when he visited it, there were people using it and walking through.

A number of residents commented on the issue, key points summarised as follows:

- The need to close the affected area was questioned. It was alleged that the Council had taken part of Wardown Park for a mini meadow without consultation. The speaker had not heard about the Limbury site meeting. She suggested the dug up area should be returned to grass and Wardown Park meadow be used;
- A month before, someone from the Wild Life Trust at the site indicated only Limbury marsh would be turned into a wild flower meadow, with a path provided. Four weeks later the whole field had been dug up. How could Council staff not know about should have happened. Was this a mistake by the Council?;
- Park in Area 3 used during summer months. Danger caused to people, children and dogs from drivers going to the allotments in Neville Road due to the undergrowth up the path. As wild life encouraged, rats had been seen and as there were residents all around, what would be done to combat this?;
- Given the 173 signature, people felt strognly, as park used in the summer by families and children playing football. No one seen there since;

- Had used the park, as had his children, grand children and more recently great grand children. Also done canoeing and fishing, but not able to do so now;
- No consultation done. Who had right of way between walkers and people driving to the allotments, as could not walk across now?
- Had strong feelings on this issue as consultation was ineffective. Had attended site meeting and at no point was there any clue that the whole park would be ploughed up - an outrage. Was this an excuse for the council not to mow the grass because of funding cuts? The council asked to listen sympathetically and reinstate the park as it was. Suggestion made for wildflowers be planted along unused area along both sides of the river bank instead.

Members further commented as follows:

- Cllr Garrett, the Chair said this issue had not previously been raised at the North Area Board meeting;
- Cllr Rowlands stated people had expressed constructive views, which Barry Timms should take away and consider where to re-locate the wild flower meadow;
- Cllr. Lewis said he regretted people were put in a position when they had to protest. He added the message was clear and that the officer should take it back and consider how to compromise and give people back what they wanted and would be able to use, as well as have a meadow somewhere else.

The Parks Manager commented there had been a suggestion to use the wet meadow by the Moat House.

Having heard all the comments and views of the Parks Manager, residents and Ward Councillors, the Board unanimously decided to support the petition, objecting to the Scheme for wildflowers Meadows on the field adjacent to Limbury Leisure Gardens, requesting that “at least half of the field be re-instated” to its original state for community use.

Resolved: (i) That the Parks Manager be requested to re-consider the decision to turn Coronation Meadow in the field adjacent to Limbury Leisure Gardens into a wildflower meadow, and with full involvement of residents, including the petitioners and the Ward Councillors discuss a compromise, including the reinstatement of the whole of or at least half of the field to its original state for community use and re-locating the wild flower scheme elsewhere;

(ii) That the Parks Manager be requested to inform the lead petitioner of the decision of the Board;

(iii) That the Parks Manager be requested to inform the Board at its next meeting, of the outcome of the re-consideration of this issue.

17. FORMER SUNDON PARK LIBRARY SITE - CONSULTATION PROCESS WITH RESIDENTS (REF: 7)

Yinka Jawando, the Estates Surveyor, Fixed Assets updated the Board orally in relation to the sales of the former Sundon Park Library site. He said it had not been possible to stop the process, as the decision had been upheld and the sale completed.

He added he had been requested to arrange a meeting between the buyer and residents to deal with concerns that the site would be turned into a religious Centre. He said the buyer had confirmed the site would be used as a children nursery and not as a religious centre and the officer was therefore not clear on the purpose the meeting.

Yinka Jawando then responded to questions/ comments, providing further information as follows:

- If a tree had been cut down against a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), that was a planning issue, a matter that Ward Councillor Green could look into;
- In relation to the Council policy on disposal of assets, he refuted the suggestion that some buyers were getting preferential treatment. He explained sales were normally advertised through a local Estate Agent and auctioned by tender using sealed bids and sold to the highest bidder. He said he was personally present when the sealed bids for the former Sundon Park Library site were opened by the Agent and the highest bidder was selected;
- A specific question on the site of the former Engine Public House was ruled out of order, as not on the agenda;
- A specific question on the site of the former Sundon Park Community Centre was postponed until the next item on the Agenda.

Resolved: That the oral update of the Estates Surveyor, Fixed Assets relating to consultation on the disposal process of the site of the former Sundon Park Library be noted.

18. DISPOSAL PROCESS OF THE FORMER SUNDON PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE - COUNCIL'S INTENTIONS (REF: 8)

Yinka Jawando, the Estates Surveyor, Fixed Assets updated the Board orally in relation to the proposed disposal process of the site of the former Sundon Park Community Centre.

He said the Council had decided to put the matter on hold to consider the feasibility of developing the site for affordable housing purposes. If not feasible, the Executive would then need to decide on disposal at market rate to the Church or if their bid was not successful, on the open market.

In relation to a question on concerns that the E-Learning Centre was going to be sold, the Estates Surveyor said it was not for sale. The Chair referred the questioner to speak to the Ward Councillor, as the matter was outside the meeting's agenda.

Resolved: That the oral update of the Estates Surveyor, Fixed Assets relating to the disposal process of the site of the former Sundon Park Community Centre be noted.

19. AFFINITY WATER - WATER SAVING PROGRAMME – PRESENTATION (REF: 9)

Nigel Beaven from Affinity Water Limited gave a presentation on the company's water saving programme (Ref: 9). The slides could be viewed from the following link: [North Luton Area Board 15 October 2015](#).

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

- Affinity Water was largest water only company, supplying a population of 3.6 million people, with 900 million litres of water a day through a network of 16,500 km of water mains;
- Demand was increasing, with 600,000 extra people to service, a 17% increase over the next 25 years, with water supply decreasing over the same period;
- The 25 year plan was to ensure customers had enough water whilst leaving more water in the environment;
- The Water Saving Programme would involve engaging with customers to encourage them to work with the company to reduce the demand for water;
- 60% of customers had no idea how much water they used;
- Free water efficiency checks and advice would be provided on how to save water, including repairing customer side leaks and provision of free water saving devices to all Affinity water customers;
- The company's 10 year water saving programme contained 3 elements:
 - Helping customers save water, save energy and save money on their energy bills;
 - Reduce leakage across the whole network by 14% over 5 years;
 - Increase installation of water metres to 90% of homes;
- The aim of the 10 Year programme was to save 56 million litres of water per day;
- Smart water metres would be installed over the next 5 years to monitor over a 2 year period how much water used by each household and advice given to reduce usage, before metered bills introduced;
- Top tips for saving water included: turning tap off of when brushing teeth, 4 minutes shower using water saving shower heads, fix dripping taps, and using water butt to collect rain water for use in the garden.

Nigel Beaven then responded to questions/ comments, providing further information as follows:

- Rain water should be used for allotments;
- Cost of 1000 litres of water was about £1.13;
- All customers eligible to have water saving checks;
- There would be increased partnership arrangements between water companies to move water around from one area to another to balance supply and demand over the next 5 years, as no more water expected to be available;
- Business premises were already metered;

- Water companies were not a Planning consultee, but there should be better relationships with Planning authorities, to encourage builders to provide new houses facilities to collect rain water;
- The programme included swapping old metres with smart metres in due course; more information available.

Resolved: (i) That Nigel Beaven's presentation on Affinity Water's Limited water saving programme be noted.

(ii) That the Board's thanks to Nigel Beaven for taking time to attend the meeting and presenting Affinity Water's Limited water saving programme be noted.

20. FLYING START 2014-2024 – LUTON'S PREGNANCY TO FIVE YEARS STRATEGY (REF: 10)

Joe Biskupski, the Flying Start - Community Participation & Volunteering Manager gave a presentation of his report (Ref: 10),

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

- The Luton's Flying Start Strategy was to make a real difference to the lives and life chances of Luton's youngest children – from pregnancy to 5 years for future generations, which was a big challenge in Luton;
- The two main aims were:
 - To work in Partnership with Pre-school Learning Alliance, Luton Borough Council, Clinical Commissioning Group and others; and
 - To work with families from pregnancy to 5 years to try and prevent problems before they arise;
- The ambition was to improve outcomes in three key areas:
 - Communication & language – better educational outcomes and employment opportunities;
 - Social & emotional – secure attachment, emotional resilience and improved school readiness;
 - Nutrition & diet – better understanding of nutrition and healthy behaviours, increased breastfeeding, lower obesity and dental decay;
- Work completed so far included:
 - Training Luton's children's workforce in *Five to Thrive*;
 - Developing the Flying Start Worker model;
 - Piloting the *Bumps, Babies and Toddlers Plus* drop-in clinic;
 - Implementing the *Sign 4 Little Talkers*, *Sign 4 Big Feelings* and *Baby Babble* interventions and developing the *Bump to Babe* antenatal programme across Luton;
 - Developing the Flying Start Volunteering Programme;
- The local community formed the foundation of the work, ensuring parent and community-led decision making was part of the process, to positively and systematically change the lives of ALL the youngest children in Luton for future generations;

- Creating volunteering opportunities for community members to sit on the Flying Start Management Board to play an active role in the delivery of the strategy, communicating, supporting and signposting parents to local organisations that could help and support them. ;
- Me Time Family – to improve Physical activities within the family;
- Fathers Matter – peer support for good fatherhood to pass positive message on;
- Volunteer accredited training would be provided.

Resolved: (i) That Joe Biskupski's presentation on the Flying Start 2014-2024 – Luton's Pregnancy to Five Years Strategy be noted.

(ii) That the Board's thanks to Joe Biskupski for taking time to attend the meeting and presenting the Flying Start 2014-2024 – Luton's Pregnancy to Five Years Strategy be noted.

21. LUTON CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP – UPDATE (REF: 11)

Dr Chirag Bakhai and Liz Cox, Luton CCG presented the Luton CCG update (Ref: 11), highlighting the following key points:

- The new mental health service provider, East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) started on 1st April 2015 and working hard to improve services and quality;
- Access to psychological therapies now available on self-referral basis;
- Cambridgeshire Communities services (CCS) were awarded a 2 year contract to continue to deliver community health services. Future options would be considered after April 2017;
- Virgin Care was awarded the contract for intermediate Care, formerly also provided by CCS ;
- Consultation on the re-provision of 4 GP Practices' contracts was about to start between now and Christmas, exact launch date not yet decided;
- Public views sought on the provision of urgent care;
- The CCG was working with partners on the 'Better Together' programme to integrate services around patients' needs. A multi-disciplinary team was responsible to deliver the programme;
- The CCG was in excess of £20m in deficit, a challenge to manage. Part of the reason for the deficit is the historic underfunding of Luton. Progress achieved to reduce the deficit, with target set for creating a surplus by 2017/18;
- The CCG was dealing with the overspend, e.g. attempting to reduce attendance to A&E and avoidable referrals to hospital, which was responsible for a significant cost.

Responding to public and Members' questions/comments, further information was provided as follows:

- The 4 GP Practices, although private concerns, provide NHS Doctors and appointments;
- Closure of a practice could be an option depending on the result of the consultation;
- ELFT had indeed set up a Psychiatry Liaison Service and doing well;

- When ready, as no date set yet, Sandra Hayes confirmed the consultation will be on the consultation portal on the Council website;
- Providers were monitored and scrutinised on a monthly basis to ensure they were meeting their contractual obligations and held to account if not. Ultimately, contract would not be renewed if a provider failed to provide the required level of service and, if other measures failed, could be terminated early;
- Feedback from Patients Reference Groups would be considered as part of the consultation;
- It was noted, the council health scrutiny group was a consultee;
- It was confirmed managed repeat prescriptions system had changed dramatically, due to high level of wastage and safety concerns with some patients stock piling medicine. A Pharmacist was on the CCG Clinical Commissioning Committee to establish close working relationship between GPs and Pharmacists;
- Patients' anxiety about the change was acknowledged.

Resolved: (i) That the progress report of the Luton CCG (Ref: 11 and part of Ref: 12 below) be noted.

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

22. YOU SAID, WE'RE DOING NEIGHBOURHOOD GOVERNANCE PROGRESS REPORT (REF: 12)

The Community Development Project Manager presented the 'You Said, We're Doing' Neighbourhood Governance progress report drawing attention to the details in the leaflet (Ref: 12).

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

Resolved: That the 'You Said, We're Doing Neighbourhood Governance Progress Report be noted.

23. AGENDA PLANNING (REF: 13)

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

24. DATE OF NEXT MEETING (REF: 14)

Thursday 3rd March 2016

(Note: The meeting ended at 9.55 pm)