

WEST LUTON AREA COMMITTEE

30th March, 2005 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Rutstein (in the Chair); Councillors Mead, Patten, Roden, Stewart and Strange

In Attendance: Councillor Bailey

12 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Resolved: That in the absence of the Chair (Councillor Shaw) Councillor Rutstein be elected as Chair for the duration of the meeting.

13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Simmons and Shaw.

14 MINUTES (REF: 2.2)

Resolved: That subject to the amendment at Minute 3 (first paragraph) replacing the words 'objecting to' with 'condemning the Council for approving' the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24th January 2005 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

15 FEEDBACK FROM MINI WARD FORUMS (REF: 6)

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

Challney Ward

- Motorcycles
- Residents Parking in Stanton Road
- Parking Schemes
- Water Meters (poor job done installing them)
- Trees need pruning in Stoneygate Road and Halfway Avenue
- Traffic Lights at Halfway Avenue
- Town Centre bus stops

Leagrave Ward

- Removal of concrete bollards opposite Whitbread offices
- Electrolux sports field – ownership
- Difficulty in getting through to Call Centre
- Telephone mast at Ackworth Crescent – vandals left in dangerous state
- West Lea home – back gate left open (security risk)

Lewsey Ward

- Cycle Path – Lewsey Park – need re-surfacing
- Parking on pavements – enforcement
- Can action be taken against person selling cars on corner of Emerald Road
- Home Zone area
- Poets Green – shrubbery needs cutting back

All the issues raised would be followed up and reported back to the next meeting of the Area Committee.

Resolved: That the report on the Feedback From Mini Ward Forums (Ref: 6) be noted.

16 REFERENCE FROM EXECUTIVE – DECISION REGARDING REPLACEMENT SWIMMING POOL (REF: 7.)

The Director of Scrutiny informed the Committee that at their meeting held on 14th March, 2005 the Executive had decided that its preferred site for the location of the new swimming pool was Addington Way.

Following concerns from members of the public the Chair advised that consultation with local residents on the use and infrastructure of the new pool would be undertaken.

Resolved: That the report on the Reference from Executive – Decision regarding Replacement Swimming Pool (Ref: 7.) be noted.

17 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME / POLICE (REF: 8)

Chief Inspector Peter Buckingham informed the meeting of the imminent increase in the number of beat managers in the area to one per ward. Restructuring of the police force would also provide a dedicated sergeant for the area and one police community support officer per ward, all of whom were to be based at Leagrave Police Station.

He further advised that contact details for the new sergeant would be available in the local press and urged the public to make contact outside of the area committee meetings.

Members of the public raised concern at not being able to telephone Leagrave Police Station direct and having to go through the call centre.

Chief Inspector Peter Buckingham advised that calls received via the call centre were linked to officers voice mail and urged callers to leave a message to enable issues to be dealt with. He further advised that officers were to be issued with mobile telephones, the numbers of which would be issued to the public to enable them to have direct contact with the Police.

A member of the public enquired about the legal status of the small motorised scooter/bikes with regard to road use.

Chief Inspector Peter Buckingham advised that they were classed as motorbikes and should not be driven on pavements and should therefore be taxed and insured to be ridden on the highway.

A member of the public reported racist graffiti on shop doors in St Dominic's square.

Chief Inspector Peter Buckingham advised that he would forward the information to the Race Hate Crime Team.

A member of the public wished to praise the Chief Inspector on the noticeable presence of beat officers in her area and advised that it was very encouraging.

Chief Inspector Peter Buckingham thanked the member of the public for her praise and advised that the aim of the Pilot neighbourhood Policing Initiative was to reassure the public that the Police were in their area.

Resolved: That the information given and issues raised during the Public Question Time (Ref: 8.) be noted.

18 STREET SERVICES PRESENTATION (REF: 10)

The Enforcement Manager (Street Services Division) gave 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 or 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 Re-active 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 (Street Services Division) 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 (Street Services Division) 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 member of the public asked how the Council traced people who dropped litter to enable action to be taken against them.

The Enforcement Manager (Street Services Division) advised that most fines were issued to people throwing litter from their vehicles; the owner would be traced via their vehicle registration and a fixed penalty notice would be served.

Members of the public gave details on locations where litter/rubbish had been seen to be a problem.

The Enforcement Manager (Street Services Division) undertook to investigate and clear the sites at the earliest opportunity.

A member of the public commented that the cleansing of Luton had improved tremendously but that around the small islands in the middle of roads didn't seem to be cleansed.

The Enforcement Manager (Street Services Division) advised that he was aware of the problems around cleansing the splitter islands (as they were called), and this would be addressed in the future.

Councillor Roden advised that she had contacted the Enforcement Manager (Street Services Division) to enquire what action could be taken regarding rubbish within the boundary of non-Council properties.

The Enforcement Manager (Street Services Division) advised that leaflet drops were undertaken on private properties which had a large amount of rubbish within their boundaries, advising them of the bulky household waste collection service, but that did not always achieve the desired outcome. He further advised that the Private Sector Housing Division did have powers to enforce clearance under risk of arson and rodent infestation legislation.

Resolved: (i) That the Street Services presentation (Ref: 10.) be noted.

(ii) That the Enforcement Manager (Street Services Division) be requested to investigate and cleanse those sites identified by members of the public.

19 HOSPITAL PARKING SCHEME (REF: 11)

The Chair introduced Mr Bob Tregillus, General Manager (Estates and Facilities), Luton and Dunstable Hospital.

Mr Tregillus advised the meeting of actions being undertaken to address parking issues at the Luton and Dunstable Hospital –

- Robust Travel Plan – this document will become public in April/May
- Park and Ride – investigations ongoing into setting up park and ride sites in Dunstable and Luton, incentive to staff to use the facility free of charge and charge staff using parking at the hospital.
- Multi-Layered car park – site near the Breast Screening Unit being looked at for a possible multi-layered car park.

A member of the public suggested having an illuminated sign on the car park opposite the hospital to show when the car park was full to stop vehicles queuing up Lewsey Road and causing so much congestion.

Mr Tregillus advised that he would be looking at the problems connected with the car park opposite the hospital and hoped to make it a short stay facility.

A member of the public suggested running a minibus on a circular route, on a 30 minutes frequency, for those patients living within a 1 mile radius of the hospital with mobility problems.

Mr Tregillus thanked the member of the public for his suggestion and agreed to investigate it.

Councillor Strange thanked Mr Tregillus for his attendance and commented that the hospital as a major generator of traffic in the town did have a responsibility to minimize its impact on others. He advised that it was a contentious issue with members of the public who constantly raised it with him and that he was glad to see the hospital taking positive steps to address the issue.

Resolved: That the information given under the Hospital Parking Scheme report (Ref: 11.) be noted.

20 POYNTERS ROAD PROPOSED CYCLE TRACK (REF: 12.)

The Head of Engineering and Transportation presented the report on Poynters Road – Proposed Cycle Track (Ref: 12.) and advised that it was the Council's responsibility to promote alternative means of travel and that despite objections received to the proposal, the cycleway would be a good thing, it was intended to be introduced at the bottom end of Poynters Road initially.

Members of the public were in opposition to the introduction of the cycle track and raised the following issues:

- A study should be undertaken to see how many cyclists used Poynters Road;
- There would be a conflict between cyclists and residents reversing their vehicles from their properties;
- Residents not consulted properly;
- Conflict between pedestrians and cyclists;
- It should be on Dunstable's side of the road;

The Head of Engineering and Transportation reminded the Committee of the receipt of a petition containing 125 signatures opposing the proposed scheme and advised that the views of the public would be taken into consideration.

The Chair advised that 2 colleagues from Bedfordshire County Council were present and invited them to contribute to the debate.

An officer from Bedfordshire County Council advised that the space was not being taken away but merely becoming tarmac instead of grass. He further undertook to write to residents following the outcome of the meeting.

Resolved: (i) That the receipt of the petition opposing the proposed cycle track in Poynters Road be noted.

(ii) That the Head of Engineering and Transportation be instructed to inform the lead petitioner of the Committee's decision.

(iii) That the results of the consultation carried out by Bedfordshire County Council be noted.

(iv) That the Executive note that although the West Luton Area Committee support the promotion of cycling initiatives, in general, given the level of public concern in respect of the proposal in its current form, it is not recommended for implementation.

(v) That the Executive be requested to instruct the Head of Engineering and Transportation to carry out consultation with local residents in respect of the proposed cycle track (independent to that carried out by Bedfordshire County Council.)

(vi) That the Executive be requested to instruct the Head of Engineering and Transportation to give the proposal further consideration (following the outcome of (ii) above) and report back to a future West Luton Area Committee for consideration.

21 DRAFT SPEED MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND DRAFT LUTON CYCLE NETWORK (REFS: 13. AND 14.)

The Engineering Services Manager (Engineering and Transportation) reported on the Draft Speed Management Strategy and circulated a document containing information and asking for views, for which a pre-paid envelope was attached, to members of the public present at the meeting.

The Engineering Services Manager (Engineering and Transportation) reported on the Draft Luton Cycle Networks and drew attention to the displayed map identifying the network. He invited members of the public to give their name and contact details on the sheet provided, to receive a free plan.

Resolved: That the reports on the Draft Speed Management Strategy (Ref: 13.) and the Draft Luton Cycle Networks (Ref: 14.) be noted.

22 CHAUL END COMMUNITY CENTRE (REF: 15.)

The Service Manager Physical and Sensory Impairment (Social Services (Adults)) presented the report on Chaul End Community Centre (Ref: 15.) advising that it was being built on Dunstable Road with the support of funding from the European Regional Development Fund and that it was on target to be completed during the second half of September 2005.

She further advised that when completed the centre would provide a children's centre, GP's surgery, rehab gym, day care facility, adult education

facility, community sports facility, internet café and general community facilities within the Challney Ward.

The Service Manager Physical and Sensory Impairment (Social Services (Adults)) reported that activities currently based at Downlands Day Centre (youth group, bingo and adult education classes) would also transfer to the Chaul End Centre in September/October 2005.

She advised on a street audit in the area of Leicester Road, Browning Road and Chaul End Lane for which volunteers were being sought. This would involve checking pavements (that they were even and easy to travel on), drop kerbs, working order of street lights and reporting back any issues and also any suggestions and ideas for improvements.

Resolved: That the report on the Chaul End Community Centre (Ref: 15.) be noted.

23 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, ADULT EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICE (REF: 16.)

The Area Community Development Officer updated the Committee on the current activities and developments in the Challney, Leagrave and Lewsey Wards.

Resolved: That the report on Community Development, Adult Education and Youth Service (Ref: 16.) be noted.

24 AREA REPORT (REF: 17.)

The Area Committee Support Officer updated the Committee on issues that were raised following the last meeting.

The Area Committee Support Officer advised of the receipt of one application to the Area Project Grant Scheme:

Scheme	Ref	Ward	Cost	Amount Requested	Decision
Bradley Road Allotment Site – storage and shelter provision	CH 158	Challney	£3,175.00	£3,175.00	Defer to next meeting of Committee.

Resolved: That the Area Report (Ref: 17.) be noted.

25 AGENDA PLANNING (REF: 18.)

Resolved: That the Committee be advised of the following:

- That members of the public requested to be kept up to date on information regarding the Section 106 Agreement – Addington Way (Leagrave).
- A member of the public commented that people seemed to have no faith in Luton Borough Council regarding traffic and highway management.

(Note: The meeting concluded at 10.00 p.m.)