

**LUTON AND SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE
JOINT PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the special meeting of the Luton and South Bedfordshire Joint
Planning and Transportation Committee held at the District Offices, Dunstable, on
Friday 15 June 2007 at 9.30am.**

PRESENT:	Councillor R.J. Davis (Chair)	Luton Borough Council
	Councillor M. Hussain	Luton Borough Council
	Councillor Roden	Luton Borough Council
	Councillor Rutstein	Luton Borough Council
	Councillor Taylor	Luton Borough Council
	Councillor Scott	Bedfordshire County Council
	Councillor McVicar	South Bedfordshire District Council
	Councillor Nicols (Vice Chairman)	South Bedfordshire District Council
	Councillor Rawcliffe	South Bedfordshire District Council
	Councillor Shadbolt	South Bedfordshire District Council
CO-OPTEES:	Mr Elvin	Local Strategic Partnership
	Councillor Jones	BATPC
	Mr McKillen	Go-East
OBSERVERS:	Councillor Ashley	Hertfordshire County Council
	Councillor Paternoster	Aylesbury Vale District Council
	Councillor Rowlands	Buckinghamshire County Council
OFFICERS:	Mr Bhowmick (SBDC); Miss Brereton (SBDC); Mr Dove (LBC); Miss Forsyth (SBDC); Mr Holloway (BCC); Mr Hutchinson (SBDC); Mr Ironside (NHDC); Mr Jones (BCC); Miss Kennedy (SBDC); Mr Kirkdale (Highways Agency); Mr Okusipe (LBC); Mr Pierce (SBDC); Mr Slater (LBC); and Mr Storah (LBC/SBDC).	

16. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN (REF: 1)

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Councillor Davis be Chair for the municipal year.

The new Chair thanked the outgoing Chairman, Councillor Nicols, for all of his dedicated work over the previous municipal year, culminating in the achievement of formal legal status for the Joint Committee (JC).

17. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN (REF: 2)

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Councillor Nicols be Vice Chairman for the municipal year.

The Chair also offered thanks to the Corporate Service Manager, Planning and Economy (SBDC) for his significant contribution to the work of the Committee, and wished him luck in his future position.

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (REF: 3)

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of:

Councillor Franks (Luton Borough Council)
Councillor Shaw (Luton Borough Council) with Councillor Taylor as Substitute
Councillor Stay (Bedfordshire County Council)
Councillor Thake (North Hertfordshire District Council)

19. MINUTES (REF: 4)

RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the meetings held on 2 March and 30 March 2007 as correct records and to authorise the Chair to sign them.

20. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (REF: 5)

None.

21. URGENT BUSINESS (REF: 6)

None.

22. PLANNING FOR GYSPY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION – ISSUES AND OPTIONS PAPER (REF: 7)

The JC received a presentation on the East of England Plan – Single Issue Review dealing with “Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in the East of England: Issues and Options Consultation Document”.

The report detailed the needs assessment for gypsy and traveller pitches across the region, and concluded that approximately 1,220 additional pitches would be required across the whole region to 2011. The initial assessment allocated 52 additional pitches to Luton and South Bedfordshire (13 and 39 respectively), totalling 74 for the county as a whole. To give the Committee some perspective on land-take they were informed that 45-52 pitches would require 1 hectare of land, by comparison 42,000 new houses would require 920 hectares of land. The land-take would not be significant.

An alternative allocation of pitches put to the Committee as “Option 2,” allowed for a minimum allocation of 15 pitches to each authority in Bedfordshire. With this option both Luton Borough and Bedford Borough’s allocation would increase to 15, with the allocation to South Bedfordshire remaining the same. Luton and South Bedfordshire’s total allocation would therefore increase to 54 pitches. The report to the JC stated that Option 2 was not based on environmental or sustainable considerations, and it did not reflect Gypsy and Traveller (G&T) community aspirations.

The Members felt that the burden should be shared, with the distribution spread evenly. In view of this, Option 2, it was felt most closely mirrored this feeling. It was agreed that acceptance of this would be the most realistic and helpful option. The JC was also informed that a recent meeting of the Housing Sustainable Community Panel at the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) had unanimously supported this Option.

RESOLVED that a response to the consultation document be drafted to reflect the JC’s preference for Option 2, and circulated for agreement by the Member Steering Group.

23. M1 WIDENING JUNCTION 10 – JUNCTION 13 (REF: 8)

The JC was taken through the report detailing the current situation with the M1 Widening and the building of Junction 11a (J11a). J11a was not included in the Orders published for the widening and would be included in the Orders as part of the A5-M1 Link Road scheme, which were due to be published in late 2007 or early 2008.

The timescale for progressing those orders would still allow J11a to be constructed at the same time as the M1 widening. Apart from the inflationary increase in cost, not doing so would result in unnecessary disruption of the motorway as the bridges for the new junction were constructed.

Junction 10a (J10a) was originally due to be improved as part of the East Luton Corridor scheme but was withdrawn. The Borough Council had developed proposals for a flyover at the junction, but the design was constrained by the woods at the east of the exiting roundabout. The alignment of the slip roads required agreement of the Highways Agency (HA) over the relaxation of the design speed of the M1 spur (J10-10a), a measure that was supported by members of the Committee.

The Committee was informed that there may be some implications on timing for the new Busway system due to the construction of the new bridge over the motorway. Dependent on the timing of the two schemes, it may be necessary for the Busway to be temporarily diverted onto the existing or new Hatters Way Bridge.

In consideration of non-motorised users wishing to traverse Bradley Road bridge and Junction 12 (J12), the Joint Local Access Forum had:

- 1) suggested that the footway alongside Bradley Road could be temporarily diverted onto the busway bridge or Hatters Way bridge;
- 2) requested an off-road route with safe crossings of the slip roads at J12.

These were both supported by the Committee.

Members from SBDC confirmed that a representative from the HA had addressed their Executive Committee, but the answers to the concerns raised were not seen as satisfactory, particularly in terms of the designs for J12. On the matter of J11a, the answers were unclear and nothing was resolved concerning the inflation of cost due to the delay in beginning the work.

The Committee felt that the consultation process had been too generalised in terms of the widening. The detail had only recently become public. Another point that the Committee believed the HA should take into account, was the role of a councillor. Councillors were often the first to be approached by the public, and they had not been supplied with the information required to answer the questions, and this had led to greater misunderstandings. It was important to make the consultation process real to those affected by the decisions at an early stage. If this was to be effective, councillors needed to be fully informed and for there to be a proactive relationship between them and officers. The HA had employed two Community Relations Officers, based in Luton, and they had been interacting with the local community to garner views, but the situation was constantly being reviewed to improve levels of contact.

It was stressed to the Committee that the allocation of funding for these developments was not controlled by the HA, but central Government, and the HA had been pressing for decisions to be made in this regard. There was some concern, however, that the initial decision to not include J11a in the M1 Widening indicated a lack of 'joined up thinking' strategically. At this stage it was too late to join the two schemes and so they would progress in parallel until the final stages of completion. There was a window of opportunity, until 2008, to bring funding for the A5-M1 Link forward, which would allow for dual construction.

Environmental issues had to be addressed with the widening of the M1, although many of these such as landscaping and the replacement of noise barriers, together with minimising the construction impacts on air and water quality, were issues that needed continued dialogue with the HA as the detailed design of the project progressed. Measures would need to be taken to ensure that J12 would be designed to minimise the detrimental effects.

The Committee discussed the key issue of available open space, and the two areas that had been highlighted as potential replacements for lost land which were at the east end of the Lincas County Wildlife Site, and a triangular area between Coverdale, Toddington Road and the motorway. Luton Borough Council had expressed concern at the apparent remoteness of the latter site from the open space being permanently lost to the scheme, which was mainly located in the Lewsey/Leagrave areas. They had suggested an alternative site to the west of the motorway, with an identified site at Kestrel Way. One draw back to this option was that the owners had expressed their objections to this alternative site

and therefore this issue was likely to go to public inquiry. Notwithstanding this, the alternative site was supported by members of the Committee.

The representative from the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) announced to the Committee that the South Beds LSP would be hosting a number of seminars over the summer period, during their public consultation on the Sustainable Community Strategy. They had felt that a wider view needed to be taken in terms of travel behaviour, which should be included in the debate. Therefore, they proposed a series of facilitated forums: 1) Integrated Economy and 2) Economy.

NOTED the report.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) confirm its support for the scheme in general as an essential infrastructure element to support the Growth Area;
- 2) urge the Highways Agency (HA) and Secretary of State for Transport to include the construction of Junction 11a in the M1 Widening Scheme in order to:
 - a. facilitate the early construction of the A5-M1 Link Road (Dunstable Northern Bypass);
 - b. avoid the need for further disruption to the motorway at a later date when the J11a bridge is constructed; and
 - c. allow the development of land in the vicinity of J11a;
- 3) urge the HA to relax the design speed of the M1 spur (J10-10a) to allow the development of proposals for M1 J10a;
- 4) request the HA to urgently resolve design and other matters relating to the bridge carrying the disused railway line over the M1, as this could impact on the process for the procurement of a contractor for the Luton Dunstable Busway;
- 5) notify the HA of its holding obligation relating to issues of traffic management and access during construction, and to the environmental design to mitigate the schemes impact on landscape and biodiversity, together with issues relating to protection of the environment (noise, water and air quality);
- 6) object to the proposed replacement open space between the M1 and Coverdale, and state preference for the “exchange land” in the Leagrave/Lewsey area to be located west of the M1; and
- 7) ask the HA to provide a safe route for pedal cyclists and pedestrians between Toddington and Harlington through the Junction 12 complex and to note the other concerns about J12 expressed in this report.

24. WOODSIDE CONNECTION (REF: 9)

The Committee was presented with the provisional findings of the Woodside Connection Feasibility Study. It was felt that further work needed to be completed on the environmental and traffic implications of each option. The model was not robust enough at the current time.

Comments were made on Option 1, where the representative for BATPC felt that it wasted space that would be available for growth. There was some discussion of local connectivity at J11a and the Chairman reminded the Committee that it had already recorded its support for local road connections.

The Committee was informed that it could expect the study to be published in the autumn, and that further public consultation would be necessary before being able to adopt a Preferred Route.

NOTED the report.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) ask the Secretary of State for Transport to reconsider his rejection of local road connections at Junction 11a; and
- 2) commission further work on the options to enable a fuller consultation to be carried out later in the year with a view to determining a Preferred Option.

25. CONSTITUTION AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS (REF: 10)

The Chair confirmed the completion of the S.29 process, and the formalisation of the Joint Committee. The Committee thanked Mike Boon (DCLG) and Neil McKillen (GO-East) for the work in speeding the process up.

In reviewing the minutes of the Member Steering Group (MSG) there was a request that details of the consultation events be forwarded to AVDC in order to match them up in accordance with their Statement of Community Involvement.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the conclusion of the S.29 process and formal establishment of the Joint Committee;
- 2) agree that the Luton and South Bedfordshire Joint Planning Committee should now be known as the Luton and South Bedfordshire Joint Committee; and
- 3) note the minutes of the meetings of the Member Steering Group on 30 March, 27 April, and 25 May 2007.

26. MAJOR TRANSPORT SCHEMES UPDATE (REF: 11)

The Committee received a report that updated the status of a number of local schemes, including:

Busway (formerly known as Translink)

Luton Borough Council's Scrutiny Committee had received a presentation on the Grant Thornton/Jacobs Financial Appraisal which confirmed that the capital and revenue terms of the scheme were viable. Robust project management arrangements were being organised by LBC and BCC to implement the Busway scheme. These included the creation of a number of sub groups including procurement, operations/management, and planning/environment. Following the initial stages of the Government approval process, the Business Case was being updated, and this would be presented to central Government in September 2007.

The JC questioned the decision that the scheme would not directly service Luton Parkway Station. The Chairman advised that the alteration in the route would allow for service of the new Napier Park development, while still providing good connectivity to the Parkway station.

NOTED the report.

- (Note: (i) **The meeting ended at 10.55am.**
 (ii) **The next meeting of the Joint Committee will take place on Friday 21 September 2007 at Luton Borough Council Offices, Luton commencing at 9.30am.)**

CHAIRMAN