

## **LUTON FORUM SPECIAL MEETING**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2009  
2.20 pm at AW House, Stuart Street, Luton**

### **PRESENT: MEMBERS**

Councillor Hazel Simmons – Luton Borough Council – Chair  
Andy Calvert – Luton Assembly – Vice-Chair  
Kevin Crompton – Chief Executive, Luton Borough Council  
Councillor Roy Davies – Luton Borough Council  
Catherine Govier – Bedfordshire Police  
Andy Frost – Bedfordshire Police  
Neil Hadden – Aldwyck Housing Association  
Helen Barnett – Active Luton  
Gillian Sharp – Luton Law Centre  
Penny Furness-Smith – Chair, Health and Well-Being Board  
David Oakley-Hill – Luton Assembly  
Anwar Haque – Luton Assembly  
Everton Blake – Voluntary Action Luton  
Linda Farrell – Luton Assembly  
Anwar Haque – Luton Assembly  
Janet Montgomery – Luton Assembly  
Jenny Spouge – Luton Assembly

### **SUBSTITUTES FOR MEMBERS**

Laura Church (substitute for Colin Chick)

### **SUPPORT OFFICERS/ADVISORS**

Bren McGowan – LSP Manager, Luton Borough Council  
Alice Abida – LSP Support Officer, Luton Borough Council  
Lachlan Robertson, Joint Technical Unit Manager, Strategic Planning  
Lisa Jerome – Democratic Services, Luton Borough Council

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (REF: 1)**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillor Sian Timoney (Fire Authority), Lorna Brown (Luton Assembly) Lysle Osborne (Marsh Farm Community Development Trust), David Barrett (University of Bedfordshire), Dave Fothergill (Beds and Luton Fire and Rescue Service), Colin Chick (Chair Economy and Environment Board), Angela McNab (NHS Luton), Craig Smith (Learning and Skills Council)

## **5 CORE STRATEGY**

Lachlan Robertson, Joint Technical Unit Manager, Strategic Planning, Luton Borough Council gave a presentation on the Luton and South Bedfordshire Joint committee Core Strategy Preferred Options. The forum noted that the Strategy had also been considered by the Environment and Economy Theme Board at its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May.

The Forum considered and identified the key issues relating to the Core Strategy with particular reference to how these related to the priorities listed in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Forum members broadly supported and recognised the need for the Core Strategy. Members considered that there should be a strengthening of the links between the spatial elements and the health, wellbeing and community safety aspects of the Core Strategy.

Key areas of concern were also identified which are set out below against the individual Core Strategy Options.

### **Preferred Option CS1 – Spatial Development Strategy**

Whilst recognising the importance of transport infrastructure, the Forum expressed some concerns about how transport infrastructure could be delivered and whether it would deliver the expected benefits.

There was not consensus across Forum members on the proposal for 5,500 new dwellings for the East of Luton, based on both the negative impact of proposed development as well as concerns about the reliance on a neighbouring authority.

The Forum expressed strong support for sustainable transport, including improved public transport, but there was concern strongly expressed by some members that the Luton-Dunstable Busway was not the most suitable option, and might not deliver the proposed benefits.

The Forum noted that the planning for the implementation to the East of Leighton Buzzard specifically included “providing further high quality open space and green linkages to the countryside”, and felt that this principle should also be included in proposals relating to Luton.

Although the Luton Forum recognised the linkages to existing strategic documents (Milton Keynes and South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy, Regional Spatial Strategy etc), there was some concern about the implications of the local delivery of targets, and how these would relate to the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy. Under these circumstances, the Luton Forum supported the broad principles of Preferred Option CS 1.

## **Preferred Option CS 2 – Developer Contributions and the Delivery of Supporting Infrastructure**

Luton Forum supported Preferred Option CS 2.

## **Preferred Option CS 3 – Strategic Public Transport Infrastructure**

The Luton Forum supported the broad principles expressed in the Preferred Option CS 3, however, there were some areas of concern. The Luton Dunstable Busway was not supported by the entire Luton Forum. There were further concerns that this section should have a clearer commitment to sustainable travel.

## **Preferred Option CS 4 – Strategic Highway Transport Infrastructure**

The Luton Forum supported the broad principles of Preferred Option CS 4, but had concerns about the impact of specific schemes, particularly the A5 – M1 Link Road and other ring roads and the impact that these would have, both on the area and on the promotion of sustainable travel.

## **Preferred Option CS 5 – Maximising Opportunities for Sustainable Travel**

Luton Forum supported Preferred Option CS 5.

## **Preferred Option CS 6 – Meeting the Housing Targets**

The Luton Forum recognised the need to meet housing targets, and the need to ensure that housing was available where it was needed. Although the Luton Forum could support the broad principles, it was felt that more detail would be required.

## **Preferred Option CS 7 – Delivering a Constant Supply of Housing Land**

Luton Forum supported Preferred Option CS 7 although it should be made clear that this related to the proposals within the plan, and was not an open-ended commitment.

## **Preferred Option CS 8 – Providing Housing for all Needs**

Luton Forum supported Preferred Option CS 8.

## **Preferred Option CS 9 – Providing a Supportive Framework**

Luton Forum supported Preferred Option CS 9.

## **Preferred Option CS 10 – Providing Social and Community Infrastructure**

Luton Forum supported Preferred Option CS 10.

### **Preferred Option CS 11 – Improving Town Centres**

This Option was partly supported by the Luton Forum. There was a mixed view about the scale of retail development, and the requirements for Luton. Some members of the Forum felt that there should be no further retail development in Luton. There was also concern about the impact of town centre development on local areas, and whether town centre development might have a negative impact on smaller communities.

### **Preferred Option CS 12 – Resource Efficiency**

The Luton Forum supported the general principles. However, there was a strong reservation that this section was not as detailed as others and that, in order to be consistent, more detail was required in this section. There was a strong view that this section should include a clearer commitment to tackling Climate change, and that this underpins a lot of the proposals included.

### **Preferred Option CS 13 – Mitigating Flood Risk**

Luton Forum supports Preferred Option CS 13.

### **Preferred Option CS 14 – Green Infrastructure and Green Space**

Luton Forum supported Preferred Option CS 14, but suggested that more detail was required in this section, particularly about how these aspirations would be achieved. As many concerns might be addressed through the Green Spaces Strategy, it was suggested that a reference to the Strategy would be beneficial at this point, and that this would show a greater commitment to green infrastructure.

### **Preferred Option CS 15 – Countryside and Landscape**

Luton Forum supported Preferred Option CS 15, but suggested that more detail was required in this section

### **Preferred Option CS 16 – Heritage and Townscape**

Luton Forum supported Preferred Option CS 16

### **Preferred Option CS 17 – Biodiversity and Geology**

Luton Forum supported Preferred Option CS 17

**(Note: the meeting ended at 4.10pm)**