2017: The year so far…

It has been a busy summer with a range of activities and events across the borough, bringing communities together and highlighting diversity and the growth in the cultural scene.

People were able to enjoy the Luton Mela, the fifth Summer in the Sun, the outdoor theatre production at Stockwood, and for the first time the Colour of Light parade in the town centre. We were also delighted to be celebrating Green Flag status for six of our parks, the national award scheme recognises the best parks and open spaces in the UK.

There has been significant progress with key developments which are helping regenerate the town with the first stage of the Marsh Farm project complete. Not only has this important scheme provided affordable housing, but it has also created jobs for local people. More homes will be built next year.

We were also pleased to announce the securing of money from the European Social Fund which will mean people in the most deprived areas of the town will have access to projects through which they are able to learn new skills. This will help tackle the issues which prevent them from finding better jobs.

Finally, in this period we had the chance to promote the Luton Investment Framework at the LGA Conference where hundreds of other councils were able to see all the positive developments going on in Luton. It really was a chance for us to put Luton on the map.

Cllr Hazel Simmons Leader of Luton Council
Luton Borough Council attended the Local Government Association National Conference in Birmingham, creating colour and atmosphere to promote the Investment Framework. The Innovation Zone was an area dedicated to showcasing new and original schemes from local authorities throughout the country. Hundreds of councils bid for one of the 30 allocated places.

Luton was chosen as one of only 12 places across England to receive Sport England funding to encourage more people to use their local swimming pools. The grant of £292,000 was awarded to Active Luton, via Luton Borough Council, to fund an intensive one-year programme to target inactivity and improve customer experience in Luton pools.

Luton Borough Council won a grant of £310,940 from the Department for Communities and Local Government to help rough sleepers through the Migrant Rough Sleepers Initiative. The scheme will support those not eligible to receive any money from the public purse. It aims to tackle the problem by providing suitable temporary accommodation, improving access to employment, English lessons, familiarisation with UK customs and help in reconnecting with their country of origin.

Six parks in Luton were awarded Green Flag status. The national award scheme recognises the best parks and open spaces in the UK for having excellent facilities, being well managed and maintained, having high standards of safety and for engaging the local community. Wardown, Stockwood, Memorial, Brantwood, Peoples and Manor Road parks received the prestigious Green Flag Award – the mark of a quality park or green space.

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Luton Borough Council together with its partner agencies Bedfordshire Police and Luton Children’s Services – part of Cambridgeshire Community Services – officially launched the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), demonstrating a successful new way of working to safeguard vulnerable children, young people and adults.

Dunstable Road highways improvements commenced. Alterations to the Dunstable Road/Cardiff Road junction included the filter lane for the right turn into Cardiff Road from Dunstable Road being extended and improvements to the road layout resulting in improved traffic flow.

Ward pages were created on Facebook which are run and managed by Councillors, meeting one of the aims of the Member Led Engagement Strategy for improved on-line information and communication with residents.
Students at Farley Junior School participated in a range of activities as part of a special pilot programme aiming to encourage younger children aged 7-11 to think about their future careers, and the skills and values they might need to be successful. The programme was developed in partnership with the Council and included employers Leonardo, London Luton Airport, Lloyds Bank, Keepmoat, John Lewis, Machins Solicitors, CITB and Arriva.

Ecotile Flooring, a Luton based company, won two awards for International Trade and Innovation. It was one of only five businesses to win two awards. The Queen’s Award For Enterprise was established in 1965 and celebrates the UK’s small and medium sized businesses.

Barnfield College took a giant step forward in realising its plans to relocate into Luton town centre and build a new state of the art college for students and employers of Luton and surrounding areas. The College purchased the Bute Street car park. Luton Borough Council will continue to operate the car park with revenue split between the organisations until building work begins which is currently scheduled for late 2018.

Schools, colleges, the local authority and key stakeholders including employer representatives, attended a major conference hosted by the University of Bedfordshire to plan for the future needs of learners in the post 16 age sector in Luton. The event focused on planning for the expected significant rise in learner numbers up to 2025, discussed courses on offer which would also meet employer demands and create exciting career pathways for Luton’s young people. Bill Rammell, Vice Chancellor of the University, and Trevor Holden, Chief Executive of the Council delivered key speeches at the event.
The new Thistle Express Luton opened in the town centre. Situated next to The Mall and St George’s Square, the hotel offers free Wi-Fi, Smart TVs in each of the 152 bedrooms, blackout curtains and Hypnos mattresses.

SEMLEP continued to work with the Careers and Enterprise Company to deliver the Enterprise Adviser Network in Luton and completed the first full year of the programme. It achieved an amazing 100% participation rate from the mainstream secondary schools, Luton Sixth Form and Barnfield colleges in Luton. 22 enterprise advisers have been matched from 15 companies to the Luton-based schools.

Luton Culture was awarded £5.17million in a joint investment from Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund, with almost £4 million from SEMLEP’s Local Growth Fund, as part of the major £9million project to refurbish the former Hat Factory buildings and create the Hat District within the Cultural Quarter. This project is also supported by Luton Borough Council and the Architectural Heritage Fund.

Active Luton continued to invest in encouraging Luton residents to try swimming as part of the £292,000 Sport England funded programme. Vouchers were distributed to Luton households to enable them to claim a free swim and a 5 swims for £5 card.

THE ME TIME FAMILY PROGRAMME REACHED ITS 1,000TH SIGN UP PROVIDING FAMILIES WITH PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN FUN OPPORTUNITIES TO GET ACTIVE TOGETHER

1.6 MILLION PASSENGERS FLEW THROUGH LONDON LUTON AIRPORT THIS REPRESENTS A 6.2% RISE COMPARED WITH JULY 2016, AND THE 40TH CONSECUTIVE MONTH OF GROWTH FOR LONDON LUTON AIRPORT

Active Luton’s Health and Wellbeing team continued to grow their flagship programmes for high profile partners including Macmillan Cancer Support and Great Ormond Street Hospital. They also introduced new programmes for the wellbeing of Luton’s residents including a new service for people suffering from stress, anxiety or with a diagnosis of other mental health conditions. People can now get access to specialist exercise for a mental health programme including one to one and groups sessions.

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Flying Start’s Safe At Home Scheme celebrated its seventh year. Based on the original RoSPA (Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents) project which was a national roll out, it is now the only remaining scheme in England.

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Luton Investment Framework | Quarterly Review July - September 2017
Love Luton held its fifth summer in the sun event at the end of July. St. George’s Square was transformed with over 100 tonnes of sand, creating one huge beach for families to come and play. Like any good beach, it came complete with its own donkey rides, helter-skelter, carousel, Ferris wheel and chair-o-planes! Other activities included The Heart Angels, Punch & Judy, bouncy castles, face-painting, games, music and dance.

Wardown House, Museum and Gallery more than doubled its visitor numbers to 10,080 compared to 3,587 visitors in the July before closing for their £3.5million refurbishment. The Museum has achieved 4.5 stars on Trip Advisor and has been ranked #4 out of 34 attractions in Luton.

Luton Culture attained National Portfolio Organisation status (NPO) for museum related activity, which creates even more opportunities for people to participate and engage with culture and local heritage. Almost £1million was awarded by Arts Council England which will enable digital innovation and expansion of Luton culture’s ground-breaking community engagement scheme, Museum Makers.

With the introduction of the full roll out of Universal Credit in July 2018, Luton Access are taking a proactive lead in working with the Voluntary & Community Sector to prepare for some of the negative impact of Universal Credit associated with a full roll out.

August

Luton Borough Council announced that it will provide £2million of funding to support the construction of 30 homes for rent in Charles Street. The mixed housing project is due for completion next summer and will provide one and two bedroom flats as well as two, three and four bedroom houses for low cost rent. 19 homes will be built for shared ownership.

Arriva Luton invested £3.2million in 13 new environmentally-friendly coaches to run on the 757 Greenline service between Luton, Luton Airport and central London. The coaches hi-tech additions for passengers, including free Wi-Fi and USB charging ports.

Arriva took delivery of 14 new environmentally-friendly buses to operate between Marsh Farm, Stopsley and Luton town centre. The investment of £2.3million in greener, hi-tech buses for Luton by Arriva will help to improve air quality and allow passengers to travel in comfort and style. The new buses also feature comfortable e-leather seating and hi-tech additions for passengers, including free Wi-Fi and USB charging ports.

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The new Ibis hotel on New Airport Way was opened and brought 10 new jobs to Luton even though many of its key functions are managed by mobile devices. Hotel functions, including check-in, housekeeping and breakfast will be managed by mobile devices – moving staff away from a traditional reception desk setup.

Construction commenced on the University of Bedfordshire’s new £40 million STEM building at the Luton campus. This will be set out over four-storeys and incorporating 6,000m² of teaching and laboratory space. The new building will be devoted to teaching and research in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects. It will also be home to a new Science and Engineering Outreach Centre, which will promote the value of science and engineering to local schools and the wider Bedfordshire community. The STEM building is due for completion in 2019.

The use of self-service terminals reached the landmark of 23,000 sessions being completed by users since they were placed by Luton Access in 7 locations throughout the town. One of the locations, Noah Welfare, advised that it was the accessibility and free use of the terminal at their welfare centre that enabled one of their clients to secure a job role.

The gym at Inspire: Luton Sports Village underwent a complete re-fit which included top of the range cardiovascular equipment, much of which is adaptable for all abilities and a state of the art functional training frame and mobile training kit. Lewsey Sports Park gym also had a functional training zone installed and Lea Manor Recreation Centre underwent a major programme of upgrading and decoration.

The Flying Start Children’s Centres held a range of summer holiday family fun events. Despite the weather, hundreds of families took part in a range of interactive activities and Flying Start staff shared key messages around the importance of healthy eating and keeping safe during the holidays.

EXPANSION OF THE OUTDOOR PERFORMING ARTS PROGRAMME AT STOCKWOOD DISCOVERY CENTRE CONTINUED WITH WITH ‘A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM’ PERFORMED BY THE CYCLING THEATRE TROUPE HANDLEBARDS DURING THE HOLIDAYS
The 8th Luton’s Best awards were officially launched at the end of August. Once again the awards honour the outstanding achievements of many of Luton’s individuals, groups and organisations. These people are often unsung heroes who willingly give up their time to help others and contribute to our community. For more information visit www.loveluton.org.uk/lutonsbestawards

The Luton Mela took place and again was a huge success. The event is the biggest South Asian Festival in the South East of England with music, dance, food and traditional arts and crafts. There was also a Guinness World Record attempt and a performance by Zamana supported by Revolution Arts.

Phase 1 of the Marsh Farm regeneration project was completed and the new residential and shop units opened in a ribbon cutting ceremony. The first stage of the £25million development has been delivered in partnership with community regeneration specialist, Keepmoat Regeneration. Seven retail units have been built, in addition to 24 new affordable one and two bedroom flats for local residents. The scheme has also provided jobs and training opportunities for people of the area. The next phases will be the demolition of the Purley Centre and the construction of a further 93 new homes which are scheduled to be completed by December 2018.

An exciting NEW programme commenced with Luton Aspire, funded by European Social Fund. It is for anyone aged 15 to 24 years old who is currently not in education, employment or training. The Luton Aspire programme is designed to support young people to access job opportunities, college courses or training programmes, particularly useful for young people who perhaps didn’t get the GCSE or A level results they were hoping for. A Luton Aspire advisor provides individuals with support, help create career plans and provides access to mentoring support in either one-to-one or group sessions.
The University of Bedfordshire welcomed its first cohort of higher level apprentices. Colleagues from Tesco will be developing their skills by undertaking a two year Associate Project Management apprenticeship delivered by the University’s Business School. The Tesco apprenticeship is part of a suite of Higher and Degree level apprenticeships designed to meet employers’ skills gaps which the University is preparing to deliver from this autumn.

A team of swim champions began working at Luton pools and in the community to encourage people to try swimming for their fitness and general health and wellbeing. Inspire: Luton Sports Village, Lea Manor Recreation Centre and Lewsey Sports Park and Pool introduced new sessions and extended opening times in response to community feedback as a further incentive to encourage Luton people to swim more.

Active Luton celebrated the fifth birthday of its flagship centre, Inspire: Luton Sports Village, with a free family fun day. Staff welcomed hundreds of visitors from the local community who came to enjoy free activities including sports hall activities, the dry dive trampoline studio, mini-astics, swimming and much more.

The Community Led Local Development (CLLD) programme was launched. A consortium in partnership with Luton Borough Council secured £2million of European Social Funding for an innovative programme which will help benefit a range of projects and initiatives led by local communities in eleven wards whose population are amongst the 20% most deprived in Luton. The programme will support schemes which aim to improve the lives of Luton residents by enabling them to learn new skills and find better job opportunities. The £2million must be match-funded by bids, meaning a total of up to £4million will be available to fund deserving local projects.
Almost 700 local people attended the Luton Employment Training and Skills Fair. Attendees were able to visit over 45 exhibitors and hear about hundreds of jobs on offer, ranging from clerical roles to jobs in construction. Voluntary organisations and local training providers were also on hand to talk about their latest opportunities.

The Keep Luton Safe, Keep Luton Tidy campaign was launched with a new road safety advert. Aimed at drivers who stop their cars on the yellow zig-zags outside school, the video stresses the importance of keeping these areas car free.

Luton Culture launched its Hat District project and website. The Hat District will be situated in the Cultural Quarter where 2,400sq m of creative workspace is set to be developed. It will support 133 new jobs in creative and digital industries and boost Luton’s visitor economy by attracting 135,000 more visits to the area.

OVER 2,000 CHILDREN

COMPLETED THE ANNUAL SUMMER READING CHALLENGE, ON THE THEME OF ANIMAL AGENTS.

TO CHILDREN HAD TO READ OVER 6 BOOKS OVER THE SUMMER BREAK.

THE SCHEME IS ORGANISED NATIONALLY BY THE READING AGENCY AND WAS AVAILABLE IN ALL LUTON LIBRARIES

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Luton in numbers

22 MINUTES
BY TRAIN FROM LONDON

23 MILLION PEOPLE
WITHIN A TWO HOUR REACH

10 MILES FROM
THE M25
EXCELLENT TRANSPORT
LINKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

ONE OF THE
5 MOST
AFFORDABLE
TOWNS IN THE COUNTRY FOR COMMUTING TO LONDON

UK’S 5TH
BUSIEST AND
FASTEST-GROWING AIRPORT
100+ DESTINATIONS
ACROSS FOUR CONTINENTS

LONDON LUTON AIRPORT CONTRIBUTES
£2,000 EVERY MINUTE
TO THE UK ECONOMY

CATCHMENT WITH
4TH HIGHEST LEVEL OF RETAIL SPEND IN THE UK

18,500 NEW JOBS

MORE THAN
£1.5 BILLION
PRIVATE INVESTMENT

RICH CULTURE AND HERITAGE
122 LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS,
AWARD-WINNING MUSEUMS AND PARKS

92% OF CHILDREN ATTEND
GOOD OR EXCELLENT SCHOOLS
PLUS HALF A BILLION POUNDS SPENT ON IMPROVING EDUCATION FACILITIES

8 STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITES
ENGINEERING, INNOVATION,
EMPLOYMENT, LEISURE,
RETAIL, OFFICE ACCOMMODATION AND HOUSING

TOP UK CITY
FOR BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY
97.6% OF ADDRESSES CAN CONNECT TO SUPER-FAST BROADBAND

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