

Luton 2020 - 2040
A place to thrive

Annual Review

October 2020 to September 2021



www.luton.gov.uk/Luton2020-2040

The first year of our journey to Luton 2040

One year ago we set out our town-wide vision for Luton 2040, to build a healthy, fair and sustainable town, where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty.

This vision was launched against the backdrop of the pandemic, which has exacerbated the impact of poverty and inequality for many in our town. During Covid, Luton experienced some of the highest rates of infection in the UK and was amongst the worst hit places economically, with the sharpest rise in unemployment anywhere in the country.

Despite this unprecedented challenge, everyone in our town has come together to work tirelessly to overcome the pandemic, driving up vaccinations and reducing the spread of the virus, while protecting our most vulnerable residents, by tackling homelessness and preventing children from going hungry in the school holidays.

We have also worked together to reopen our economy safely, administering government support grants as well as securing Reopening High Streets and Welcome Back funding. I am delighted that so many of our businesses across retail, leisure, food and hospitality are now bouncing back and it has been fantastic to see the return of major events in recent months, including the annual fireworks display, the Love Luton Half Marathon and 10K and the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Awards.

The last year has been extremely challenging for everyone and with the lasting impacts on our local economy and the wellbeing of our population, especially our young people, delivering our vision for Luton 2040 is now more important than ever.

Over the last 12 months, we have also seen significant progress in delivering on our shared priorities to lay the important foundations to achieve our town-wide vision. We have been focussing on delivering our plans for an Inclusive Economy and greater Population Wellbeing, by tackling health inequalities and getting people back into work through a range of skills and employment programmes.

We have seen the launch of the government's Kickstart scheme, as well as a further 600 enrolments in our Passport to Employment Programme, new external funding for our dedicated Passport to Health and Social Care Scheme and the launch of Luton's first ever Social Work Academy. There has also been clear progress for our growing creative sector, with the launch of Curating Luton - our new 10-year Heritage Strategy and Harnessing Momentum - our refreshed Arts and Cultural Strategy.

The future of our children and young people is also at the heart of our vision for Luton, and over the last year partners across the town have been working hard to support education catch-up and the improvement of vital services. We have also seen the completed development of school facilities in Luton, including the new building for Putteridge High School and the Windmill Hill SEND School in York Street, helping to increase the aspiration and achievement of many young people.

There have been a number of important developments across the town that will help to transform the lives of our residents. Lewsey Pool has been refurbished by Active Luton, while the Hat Works building has now been reopened by the Culture Trust, Luton. Foxhall Homes has also completed two developments at Sundon Park and Solway Road, providing a range of quality and affordable homes for residents.

We have also taken the first steps to transforming our Town Centre, with the adoption of a new Town Centre Masterplan and our successful £20 million Levelling Up bid, which will be a catalyst for further investment and regeneration in Luton. We have also secured funding to support a new strategic town centre board, to strengthen our collective approach to community safety.

Luton is also playing its part in tackling the urgent threat of climate change, having set out our bold ambition to become a carbon neutral town by 2040. Already the council has adopted net-zero priorities as part of its tendering and procurement processes and we have received £7.7 million of government funding to decarbonise public buildings. In addition, we continue to maintain our outstanding greenspaces, with six of our parks retaining their green flag status this year.

Across each of our priorities for Luton 2040 there is still significant work to do to deliver our vision for the town. Looking ahead to the next year, I am confident that we will see even more progress, as we outline more detailed plans to become both a Child Friendly and Carbon Neutral Town. We will also be launching a new Employment and Skills Strategy and a Good Business Charter to help build a more inclusive economy, while our Fairness Taskforce will be helping to tackle inequalities across our communities.

Next year we will begin to see the first signs of transformation in our town centre, leading to greater prosperity, wellbeing and sustainability. We will break ground on our £20 million Levelling Up project, The Stage, delivering new high-quality office, community and residential space. This will be linked to other improvements taking shape across the town centre, including the opening up of the River Lea, a new pocket park and the installation of Our River, a public art piece to commemorate those lost to Covid and the role of key workers in the pandemic.

We will also see other developments continuing at pace throughout the town, including the impressive redevelopment of Barnfield College and the completion of the Luton DART. Plans continue to take shape for the development of Newlands Park and Power Court Stadium.

There is an enormous amount to look forward to as we continue on our journey to Luton 2040. Residents and partners from across our town are already demonstrating outstanding commitment and I am confident that together we can truly build back better and make Luton a place where everyone can thrive.

Cllr Hazel Simmons MBE
Leader of Luton Council



Highlights from the first 12 months

Integrated Family Partnership Service went live April 2021

Edge of Care Service launched March 2021

10,789 business grants awarded paying out a total of £54,625,323

600 enrolments to Passport to Employment last year

£74,000 external funds for Passport to Health and Social Care programme

£375,000 ERDF's Reopening High Streets Safely Fund and Welcome Back Fund for town centre

MHCLG funds of £299,000 secured in addition to the initial £148,000 to deliver ESOL

£360,000 funding for a Youth Hub to support young job seekers

Decarbonisation/ climate priorities embedded in tenders

Launch of the Creative Leaders Programme

Launch of 'Our River' the Covid memorial for Luton, part-funded by ERDF's Welcome Back Fund

Launch of Curating Luton the 10-year heritage strategy for Luton and new appraisal framework

Refresh and launch of 'Harnessing Momentum' Luton's 10-year arts and cultural strategy

Successful WIA Big Trunk Trail for Luton and five new art benches funded by Talking Takes off

Lewsey Pool refurbished and re-opened

Windmill Hill School, SEND School in York Street completed and opened

£7.7 million Decarbonisation Fund Grant

Foxhall Homes: Sundon Park and Solway Road schemes completed and homes sold

Foxhall Homes: works commenced on Taylor Street and Strangers Way schemes

£20 million Levelling Up Funding secured to develop The Stage

Town Centre Masterplan adopted

Highlights from the first 12 months

Luton's first **Social Work Academy** was officially launched

Foxhall Homes completed its first development of 15 high-quality residential homes on the Saints Community Centre site

Brantwood, Leagrave, Memorial, Peoples, Stockwood and Wardown parks retained their green flag status

Kickstart scheme in Luton commenced

Dallow Downs and Winsdon Hill awarded Site of Special Scientific Interest status

The council used part of the Covid Winter Grant scheme to fund supermarket vouchers over Christmas, February half term and summer holidays to help stop vulnerable children, young people and families going hungry

Luton Council awarded a grant of more than £500,000 from the government's National Leisure Recovery Fund (NLRF) to support the re-opening of its leisure centres

Luton Council worked with its partners to **ensure that no one slept rough on the streets of Luton over Christmas**

Luton Council one of many partners joined the **Bedfordshire Against Violence and Exploitation (BAVEX)** campaign

University of Bedfordshire launched the Premium Progression Partnership (PPP) scheme providing impartial advice and guidance for pupils considering higher education

Hat Works opened in the Hat District as part of the heritage regeneration project led by Culture Trust, Luton

Putteridge High School's new £23 million building completed

Construction work commenced on the £25 million redevelopment of Barnfield College in the New Bedford Road which will provide a new standard coding and digital zone

Achievements from the last six months

May 2021

Children's Art Project



Five Luton nursery and primary schools participated in the Talking Takes Off project. Children were asked to think about 'the places they would like to visit, and things they would like to do when the pandemic is over'. Luton's Aaron Spendelow, founder of A Children's Story, led the workshops.

Five artists Tom Guilmar, Roo, Alex Edwards Agg, Jenny Cox and Luton's Lauren Connolly worked with the children to transform their ideas and drawings into high quality designs onto five star-shaped benches that appeared in Luton's parks and playgrounds during the summer.

The project was developed and commissioned by Luton Council's Talking Takes Off team in collaboration with the Early Years Alliance, Flying Start and Luton 2040. It was funded by the Early Outcomes fund, received from the Department for Education.

Supporting the homeless

The Big Change Luton campaign demonstrated its success so far. The campaign has enabled a number of individuals build a life away from the streets.



The initiative launched at the end of 2019 provides alternative methods of giving, asking Lutonian's to donate spare time, items or money to help people experiencing homelessness build a life away from the street.

There have been a number of success stories including:

- An individual with a long history of domestic violence, exploitation, and significant health issues securing permanent council accommodation. Money from the Big Change through Keystage Housing enabled her to buy a bed, fridge-freezer and cooker.
- An applicant using services provided by Noah Enterprise was given money to purchase a mobile phone enabling him to open an online bank account and access and apply for jobs.
- Signposts and Penrose assisted clients with mobile phones, furniture or deposit money to secure accommodation.
- Declan was street homeless living in a tent for eight years until offered a flat by Signposts who also helped furnish it.

The alternative giving campaign is managed by the Luton Homeless Partnership.

Encouraging return to physical activities

Luton Council, team BEDS&LUTON and Active Luton launched the campaign - 'Luton Let's Get Active' to help residents to become more active as restrictions were slowly lifted.

There had been a significant reduction in sport and physical activity during the Covid pandemic locally with national lockdowns leisure facilities were closed impacting on the health and wellbeing of our population.

The Let's Get Active campaign encouraged children and adults of all ages and abilities to get fit and offer reassurance that sports and physical activities could be conducted safely, especially when undertaken outdoors.

An on-line database of physical activities and sessions taking place was developed to help residents get started.

As part of the Luton Let's Get Active campaign monthly challenges were set to help keep residents motivated.



Council takes steps towards its carbon neutral ambitions



The council announced it was switching its entire 300 vehicle fleet from using diesel to Gas To Liquid (GTL) as part of its pledge to improve air quality and their wider green environment policy.

Benefits include:

- GTL being more environmentally friendly than diesel producing lower levels of emissions such as carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide
- the ability to be used in existing diesel engines
- reduced noise levels
- no additional maintenance
- free from metals, sulphurs and aromatics as it uses natural gases as opposed to crude oil
- better safety and handling

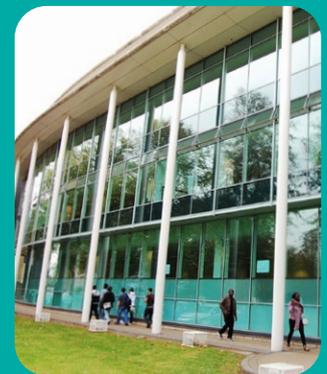
#GettingResults campaign

The University of Bedfordshire joined the Universities UK national campaign #GettingResults highlighting the key role universities played in the social and economic recovery from Covid and driving the UK's future growth.

During the pandemic the University of Bedfordshire worked with over 1,000 regional businesses, charities and other organisations to adapt, refocus and modernise so that they could still be successful.

The university and its partners are working with employers to create thousands of local jobs and help drive innovation within local businesses. Every £1 spent on Research and Development at the University of Bedfordshire has led to £6.50 in regional growth.

The University of Bedfordshire is one of the top 10 performing Universities in the country for graduate start-ups and the provision of on-the-job CPD and skills to business.



Energise Luton Invites Applications

Energise Luton Holiday Camps were launched by Active Luton and applications for funding invited from schools, creative and arts groups, community groups and sports clubs to run summer holiday camps.

The Department for Education's Holiday Activity and Food programme made the award to Luton to fund a comprehensive range of fun and enriching summer activities, including enjoying a healthy meal together, for children on income-related free school meals.



Housing scheme success for long-term homeless

The Housing First scheme, led by NOAH Enterprise (funded by Luton Council), published a Headline Report revealing 15 long-term homeless people in Luton have been found homes.

Housing First is a housing and support approach which gives people who have experienced homelessness and chronic health and social care needs, a stable home from which to rebuild their lives. It provides intensive, person-centred, and holistic wrap-around support that is open ended.

The report also showed that there was a reduction in clients' criminal activity which means that their impact on public service funds has been reduced. It also found that most clients are now living much less chaotic lives.



New skills facilities

Barnfield College announced plans for a new standard coding and digital zone in their new state-of-the-art building at their New Bedford Road campus.

The new four storey coding and digital centre will include a new gaming studio.

Coding literacy is highly valued among many employers. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of local employers and enable students to move into professions including data analysis and design, digital marketing, cyber security and customer relationship management.

SEMLEP provided £4.75 million of funding to support the development of the new coding and digital zone via its Getting Building Fund.

Welcome Back to Group Fitness

Active Luton's extensive group fitness programme resumed after lockdown welcoming customers back to its centres across the town with nearly 200 classes per week.



New Long Covid Support

Total Wellbeing Luton's Healthy Lifestyles team welcomed customers with long term conditions back to its specialist exercise and rehabilitation programmes, including a new programme for people with long Covid.

June 2021

Encouraging a healthy environment

New signage and floor art was installed at The Mall entrances as part of a town-wide campaign to support people to give up smoking and reduce the harm caused by second-hand smoke.

The joint initiative between The Mall, Luton Council and Total Wellbeing Luton saw artwork placed at entrances to encourage people not to smoke in those busy areas and signposts to support they could access.

A key driver for the initiative was people getting exposed to second-hand smoke as they entered the building, no matter how careful the person smoking was.



Supporting Luton's Health and Wellbeing

Active Luton published its Impact Report for 2020-21. After supporting many different groups through the pandemic, the report finished on a note of hope and optimism with the award of £500,000 from the government's National Leisure Recovery Fund to help to get people in Luton more physically active during the year ahead.



Supporting the airport's economic recovery

Luton Council's Executive members agreed investment totalling £119 million, plus a contingency of £20 million to help stabilise the airport company following the coronavirus pandemic, as well as providing additional capital investment.

A portion of the £119 million investment in LLAL (London Luton Airport Ltd) was to provide additional funding for the major national infrastructure project, the Luton DART, a key element in the airport becoming the UK's greenest airport.

The total package of loans from the council to LLAL totalled £507 million comprising the major investments in Luton DART and other capital projects, as well as the stabilisation packages in response to the pandemic which totalled £124 million.



Windrush Day celebrations

The fourth national Windrush Day was celebrated in Luton.

A short event was organised by the African Caribbean Community Development Forum (ACCDF) to mark the Windrush Generation's massive contributions to Luton. As part of these celebrations the Windrush flag was raised over the Town Hall. The day commemorates the arrival of the SS Empire Windrush in this country with the first Caribbean migrants on board who helped re-build Britain after the ravages of the Second World War.

The UK Centre for Carnival Arts (UKCCA) helped decorate the Town Hall balcony with masks and costumes, there was a Windrush launch event at Wardown House Museum and Gallery and the UKCCA installed Windrush costumes in their Church Street windows near the market entrance of the Mall.

July 2021

Community memorial



The council launched the community memorial 'Our River' a new photomosaic public art which will be situated on the Mall wall facing a new park soon to be developed on Silver Street as part of the Town Centre Masterplan.

The photomosaic will include 1,000 images of Luton residents, commemorating those lost to Covid, celebrating the key workers who provided support and moments of joy that helped us get through the pandemic. Residents were invited to submit photographs and stories to be included in the memorial being curated by The People's Picture. The photographs and stories submitted are also to be included as digital artwork piece.

'Our River' is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund's Welcome Back Fund.

'Reimagined' town centre



Luton's Town Centre Masterplan, 'Creating a vision – delivering a change' was given the go ahead.

Working with communities, businesses, Luton BID, planners, developers and investors, the town centre will become an area which is cleaner and greener with more open space and a safe

place where families, and friends come to meet, eat, drink and socialise.

New developments and investment in the town centre will also see jobs and opportunities.

New strategies, investment and initiatives with partners such as the police will make the streets cleaner and people feel safer.

New affordable activities for friends, families and children will be introduced.

Short term improvements will see the further opening up of the River Lea and large events returning.

Support for vulnerable children over the summer holidays

Luton Council pledged to support vulnerable children and young people to ensure no child went hungry during the summer holidays.

Children receiving free school meals and those from low income families received a total of £60 vouchers per child funded by the government's Covid Local Support Grant (formerly the Covid Winter Support Grant) for the school holidays.

Parents and carers of eligible children could choose their preferred retailer from a selection of supermarkets including: Aldi, M&S, McColl's, Morrison, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose.

In addition to the food vouchers, children aged five to 16 years on benefits-related free school meals were also eligible for a free place on the Energise Luton Holiday Camps giving children the opportunity to participate in a range of fun and active summer holiday experiences across Luton as well as a healthy meal.



Luton council receives funding to decarbonise public sector buildings

The council secured £7.74 million from the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS).

The scheme, introduced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, launched in autumn 2020, offers grants for capital energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation projects for non-domestic buildings.

The grant will help the council in its commitment to ensure all council-owned and occupied buildings will be carbon neutral by 2040. The funds will be used towards decarbonisation of heating by replacing gas heating with heat pumps and general carbon reduction such as lighting and heating controls. Around 20 schools and community centres will benefit. A grant was also been approved for some of the council's corporate sites.



New employment hub for local young people

Luton Adult Learning received funding from the Department for Work and Pensions to create a one-stop-shop providing support to unemployed 18 to 24 year olds living in Luton.

Luton's new Youth Hub aims to help 350 young, unemployed adults. The council will act as the project's lead body with NOAH Enterprise and TOKKO as delivery partners with other organisations involved throughout the project. This project is funded for 12 months supporting Job Centre Plus (JCP) claimants.

The Youth Hub will support young people develop skills, be more effective and successful looking for work and securing employment in the future. There will also be opportunities to help them break down barriers that might prevent them from accessing work and to take part in other enrichment activities.

They will also be able to access the Government's Kickstart scheme.

The scheme launched in August.

New town centre green space

The council secured significant funding to open up part of the River Lea and add new green space.

The opening up of the river, in the former Silver Street car park, will create an attractive area for people to enjoy. It will also help reduce potential flooding risk and work towards developing a natural chalk stream.

The project will provide more open space for people living in the town centre. It also supports the council's carbon neutral objectives providing more planting helping the green environment and improve air quality.

The project costs around £1.9 million, with European Regional Development Fund funding £908,000 capital and £49,000 revenue and the council is matching within its capital programme and revenue budgets.



Plans to improve housing

The council began a consultation to seek the views of residents to improve housing conditions in Luton.

Luton Council is committed to improving the range and quality of private rented accommodation in the town. They are proposing to introduce licensing of all houses in multiple occupation across the town and all privately rented properties within South Ward.

A house in multiple occupation (HMO) is a property rented out by at least three people who are not from the same 'household' but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen.

The council sought the views about the proposals and any alternatives for consideration.

Licenses granted under a Licensing Scheme would usually run for a five year period and the schemes would be reviewed five years from introduction.



August 2021

New plans for Luton Town Centre

Luton Council were awarded £264,000 as part of the Welcome Back Fund, provided by the European Regional Development Fund that could be used to help keep high streets and town centres alive and vibrant.

Working with partners such as the Luton BID and The Mall, projects include:

- the installation of a City Tree and a Living Wall on Market Hill
- additional street cleansing and days of community action
- creating a range of events to liven up the town centre
- power washing heritage buildings
- the creation of high quality display hoarding celebrating the art deco and social history of the town centre's key assets
- public art including the Covid memorial wall art piece
- Buy Local, 'support your high street' campaign
- a campaign aimed at businesses to raise awareness of cleansing and sanitising standards and promoting the use of sustainable products and services

#10MinutesOfCommunity



The council launched the #10MinutesOfCommunity, encouraging citizens to dedicate 10 minutes of their time to help improve the appearance of their neighbourhood.

People were encouraged to do anything from picking up a piece of litter on the school run, weeding outside their house or tidying up an overgrown plant.

Participants were asked to take a 'before and after' picture posting them on social media using the #10MinutesOfCommunity hashtag, saying where the change was made.

Energising Luton's Children and Young People

Energise Luton Holiday Camps take off across the town offering 25,500 spaces during August for children on income-related free school meals at a wide variety of great fun camps.

Wild World Heroes Help Reading

This summer's Wild World Heroes Summer Reading Challenge, run by Luton Libraries, was a huge success with events taking place online, in schools and in the libraries, supporting Luton's children to embrace a love of reading after so much home and online learning.

Feel good while doing good

GoodGym was launched in Luton becoming the 59th area nationwide to participate in the scheme.

The launch event started at St George's Square where everyone involved made their way at their own pace to the Penrose 'Roots to Recovery' allotment.

The scheme combines benefitting the community with improving your health.

The idea is to walk, run or cycle around the community to stay fit, but stop off to help people on the way by doing physical tasks, such as clearing gardens or visiting older people who may be lonely or isolated.

The scheme is funded for a three-year period.



September 2021

New Heritage Strategy launched



Luton's Heritage Strategy was launched following public consultation and stakeholder engagement.

Curating Luton - Heritage Strategy 2021-2031, co-created and funded by National Lottery Heritage Funding, sets out an ambition for Luton to transform lives through heritage.

The new strategy will help preserve and protect the town's most valued heritage assets, reflecting the town's diversity and enable skills and opportunities to be developed especially for young people.

A programme of free events took place throughout September as part of the national Heritage Open Day Programme and to coincide with the strategy launch showcased the town's rich history.

New secondary special school

Windmill Hill School opened for secondary aged children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). The new 120 place special free school supports the increase in need for secondary school places for children and young people with SEND complementing the outstanding provision already in place.

Work to renovate and ensure the school building meets the needs of children with a range of learning needs and disabilities was undertaken by Neville Special Projects Ltd. Building work was undertaken to ensure the school is fully accessible and provides specialist rooms such as a sensory studio and physiotherapy room, fully accessible toilets, family room, and in planning for the future, ensuring the sixth form area is accessible and suitable for young adults with learning difficulties.



Luton named Arts Council England priority area

Arts Council England (ACE) announced Luton had been chosen as one of 54 priority places. Priority areas will be focused on as part of the publication of ACEs three-year Delivery Plan for 2021-2024.

The Delivery Plan sets out a detailed roadmap to implement the vision of their strategy Let's Create: by 2030 England will be a country in which the creativity of each individual is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where everyone has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences.

The Arts Council will work with local partners, such as University of Bedfordshire, Luton Council, Luton Culture Trust and a range of other local partners, to help develop the local cultural offer, creating opportunities for everyone to experience and participate in cultural activities.

Funding to help people get back into work

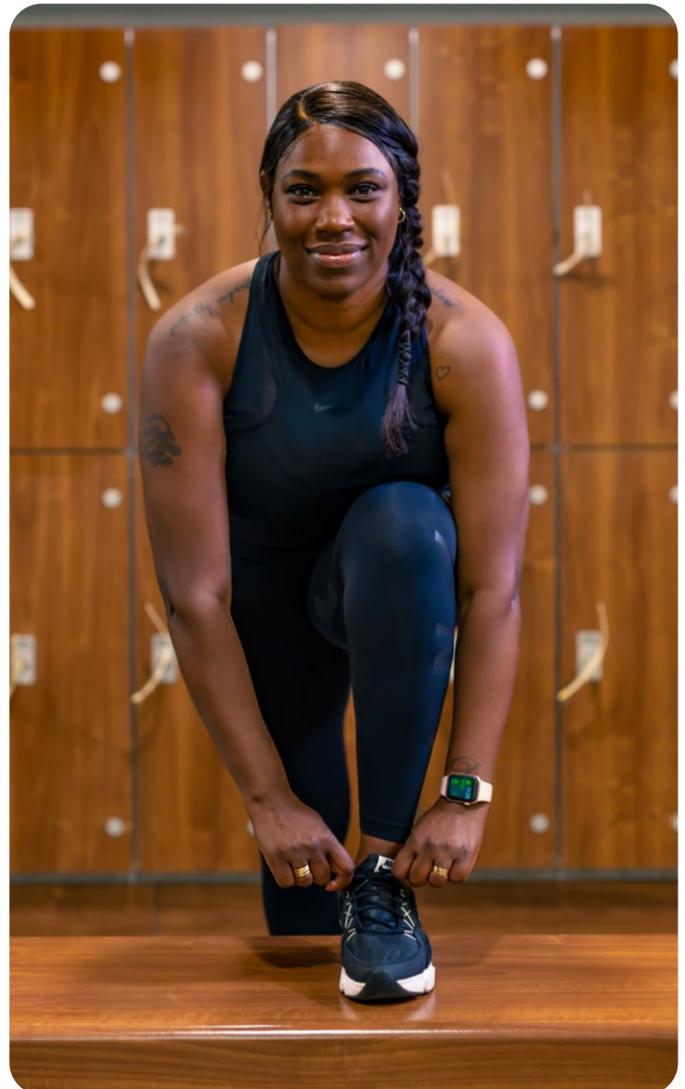
SEMLEP opened their Community Grants programme for applications providing between £10,000 to £20,000 to projects that help people to develop confidence, self-esteem, enhance employability skills and transferable life skills.

To find out more about the programme, eligibility and the application process, visit SEMLEP community grants.



Healthy living

September's promotion 'We're Getting Active, How About You?' from Active Luton featured real-life customers on Sky TV, buses and roadside posters, demonstrating the health and wellbeing benefits of staying active whatever your age or ability.



Help to stay fit on low incomes

Active Luton's concession Go4Less Advantage Card for people on low incomes is being offered free of the usual card and gym induction cost to make sure that physical activity is accessible to everyone. With a Go4Less Advantage card, swimming, gym or group fitness is just £2/session (subject to time restrictions).

Young people's think tank event

A 'Young Persons Think Tank' event was held to give young people a chance to talk about their concerns on the environment. It gave young people a chance to talk directly to local politicians and get their voice heard. This was a great opportunity to engage with councillors and key officers on this subject and discuss what changes are most important for young people and what support is needed for changes in the family.

Hat Factory Autumn Programme

The autumn programme at the Hat Factory Arts Centre is filled with a wide selection of cultural and creative activities to support peoples' wellbeing after a difficult past 18 months.

These include: Art Therapy sessions led by a qualified art psychotherapist devised to calm the mind and create space for new ways of thinking; Drink & Draw – a monthly event for over 18's interested in learning or practicing drawing skills while having a glass of whatever you like; plus our regular theatre, comedy and music events scheduled every month.



New vocational centre for Luton school

A bricklaying ceremony at Stockwood Park Academy marked the start of building a new centre to be known as the Phoenix Centre for studying vocational skills. The centre will provide facilities for studying courses in horticulture, construction and health.

Luton crowned top UK city for start ups

UK tech news reported that Luton had been listed by Fasthosts as the top UK destination for start-ups after considering factors such as regional metrics, survival rates and cost of office space. Early-stage start-ups were seen to have the best production rates, office prices and business survival rates among other cities. Luton was also considered to be the best-all round UK location for aspirational entrepreneurs. Tech start-ups include AiSolve, Chargemaster, OAG and more.

October

Lewsey Pool re-opened

Funding from the Sport England Community Asset Fund enabled extensive repairs and refurbishment of the reception and changing rooms of Lewsey Pool which welcomed customers back. Children on school swimming were the first to enjoy getting back in the water, closely followed by swimming lessons and a public swimming timetable with the full range of sessions from lane swimming to family swims.



Beds and Luton Community Foundation celebrate 20 years

Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation (BLCF) the leading local grant maker in the county is establishing a national reputation for an innovative, community-focussed and strategic approach. 2021 marked their 20th anniversary and in that time, the Foundation has given out over £15 million through over 2,324 grants to charities, people and volunteer led organisations across the whole of Bedfordshire.

In Luton, over the last three years, they have awarded £7,923,463 across 295 grants to 144 organisations benefiting 556,724 people. Of this £330,000 was awarded in emergency support during the Covid pandemic. An extraordinary achievement for their small dedicated and agile team.

To find out more about their grants programme visit www.BLCF.org.uk and sign up to receive their newsletter.

Black History Month celebrated

Black History month celebrations commenced with a two hour event at the town hall at which Ghana's Deputy Ambassador to the UK, Her Excellency Rita Tani Iddi was the key note speaker.

Events throughout the month included the annual Kente festival, Dressed to the nines, nominations for the Hall of Fame were made, events at Wardown House including the Sugar and Spice Exhibition by Nine Red Presents as well as a Mobile Black History Museum in The Mall.

The theme this year has been "Proud to be me" recognising the vast contributions and achievements of African and Caribbean people who have made enormous sacrifices over the years, as leaders, businesses, artists and educators, and in so doing contributed towards making Luton the diverse town it is today.

Looking ahead to the next six months

Launch of Good Business Charter



Progression of Luton DART to be opened in 2022



Completion of the Creative Leaders Programme with work to secure funds for a second cohort



Decisions to be made on updated schemes for Power Court and Newlands Park



Our River to be formally unveiled on 23rd March 2022



Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation (BLCF) in partnership with Luton Council will launch the Community Recovery fund and Luton Citizens Fund details to be found at www.blcf.org.uk



Return of large scale events and the rollout of the new events framework and programme for 2022



In the autumn 2021 budget Luton has been awarded £20 million from the Levelling Up Fund which will enable the commencement of the regeneration of the Bute Street car park site



Establishment of Luton's Fairness Task Force



Launch of the child friendly town road map



Town Centre Masterplan to be realised



First partners to sign up to the Luton 2040 pledge



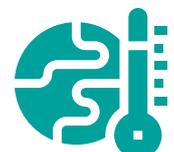
Work to begin on the Open Lea Project



ARG business support package to begin October 2021 to March 2022



Publication of the climate change road map





Levelling

UJP

Luton

#levellingupluton

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