

Luton 2040
A place to thrive

Luton 2040 Vision review

October 2021 to April 2022



www.luton.gov.uk/Luton2040

The second year of our journey to Luton 2040

It has been a truly incredible six months as we continue on our journey towards Luton 2040.

At the end of last year we held our first Annual Luton 2040 Conference, where we recognised the enormous effort of everyone in our town in delivering a strong recovery from the pandemic.

I am delighted to say that the past six months have seen us moving forward positively, with a clear focus on our shared mission to build a healthy, fair and sustainable town where everyone can thrive.

I believe that the rapid progress we are now delivering in Luton is driven by three things. First, we have set ourselves a clear vision which not only meets the government's levelling up agenda, but goes further, raising the level of ambition for our town above that of almost anywhere else in the country. Our vision sets a clear blueprint for how we can level up Luton and we are building stronger links with central government every day to meet our shared goals.

Second, our approach to working in partnership across the Luton system is already delivering massive transformation that will change the lives of our residents today and for years to come.

Together we are building a more inclusive economy that can benefit all of our residents and businesses. Over the past six months we have kick-started employment and skills opportunities with a new strategy, as well as new skills based courses at the University of Bedfordshire and jobs fairs by partners.

We have also started the first phase of transforming our town centre, with work commencing on the new pocket park, the opening-up of the River Lea and the launch of Our River, as well as the return of many events and festivals.

We have also seen lots of excellent work to improve wellbeing of residents including young people over recent months, with the launch of our thriving communities programme as well as schemes to get people active through discounted gym memberships, swimming lessons, and places at Energise Luton holiday camps for over 2,000 children. We have seen new and improved facilities such as the opening of the refurbished Lewsey Pool and a new boxing facility, while six of our amazing parks have again retained green flag status.

Thirdly, as a result of our partnership working locally and our collective engagement with national government, we are beginning to generate greater funding and investment into Luton once again. Over the last six months we have brought in over £20 million of Levelling Up Funding, as well as additional money from government and European Regional Development Funding to accelerate the transformation of our town centre. We have also obtained more than £7.5 million for the decarbonisation of public buildings to help



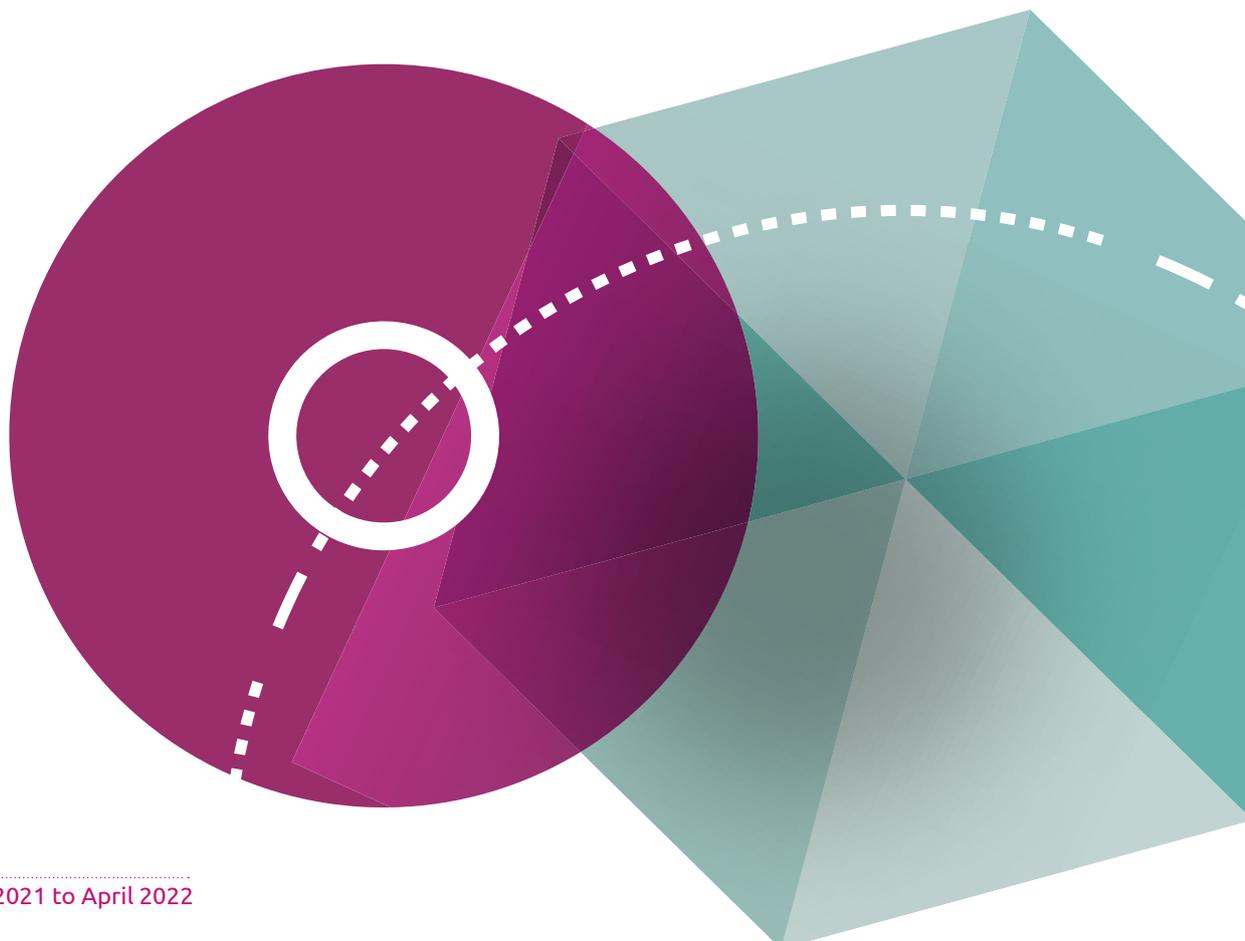
meet our net-zero ambition, as well as over £3.7 million from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to support hospital discharge and population data project, more than £3 million from South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) for the development of Morton House and £1.8 million from the Department for Work and Pensions to support our poorest households through the cost of living crisis.

This is just a small selection of the many achievements we have made together in the last six months and this review provides another great opportunity for us to reflect on all of the work we have been doing deliver our vision for Luton 2040.

Over the next six months we know that there are many more exciting developments, including: the next steps in our town centre transformation; Luton becoming a Marmot Town; the launch of our Net Zero Roadmap; the Good Business Charter; the opening of the Luton DART; and the return of more events to our town.

I am really grateful to everyone who has contributed towards making Luton a place to thrive over the last six months and I am really excited to be working with you all as we move forward together towards Luton 2040.

Cllr Hazel Simmons MBE
Leader of Luton Council



Highlights from the last six months

Delivered first Annual Luton 2040 conference



Five organisations pledged their commitment to Luton 2040



The council successfully secured £38.55 million of funding between October 2021 and April 2022



Two Task Force Citizen Forums held



75 projects funded and delivering outcomes from the Luton Citizen Fund



Adult Social Care Strategy completed



Five care leavers appointed to apprenticeships within Luton Council



Town Centre Strategic Board created



Equality Diversity Inclusion (EDI) Board established



Achievements from the last six months

October 2021

Business support

A grant and support programme designed to help Luton businesses impacted by the pandemic was launched with the council's allocation of Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) funding.

Luton Citizen's Fund

Groups and organisations from the town were able to apply for an award of up to £3,500 from part of the £360,000 Luton Citizen's fund.

The fund provides support to smaller, local grassroots Voluntary and Community sector (VCS) organisations and projects positively involving a more diverse range of local citizens in local decision making.

Funding boost to Luton Town Centre

The council was awarded £20 million from the Levelling Up Fund by the government for The Stage, a major multi-purpose development which will regenerate the Bute Street car park site. This will provide 372 new homes, 7,000 sqm of high quality work space, 2,000 sqm of community space, a new cycle hub and improved public realm.

This submission was made following consultation with key stakeholders.

Lewsey Pool welcomes children back first

After the long break due to Covid, followed by essential repair and refurbishment works, Active Luton re-opened Lewsey Pool to welcome local children back to swimming lessons.

Thriving Communities Luton launched

Thriving Communities Luton, a new series of arts, culture, health and wellbeing, physical and outdoor activities in Luton Libraries, parks and other community locations launched free sessions as part of Total Wellbeing Luton's Social Prescribing programme.

Funding was secured from the National Academy for Social Prescribing, Arts Council England, Historic England, Money and Pensions Service, NHS Charities Together and Sport England.



New boxing area at Lewsey Sports Park

Active Luton invested in a fantastic new boxing training area to enhance the modern facilities at Lewsey Sports Park available to local people on a pay as you go basis or included in the dual centre membership with Lea Manor Recreation Centre.



November 2021

Luton retains Green Flag status

Six parks in Luton successfully retained their Green Flag status once again being recognised for having excellent facilities, being well managed and maintained, having high standards of safety and for engaging the local community.



Luton's Fairness Task Force launched

The Fairness Task Force, a citizen's forum was launched with 120 people attending the first forum meeting to work towards the aim of the town being built on fairness.

Partnerships for People and Place funding

The council secured an initial £50,000 of funding from the government scheme Partnerships for People and Place funding (PfPP), to support 'levelling up'. The funding was used to focus on measures promoting a strong economic recovery and protect the town's most disadvantaged from the worst impacts of the Covid pandemic.

Tokko funding

TOKKO Youth Space received £480,356 from The National Lottery Community Fund to help meet core costs in supporting vulnerable youth.

London Luton Airport Job Fair

London Luton Airport job fair at Percival House was attended by 600 people, where jobs from more than 20 different companies were being exhibited including Wizzair, easyJet, and UK Border Force.

The event was held in partnership with Luton Council and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

Decarbonisation of heating funding

The council received £7.74 million from the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) to help with decarbonising heating in council owned and occupied buildings.



Morton House – a new Luton development

'K Block' a former Vauxhall building in Kimpton Road acquired by Luton Rising underwent an £8.6 million redevelopment and was re-named 'Morton House' in memory of Luton Town Football club legend Bob Morton. The building, due to open in summer 2022, includes a new skills, innovation and business hub, café, flexible open plan office spaces, state-of-the-art IT and communications systems as well as a number of environmentally friendly features.

This was supported by a £3 million grant from SEMLEP's Local Growth Fund.



Urban tree installed in Luton town centre



An urban tree was installed at Market Hill to help tackle air quality in the town. The 'tree' uses a sustainable biotech fine dust filter with natural moss modules to remove pollutants in the immediate area, improving the quality of air around the tree by 53%.

The project was funded as part of the Welcome back Fund*.

First Luton 2040 Annual Conference held

The hugely successful first Luton 2040 annual conference was held delivering the Luton 2040 message to a mixed audience of partners, businesses and residents on the Luton 2040 ambitions and how they need to be achieved through partnerships and cooperation. The audience heard from council colleagues as well as nationally-recognised leaders in the fields including health equity, academia, private enterprise and clinical care.



Luton fireworks

Luton's annual firework spectacular returned to Popes Meadow. It was well attended bringing diverse communities together to enjoy the stunning display.

The event was sponsored by Luton Rising.



Carbon accreditation for London Luton Airport

London Luton Airport was awarded Level 3 of the Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) scheme.

The airport joined the scheme at the end of 2019 progressing to Level three in just 18 months, following collaboration with key stakeholders.

Overall, the airport reduced direct carbon emissions by over 30%, despite a 23% increase in passenger numbers between 2016 and 2019.



Lewsey Pool fully open for all

Active Luton's staggered re-opening of Lewsey Pool was completed with a full timetable of lane, leisure and family sessions to get everyone back enjoying the benefits of swimming in their beloved local pool.



December 2021

Library service consultation

Luton Council launched a consultation on the library service to find out what local communities would like from the service, with the aim of creating a modern, sustainable and better library service that will meet the needs of people who live, work, study and visit the town.

Contractor appointed for project to open up River Lea

The council announced Ryebridge, a Luton-based construction company, had been appointed to carry out the work to open up the River Lea and create a small park in the town centre.

This will be a key part in rejuvenating the area revealing the river on the corner of Bute Street and Silver Street.

The project was only possible with funding of £958,201 from the European Regional Development Fund.



Employment and Skills Strategy consultation launched

Luton Council launched a consultation on its Employment and Skills Strategy to ensure it reflects local opportunities and challenges when formally launched in 2022. Businesses, community groups and members of the public were encouraged to shape its focus and content.

Power Court development

A revised first phase of the proposed Power Court development made up of around 1,200 flats, ground floor retail and new public realm together with opening up of the culverted River Lea was approved.

University retained its top ten spot for sustainability

The University of Bedfordshire received a first class award in the 2021 People and Planet University League, retaining its position of eighth out of 154 institutions.

Bedfordshire scored 75.2% overall, meaning the institution proved to have kept its sustainability performance consistently high.

Change of ownership of land at Newlands Park

2020 Developments, Morgan Stanley Real Estate Investing and Wrenbridge announced the sale of land at Newlands Park at Junction 10 of the M1 had been agreed.

This goes a considerable way towards securing funding for the new football stadium at Power Court.

January 2022

Energise Luton

A government-funded holiday activity and food programme, Energise Luton, ran its first Christmas holiday programme offering spaces to local children on income-related free school meals. Over 2,000 children enjoyed activities including free rides and lunch at the annual Winter Fair in St George's Square, plus school and other community-based camps alongside activities at Active Luton centres.



Vegan Food Festival

The Vegan Food Festival took place over two days in the town centre. This was the first of three Luton Street Fests held by Luton Council.

Working with Culture Trust Luton, local restaurants, traders and creatives, the Hat District area was brought to life.

This event was supported as part of the Welcome back Fund*.

Addressing high blood pressure in Luton

Active Luton worked in partnership with the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Commissioning Group (BLMK CCG) to support the local community in identifying, monitoring and addressing high blood pressure. Trial SISU Health stations were located at Inspire: Luton Sports Village (in reception) and Luton Central Library (on the first floor) for local people to monitor their blood pressure and get access to immediate support.



Cleaner, greener taxi rank at London Luton Airport

The owner and the operator of London Luton Airport opened a new environmentally-friendly taxi rank. Initially 40 drivers attached to the Luton Hackney Carriage Association obtained permits.

Nine of the new taxis being fully electric and the rest meet the latest carbon-efficient Euro 6 standards.



Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy consultation

Luton Council launched a consultation on their new Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy relating to how grants and loans are provided to help vulnerable people adapt and improve their homes.

The consultation ran until March 2022.

National Leisure Relief Fund gets people in Luton active

Active Luton offered new joiners 30% off its most popular memberships every month from January through to April as a result of funding from the government's National Leisure Relief Fund. Record numbers of new joiners took advantage of the offer to be more active again after the restrictions and closures of the past two years.

Free Go4Less Advantage Cards

Active Luton made sure people on low incomes could enjoy an opportunity to get active again in its centres with a continued suspension of the Go4Less Advantage card and gym induction fee for people on low incomes, enabling these customers to enjoy gym, swimming and group fitness for only £2 per session straight away.

New skills based courses at university

The University of Bedfordshire was successful in applying for £500,000 of government funding to launch 12 courses of the new Higher Technical Qualification courses plugging skill gaps and providing an alternative to the standard three year degree.

Consultation on proposals to expand London Luton Airport

Luton Rising, the owner of London Luton Airport opened a statutory consultation on its long-term proposals to expand London Luton Airport to

February 2022

increase the capacity of the airport to 32 million passengers per year, by building a new terminal and making the best use of the existing runway.

Chinese New Year Street Fest

Luton Council held the second of its Luton Street Fest events celebrating the Chinese New Year.

This event was supported as part of the Welcome back Fund*.



Special community events 2022 award fund launched

To celebrate the return to a full events programme in Luton, Luton Council and Luton Rising launched a new grant which local residents and organisations could apply for to run their own local neighbourhood activity.

Thirteen groups from across Luton successfully bid for part of the £100,000 fund and have received funding to carry out a variety of activities.

Luton businesses provided with support through council grant scheme

Further government funding enabled a new discretionary grant to be opened for businesses severely impacted by restrictions due to the pandemic, or by the Omicron variant but did not qualify for the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant. The scheme was aimed at supporting businesses with less than 250 employees, including those outside of the business rates system helping those that fell within specific sectors.

Free swimming lessons

During previous holiday programmes the Energise Luton Holiday Camp team identified there were a number of children who were unable to swim. To provide the chance to experience swimming the team worked with schools to identify families whose children would benefit. Active Luton invited children from families in receipt of free school meals which resulted in 61 children enjoying free swimming lessons during the February half term.



March 2022

Funding secured by council

It was confirmed that Luton Council had secured funding that would result in benefiting Luton's citizens including:

- £3.7 million secured from the local Clinical Commissioning Group including £3.2 million to boost the 'hospital discharge' programme supporting residents returning home from hospital and £500,000 for the 'population data' project
- £1.8 million from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) household support fund, to provide financial assistance to Luton's most vulnerable households as the cost of living crisis develops
- approximately £140,000 from the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities to help fund the council's emergency hub for Ukrainian refugees arriving in Luton
- £200,000 to establish the Luton Vaccine Community Fund (part of a larger grant of £485,000 grant from central government to encourage vaccination take-up)
- a further £198,000 was secured from the Partnerships for People and Place funding to work with central government and local partners to tackle the challenges around crime and anti-social behaviour and improve the town

Task Force Citizens' Forum

Following the launch of the Task Force Citizens' Forum in November, a further event was held at the University of Bedfordshire focusing on work, skills and employment aspirations.

Improving air quality by tackling engine idling

The council adopted powers to prevent engine idling with an aim to improve air quality in Luton allowing it to monitor and issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) where a motorist fails to switch off their engine when stationary.

The council also declared three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Luton.



Wellness Street Fest

Luton Council held its final Luton Street Fest in the town centre. The wellness weekend provided two days of wellness and self-care for the mind, body and soul and included a range of food stalls and demonstrations, arts and crafts, live performances, music and DJs and much more.

This event was supported as part of the Welcome back Fund*.



St Patrick's Day returns

Luton Irish Forum organised the St Patrick's Day programme after two years of these not being held due to the pandemic. Events included:

- the popular parade
- activities inside and outside The Mall
- after party at The Hat Factory Arts Centre with live bands and DJs
- Gaelic Football on St Joseph's playing fields

Heritage funding

The council announced it had been awarded £249,572 of funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund for a two year project which would:

- develop support for an ecosystem of community organisations delivering heritage activity across town
- development of a five year 'community – owned' Heritage Implementation Plan
- give opportunities for people to get involved including a new grant of up to £2,000 for individuals who can offer innovative ways to engage their communities with heritage
- enable Heritage Open Days to be expanded



Made possible with

**Heritage
Fund**

April 2022

Big Iftar returns to St George's Square

Inspire FM organised The Big Iftar, a celebratory event during the month of Ramadan, which returned to St George's Square with a communal sunset meal to break the daily fast.

Open Lea project and Our River

The ground breaking ceremony of the Open Lea project took place.

The pocket park situated on the former car park site on the corner of Bute Street and Silver Street will include a stepped terrace down to the newly opened up River Lea, new planting and trees.

'Our River', a piece of public artwork recently installed on the Mall wall faces the park honouring those lost to Covid, celebrating the hard work of people who kept Luton safe and reflecting some happy and momentous occasions during the pandemic.

The Our River project was funded from part of the Welcome back Fund*.

St George's Day returned to the town

St George's Day celebrations returned to the town with events being held in Market Hill and St George's Square.

Entertainment included dragon performances, Punch and Judy shows, a magician, music, street food stalls, workshops, arts and crafts, heritage walks and fair rides.

Luton BID funded the children's entertainment for the day and Luton Rising, the council's airport company, acted as principal sponsor.

Bandstand opening ceremony

A brand new series of music, arts and cinema events commenced at the Wardown Park Bandstand. Entertainment included performances from Luton Brass Band and Nathan Kabeya and Friends. DJs included K-Splash, New Attraction Sound and Jazzy Vibe.

Open air spectacular event

59 Productions delivered the 'About Us' free spectacular open-air event involving a 25-minute projection on the front of the Town Hall immersing audiences in an exhilarating journey through 13.8 billion years of history, from the dawn of the universe.

Multiple live shows took place each evening with live choir performances by B.I.G. Hat Factory Choir, members of Luton Choral Society and Musical Melodies Choir.



*The £264,000 Welcome back Fund received from the England European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020 was used for a number of events and projects in the town. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (and in London the intermediate body Greater London Authority) is the Managing Authority for European Regional Development Fund. Established by the European Union, the European Regional Development Fund helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community regenerations.

Looking ahead to the next six months

Luton International Carnival



Submission of bid for round two of the Levelling Up Fund



Luton Half Marathon and 10k



Delivery of Care Leaver Covenant



Luton Mela



Create a Children with Disabilities Resource Centre of Excellence



Lighting Up Luton



River Lea unculverted at Bute Street/Silver Street site and pocket park opened



The first Pride event in Luton 'Unmasking Luton's LGBTQ+ community'



Launch of the Good Business Charter



Detailed planning application submitted for the Power Court stadium development



Luton DART to be opened



89 housing units to be delivered in 2022/23



Becoming a Marmot town



Luton 2040 vision review and refresh



Launch Equality Diversity Inclusion (EDI) Strategy





Levelling

UJP

Luton

#levellingupluton

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