

# Planning and Transportation

## *Local Authority Monitoring Report*

December 2012



## **LUTON AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT 2012**

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# 1 . Introduction

**1.1** This Authority Monitoring Report describes activities relating to planning within Luton between 1 April 2011 to 30 March 2012. This monitoring year represents the last year of formal joint planning work between Luton and Central Bedfordshire. On 31 March 2012 the Luton and Central Bedfordshire Joint Committee ceased to exist as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for the Luton and Central Bedfordshire areas. Full planning powers returned to each of the authorities.

**1.2** For the purpose of fulfilling the requirement to monitor the activities of the final year of the Joint Committee this AMR should be read in conjunction with Central Bedfordshire's 2012 Authority Monitoring Report. The two in this respect form the AMR for the former Joint Committee area.

## **Purpose of this Authority Monitoring Report**

**1.3** This AMR will bridge the transition period between the Luton Local Plan 2001-2011 and the Luton Local Plan 2011-2031 by focusing on the matters which continue to be of concern and importance to the people of Luton. The priorities are those outlined within the [Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026<sup>\(1\)</sup>](#) and enforced within the current [Corporate Plan for Luton](#). Since this document was written however the annual grant given to Luton by Government has been significantly reduced. How the Council will focus on achieving outcomes against this background is explained in the [Luton Borough Council Prospectus 2013 - 2016](#).



## 2 . Plan Progress

### Luton Local Plan 2011 - 2031

**2.1** The new local plan for Luton is currently undergoing a second round of evidence gathering. This followed a consultation exercise which ran from June to August 2012 (the "notification" stage). This was undertaken in order to establish the content of the Plan.

**2.2** As indicated in the timetable for the Local Plan published within the [Local Development Scheme](#) (LDS, Figure 1), it is proposed that consultation on a published local plan would start in March of 2013. Later stages are detailed within the LDS; it is currently expected that the Plan will be adopted in June of 2014.

### Neighbourhood development orders and plans

**2.3** No neighbourhood development plans or orders have been made during 2011 - 12.

### Duty to co-operate

**2.4** Luton Borough Council has been maintaining a dialogue with neighbours Central Bedfordshire and North Hertfordshire since the end of formal joint working in March 2012. Luton has followed the emerging local plans for these areas with interest. As evidence studies have neared completion Luton has advised our neighbours of issues that will concern them under the duty to co-operate. In late November we wrote to North Hertfordshire and requested a more formal process of working together, particularly with regards to housing needs. In early December 2012 we wrote to Central Bedfordshire Council, again with concern expressed over the level of housing need in Luton against our ability to deliver within the Town. A number of other significant concerns have been raised by Central Bedfordshire's emerging development strategy. High levels of in-commuting from both North Herts and Central Beds for employment purposes remains a significant cross-border issue. Evidence studies undertaken as part of our own local plan process have further highlighted the important role that Luton plays in delivering higher order jobs to the sub-regional economy than those provided in the surrounding area. The studies also illustrate that we will need to protect our employment land due to both the projected jobs requirement within the Town and in order to maintain the critical role we play in the wider sub-regional economy.

**2.5** Luton believes that the urban extensions proposed next to Luton in Central Bedfordshire's area are now being put forward in a manner contrary to their original justification and that there is no longer a commitment by Central Bedfordshire Council to ensure that the needs of the conurbation as a whole are being fully reflected in their development strategy. This is primarily because the emerging proposals in relation to the urban extensions to the north of Luton no longer demonstrate the exceptional circumstances required to justify the removal of the Green Belt designation in order to address the wider housing needs of the conurbation - particularly in relation to the needs of Luton.

**2.6** Luton have already responded positively to an invitation from Nick Bowles, the Planning Minister to meet with officials from DCLG to discuss progress on our local plan and any issues and barriers we are facing. As referred to above, communications and ongoing dialogue with Central Beds and North Hertfordshire District Council are being actively pursued in order to seek their engagement in the considerable cross boundary issues we are facing.

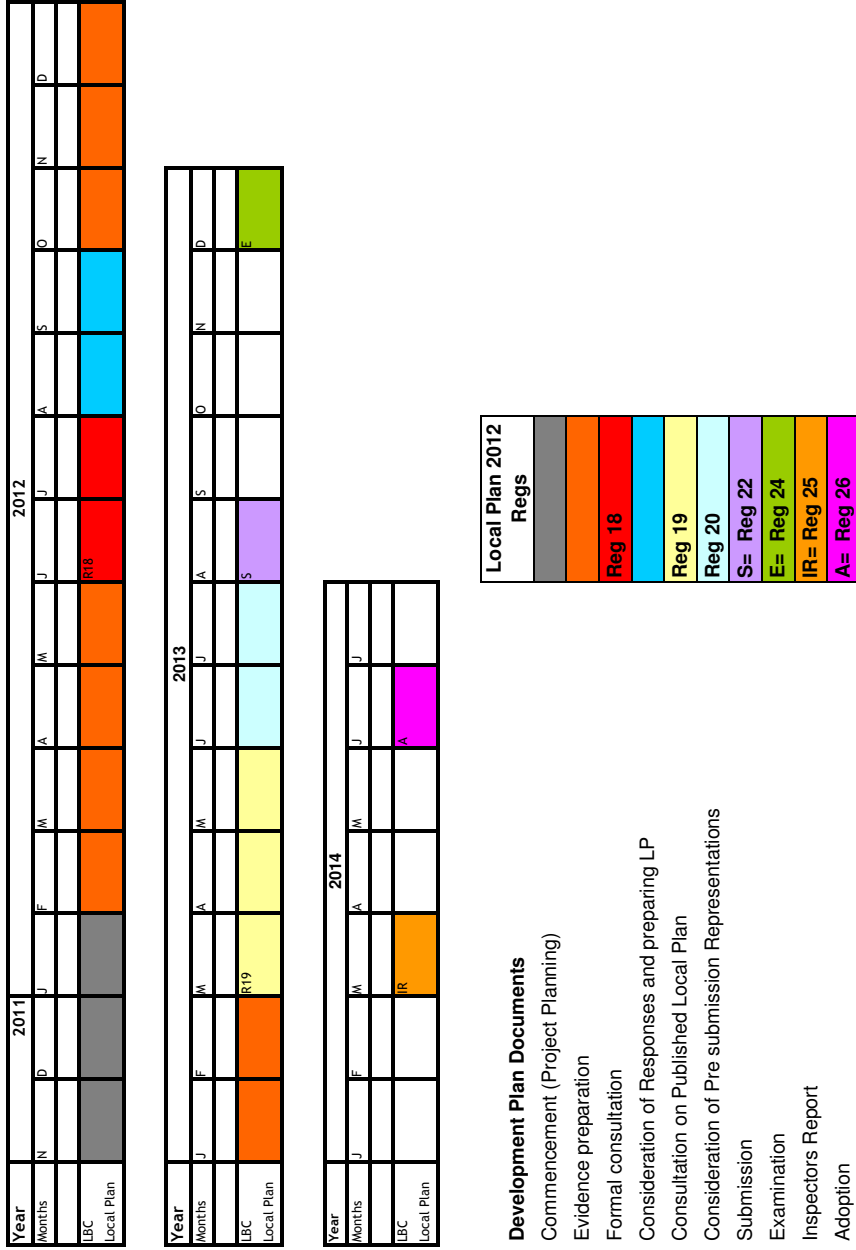


### **Luton Community Infrastructure Levy**

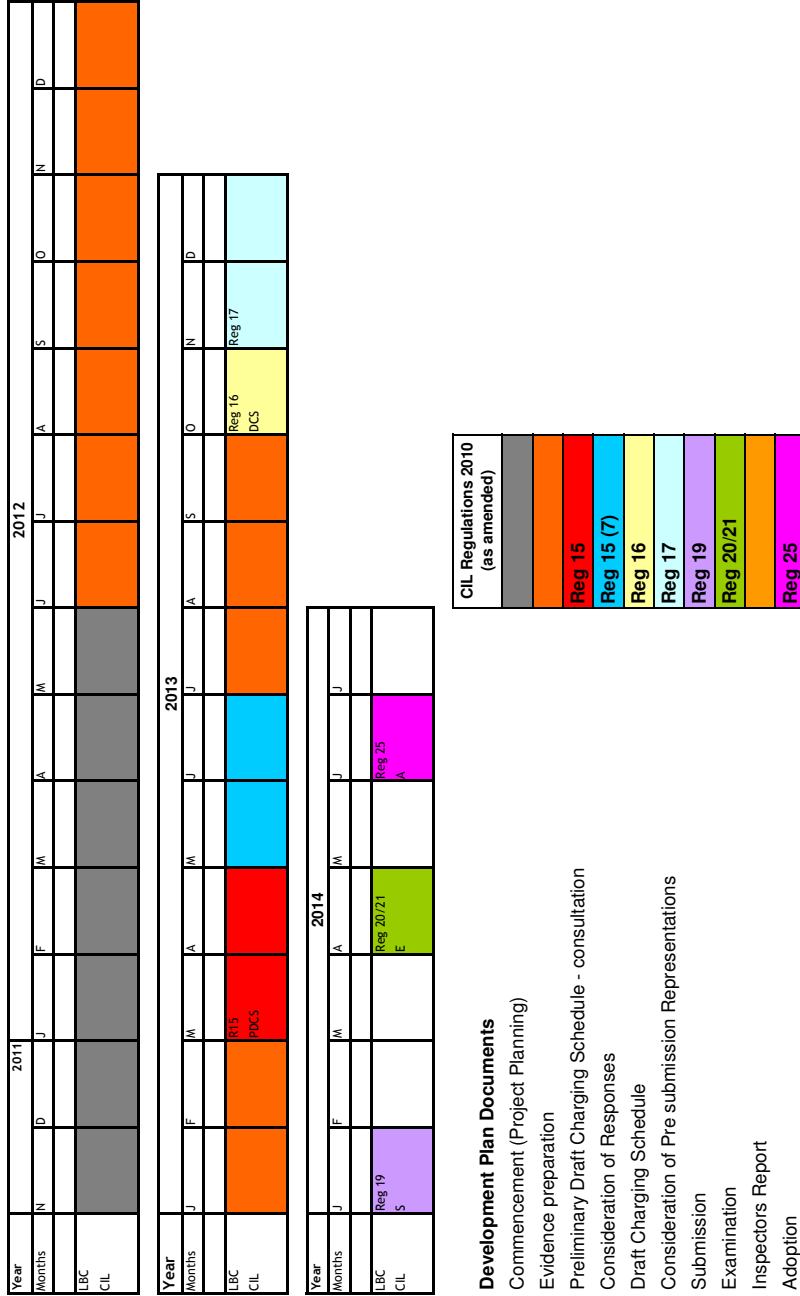
**2.7** In order to be effective a local plan must deliver infrastructure that is needed to support proposed allocations of land. To help in the delivery of this infrastructure which can include roads, schools and other community facilities Luton must set a charging schedule which developers contribute against when bringing forward certain developments.

**2.8** Evidence towards the charging schedule is currently being gathered. It is proposed that the preliminary, or consultation charging schedule is placed on public consultation in March 2013. Figure 2 shows the approximate timing of later stages which are also detailed in the [LDS](#).

**Figure 1 LDS Local Plan Timetable**



Picture 2 LDS Community Infrastructure Levy Timetable



## 2 . Plan Progress



## 3 . Housing

**3.1** Net gains in housing can emerge as the result of new-build, the sub-division of existing houses or the conversion of non-residential buildings such as offices or factories. The data and information given below is the result of the continual monitoring of sites with granted housing permissions. These are tracked and visited until the housing is completed or the permission expires.

**3.2** More data, including historic trends and lists of planning applications and their build status can be seen within the [2012 Housing Schedules](#)<sup>(2)</sup>.

### Housing Target for Luton

**3.3** Under the 2012 planning regulations the Local Planning Authority must declare performance against any housing target within their current Local Plan. The Luton Local Plan 2001 - 2011 contained a target that arose from the Structure Plan 2011. This required that 6,200 dwellings should be completed between 1991 and 2011 within Luton.

**Table 3.1 Housing target 1991 - 2011**

Target	Achieved	Surplus over 20 year target
6,200	7,014	814

**3.4** The 20-year target was comfortably achieved. With the end of the Plan period, and with a surplus having been delivered against it there is little reason to continue to look to this target which was based on a population assumption for the Town that has been surpassed.

**3.5** The most recently developed housing target for Luton is that from Policy H1 of the East of England Plan, published May 2008. Although it is expected this plan will be abolished in January of 2013 it set a higher target for housing per annum of some 360 dwellings per annum up to 2021. The temporary adoption of this target for the purpose of testing a 5-year land supply for Luton is further discussed in the Luton [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment November 2012](#) (SHLAA).

**3.6** As the Luton Local Plan 2011 - 2031 is prepared an annualised target will be set for the numbers of homes to be delivered each year within the Luton area. Should progress on the Plan be maintained it is possible that this target will be reported against within the Luton AMR 2013.

### Housing by Type

**Table 3.2 Housing by type 1 April 2011 - 31 March 2012**

New Housing	Affordable Housing	Demolitions	Conversion To	Conversion From	Sub-division <sup>(1)</sup>	Total
333	125	-39	42	-6	35	490

1. The figure for sub-divisions is net.

**3.7** Against the annualised 5-year land supply target of 360 per annum used within the Luton SHLAA 2012, 490 dwellings were completed over the 2011 - 12 financial year. Of these 490 dwellings some 130 were built at the University Campus. These were flats typically containing 5 student bedrooms, although a few were built as studio flats. Of the remainder 125 were affordable or shared ownership and of these 97 were completed as part of the New Homes for Luton scheme. Together, these schemes raised the proportion of homes provided as new-build accommodation above typical levels.

### House Size

**Table 3.3 Gross bedroom numbers 1 April 2011 - 31 March 2012**

1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 + bed	Unknown	Total
213	136	72	133	0	<b>554</b>

**3.8** The majority of housing continues to be delivered as 1 or 2 bedroom, flatted units. The supply of 4+ bedroom houses appears unusually high because of the provision of large flatted units for University accommodation. When these 114 dwellings are removed the dwellings built fit the normal pattern of development within Luton.

### Location of New Housing

**Table 3.4 Net completions by Location**

Central Area Plus 300m Buffer	Action Areas	Rest of Luton	Total
179	-12	323	<b>490</b>

**3.9** It is difficult to develop meaningful location indicators for Luton as the Town is well connected internally for most community uses such as access to doctors, schools and major retail centres. This area of work will continue to be explored as the new Plan emerges.

**3.10** The net figure for housing by location shows a loss of dwellings within Action Areas. This is because of the loss of 39 flats within Marsh Farm which were demolished in order to allow for a comprehensive redevelopment of the area. The Central Area and surrounding area appears to continue to attract approximately one third of all new housing as per recent trends. However, the new build student flats contribute significantly to this figure.

### Student Accommodation

**3.11** During 2011-12 some 580 bedrooms were built for student accommodation. This was part of the continual investment in the University of Bedfordshire campus in Luton. Aside from some 16 flats which have been built as studio flats for mature students the rooms have been provided in self-contained clusters of no more than 5 bedrooms, each with bathroom facilities but sharing a lounge and kitchen. This is the first purpose-built student accommodation to have been completed for some years and provision will be added to by the completion of another 285 bedrooms during 2012-13.

## 3 . Housing

### Residential Care Homes

**3.12** One private care home was completed this monitoring year. This establishment in Stopsley provides 32 self-contained flats, 7 of which have 2 bedrooms. As of 1 April 2012 there was only one other live planning permission which is for an extension of 11 rooms to an existing home.





## 4 . Employment

### Completions in 2012

**4.1** As Luton is constrained by its boundary, new employment land is rarely created. It is common for gains and losses to see-saw by land use type as land and floorspace is cannibalised between uses.

**Table 4.1 Floorspace completions by type (square metres) 31 March 2011 - 1 April 2012**

	<b>Gain</b>	<b>Loss</b>	<b>Net Floorspace</b>
B1a	135	-5,330	-5,195
B1b	0	-400	-400
B1c	25	-1,366	-1,341
Sub Total B1	160	-7,096	-6,936
B2	18,044	-1,225	16,819
B8	778	-14,944	-14,166
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,982</b>	<b>-23,265</b>	<b>-4,283</b>

**4.2** Lost office floorspace mostly went to non-residential institutions such as education or training uses. A modest gain in B2 floorspace occurred through the change of use from vacant warehousing and bulky goods land on Kingsway to a manufacture and storage area for concrete beams associated with the guided busway. A greater gain in B2 occurred through the change of use of a major distribution centre on Kimpton Road to a printing press for a national newspaper chain.

**Table 4.2 Land completions by type (hectares) 31 March 2011 - 1 April 2012**

	<b>Gain</b>	<b>Loss</b>	<b>Net Area</b>
B1a	0.015	-0.2346	-0.2196
B1b	0	0	0
B1c	0	-0.1334	-0.1334
Sub Total B1	0.015	-0.368	-0.353
B2	6.18	-0.107	6.073
B8	0.027	-4.0859	-4.0589
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.222</b>	<b>-4.5609</b>	<b>1.661</b>

## Employment pipeline

Table 4.3 Net employment land available as at 1 April 2012

	Net Commitments (ha)	Gross Floorspace Commitments (sq.m)	Net Floorspace Commitments (sq.m)
B1a	8.16	34,704	27,324
B1b	0	0	0
B1c	15.857	83,971	72,411
Sub Total B1	24.017	118,675	99,735
B2	-0.2437	96,016	-859
B8	14.188	57,741	56,215
Total	37.9613	272,432	155,091

**4.3** There are two major employment allocations forming part of the Luton employment potential supply, or pipeline. The first, Napier Park, or the Kimpton Road Area, is some 23 hectares of former B2 land on the former Vauxhall car plant in Kimpton Road. This allocation excludes a smaller area adjacent to Luton Parkway Station of just over 1 hectare formerly known as Stirling Place. A planning application for a scheme over both areas is expected shortly which will provide approximately 8 or 9 hectares of "new" B1a - B1c land. This must however be recorded against the loss of the 23 hectares of existing B2 land, which will be incrementally recorded as parts of the site is developed.

**4.4** The second allocation is Century Park, or Wigmore Employment Area. This undeveloped land is described as a key employment area and subject to a policy limiting uses to industry, offices and warehousing. An area of some 24 hectares was proposed in the original outline permission for various B1-B2 uses. For monitoring purposes this has been recorded solely against B2 uses. Some 14 hectares of B8 land was also proposed and accounts for all the undeveloped B8 land currently available in Luton.

# 4 . Employment



## 5 . Community

### Community Infrastructure

**5.1** The development of new formal education school buildings and extensions to existing ones is responsible for the major gain in community floorspace for 2012. New build resulted in some 15,700 sq m of new school buildings across 3 sites for the loss of 4,700 sq m of existing space. Extensions across 8 schools ranged from the small, at just 12 sq m for an ancillary office, through to a 440 sq m extension for new classrooms and improved access arrangements.

**Table 5.1 Community Infrastructure - completed**

	<b>Gain</b>	<b>Loss</b>	<b>Net</b>
Land Completed 31 March 2011 - 1 April 2012	8.3201	-8.014	0.3061
Floorspace Completed 31 March 2011 - 1 April 2012	26,327	-5,155	21,172

**5.2** Planning permissions have also been implemented at several schools for temporary classrooms. These tend to be single buildings, but in the case of Lealands High School some 2,600 sq m of temporary classrooms have been permitted to allow for the refurbishment of the existing buildings.

**5.3** Some 2,100 sq m of office floorspace in or near the Town Centre have changed to education or training uses. Most of these involve upper floors and so do not result in a primary change in the use of the land. A further 2,400 sq m of floorspace changed to uses ranging from childcare to religious uses, although the most significant completed planning permission for 1,100 sq m is a temporary one.

### Leisure

**Table 5.2 Leisure - completed**

	<b>Gain</b>	<b>Loss</b>	<b>Net</b>
Land Completed 31 March 2011 - 1 April 2012	2.8195	0	2.8195
Floorspace Completed 31 March 2011 - 1 April 2012	6,570	0	6,570

**5.4** The significant net gain in land available for leisure during 2011 - 12 is mostly due to the opening of the Aquatic Centre, which incorporates a dive school, gymnasium and sports hall and other minor leisure facilities. The centre is also responsible for some 4,000 sq m of leisure floorspace. It is worth noting however that some of the old facilities it replaces will be recorded as lost as they are demolished and cleared or redeveloped. It is possible there will be an overall net loss of floorspace over time as a result.

**5.5** Just under 1,500 sq m of leisure floorspace was provided following the redevelopment of a Town Centre bar and nightclub for a gymnasium. Other floorspace completions are the result of relatively minor extensions or conversion although 2 small industrial units were converted for martial arts use.

**5.6** Details of the completed, under construction and not yet started permissions for community and leisure uses for the 2011 - 12 monitoring year can be seen via the [Community/Leisure schedules](#).

## 5 . Community





