

# Our vision for Luton in 2026

## Luton's Sustainable Community Strategy

Luton**Forum**

'We want Luton to be prettier – friendly and nice', quote from a younger resident at our community consultation event, February 2008



# Partners





## Foreword

By Councillor Hazel Simmons, Chair of the Luton Forum.

Welcome to the Luton Forum's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026.

The Luton Forum is a partnership of statutory and mainstream agencies, the voluntary and community sector, and business representatives.

We are committed to working together to make Luton a better place to be – both now and by 2026. That may seem an odd figure but it's 18 years. We chose it because we wanted our strategy to paint a picture of what Luton will be like when someone born today enters adulthood – what life chances would we like them to have? What opportunities do we want to create for them over the next 18 years? But this strategy is not only focused on young people – we want Luton to be a town where all residents, regardless of age, enjoy a good quality of life.

Our strategy will:

- inform people about Luton, the challenges, opportunities and priorities
- provide clear direction to develop policy with all partner organisations
- challenge all Luton Forum partners to deliver the vision.

This strategy belongs to residents, partners and providers. It will give us a direction of travel and its accompanying document the Local Area Agreement provides us with the detailed action plans to implement the vision for 2026.

We cannot achieve a Luton of tomorrow without the involvement of local people today - so each year we'll hold events to measure our progress and gain involvement in delivering Vision 2026. We promise we will also feed back to residents on what has been achieved.



Hazel Simmons, Chair of Luton Forum  
and of Luton Council

# Contents

	Page
Foreword	2
Section 1 What is Luton Forum's sustainable community strategy?	4
Section 2 Principles	6
Section 3 Welcome to Luton - our opportunities and challenges	7
Section 4 Vision for Luton 2026	10
Section 5 Where we are, where we want to be and priorities for getting there	11
Stronger and safer community	11
Health and wellbeing	15
Environment and economic development	19
Children and young people	23
Section 6 Next steps	28
Appendix	29
Related documents:	
Evidence base	Separate document
Local area agreement	Separate document

Information on impact assessments is available by emailing: [lsp@luton.gov.uk](mailto:lsp@luton.gov.uk)

## What is Luton Forum's Sustainable Community Strategy?



The Luton Forum is Luton's Local Strategic Partnership and was formed in 2000. Its members are drawn from the public, business, community and voluntary sectors within Luton.

Public sector organisations represented include Luton Borough Council and other statutory agencies such as the Police, the NHS Primary Care Trust, the Fire and Rescue Service, JobCentre Plus, and education providers such as the University of Bedfordshire, Barnfield and Luton Sixth Form Colleges and our schools. Representation of Luton's businesses includes business interest groups and employers such as London Luton Airport Operations Limited.

Luton's Community Empowerment Network, known as the Luton Assembly, represents over 650 community and voluntary groups and organisations operating within Luton.

The Sustainable Community Strategy describes our shared vision for how Luton will be in 2026, and how we intend to get there. It is based on our knowledge of Luton and informed by the aspirations of local people.

The strategy is underpinned by shorter term (three year) plans set out in the Local Area Agreement.

The Local Area Agreement will describe exactly how we are going to make Luton a better place. It is a statutory plan to which all partners are signed up to achieve together the set targets agreed between the Luton Forum and the Government through the Government Office for the East of England.

Though partners have their own plans and strategies the Sustainable Community Strategy, and the Local Area Agreement are the overarching framework which brings Luton together under this common set of priorities.

As an overarching strategy for Luton, these partner strategies and plans sit below it and support the Sustainable Community Strategy – see diagram on next page. The Strategy reflects current national and regional strategies and as new ones are issued they will be incorporated when our strategy is reviewed.

Note: (Local Area Agreement is not included in this Draft.)



Throughout its lifetime we will monitor the strategy and review it in 2014 and again in 2020 to identify new priorities to keep us moving towards our Vision 2026.

Many local partners were involved in developing and delivering the current Community Plan 2002-2012 which supported the delivery of key local priorities through strong local leadership and enhanced partnership working. This will now be incorporated into and replaced by the Luton Forum Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026 as a result of consultation with local residents and detailed discussions with partners.

## Principles



Principles underpin the whole strategy and all the priorities and actions within it.

To be sustainable this strategy must ensure Luton's community is one where all residents:

- enjoy fair access to goods, services, employment and justice - **equality**
- are able to participate in and feel a part of that community - **inclusion**
- feel respected and able to live in with dignity and in harmony with others and our environment - **cohesion**.

**Equality** - Fundamental to achieving our full potential is the need to ensure equality of access to all regardless of disability, race, gender, age, religion/faith/belief or sexual orientation.

Luton Forum partners have public duties to deliver on the equality and diversity agenda. For example, meeting housing needs, raising educational attainment, improving health outcomes, addressing skills gaps, and improving employment opportunities, are all vital in addressing the underlying inequalities that undermine cohesion and inclusion.

**Inclusion** - Social exclusion is also known as non-participation in society due to constraints rather than non-participation by choice. A powerful excluding factor is poverty which can directly affect health and wellbeing and can mean restricted access to those customs, goods and services which are perceived as normal in society.

**Cohesion** - dignity and respect for all, together with a collective appreciation of rights and responsibilities will help to ensure we can build cohesion between communities. This incorporates respect for the environment and the principles of sustainability.

## Welcome to Luton – our opportunities and challenges

Luton is a town with enormous potential - as the international gateway to the region we have some of the best north-south links and beyond that to the world. Our international airport, built in 1938 and still owned by the Council, serves cities across the UK and Europe and key international destinations such as Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. A ticket from Luton Station, can take you via St Pancras International by the Eurostar to Paris, with connections across Europe. The M1 provides a direct link to the rest of Britain's road network and construction is underway on the East Luton Corridor to better link town, airport and motorway.

We are set in the heart of some of the richest farmland in the UK and benefit from some nationally important natural open spaces. These include a UK priority habitat with its chalk grassland, with the nationally important Warden Hill, Galley Hill<sup>1</sup>, and Dallow Downs<sup>2</sup>. There are also pieces of ancient woodland and nationally<sup>3</sup> rare and priority species

Our excellent transport links and a vibrant economy have enabled the town to develop strong voluntary and public institutions, public and private services and diverse opportunities for local people to spend their spare time:

- Luton hosts the Regional Sports Centre for the East of England
- it enjoys performance and arts facilities in The Library Theatre and The Hat Factory
- London Luton Airport terminal hosts an art gallery and St Georges Square hosts a programme of music and performance events in the summer
- the Galaxy houses cinemas, pubs and restaurants
- Wardown Park and Stockwood Park and the museum and the new Stockwood Park Discovery Centre are valued by the people of Luton
- Luton has a number of well-known achievers achieving success nationally and internationally

1. Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

2. Assessed by Natural England as being of Site of Special Scientific Interest quality.

3. Identified by the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.



- Luton is recognised internationally as a centre of excellence in carnival arts. The Luton Carnival - the largest in Europe - is usually attended by around 120,000 people. An international Carnival Arts Centre is currently under construction in Luton.

Luton also benefits from an international reputation - with the production of Vauxhall cars for over 90 years as well as having one of the world's first football clubs, which opened in 1885, our name is recognised more widely than many towns of its size. A branding exercise carried out in 2001 showed that internationally Luton was the sixth most known place in the United Kingdom alongside London, Manchester and Birmingham<sup>4</sup>.

Whilst car production may have come to an end the current production of vans for the European market by General Motors has expanded and maintains part of the town's engineering expertise. The former Vauxhall site is undergoing a £400million redevelopment transforming it into Napier Park, one of the south east's largest urban regeneration projects with high quality housing, a five star hotel, light industry and airport car parking.

Luton is emerging from a period of major economic restructuring. It has already attracted major developers with £4 billion invested in funding infrastructure and private development over the next six years – the largest for any town in the UK. In the past seven years more than thirty companies, including Blue Chip organisations, have relocated or stayed in Luton and brought in investments of over £60million. Through grant funding more than 1000 jobs have been created and hundreds more have been supported which may have been lost to the town.

With such growth comes challenges and responsibilities. Our population of 186,800<sup>5</sup>, has 35 per cent<sup>6</sup> from a black or minority ethnic background, and 54 per cent of school pupils from a black or minority ethnic background<sup>7</sup>.



Our younger population is higher than the regional average, with a higher percentage aged under 16 years, and a much lower percentage above pension age. It is also predicted that the number of residents over 75 years will increase by 10 per cent over the period 2006-2011.

With recent arrivals, including Eastern European migrants, new estimates suggest that there are over 200,000 people living in Luton<sup>8</sup>. With such a significantly diverse population we benefit from a rich culture yet must work hard to develop our community cohesion.

<sup>4</sup> Interbrand Branding Exercise for the East of England Region

<sup>5</sup> ONS 2006 Mid Year Estimate

<sup>6</sup> 2001 Census

<sup>7</sup> School Survey 2007

<sup>8</sup> Source: Luton Borough Council

Our large and growing population, added to little land available for development, means a high demand for affordable housing. The current deficiency of high quality accessible green space in certain areas of the town is an issue affecting peoples health, wellbeing and overall quality of life.

Three of our wards are in the top ten per cent of deprived wards in the country wards (as defined in the Index of Multiple Deprivation). The proportion of the working population claiming benefits is 1.4 times higher than that for the East of England and unemployment at 3.4 per cent remains above the regional (1.9 per cent) and national (2.5 per cent) averages.

There is also a high percentage of children in Luton schools from homes where English is not the first language and who start school needing extra help with their English.

Making a difference to Luton and its community takes partnership and commitment. This strategy brings together the organisations which have made a significant commitment to improving residents lives and making Luton a place people want to be.

Luton Borough Council was rated as “good” in its latest government inspection (2007). Bedfordshire Police have reported record levels of customer satisfaction, and the Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service was judged by the Audit Commission to be performing and improving well (2007).

Our health services continue to develop with a greater focus on primary and community-based care, greater involvement of the voluntary sector and a much closer partnership between the Council and the Luton NHS.

There are good quality and improving schools in Luton with family workers in all infant and junior schools supporting Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children. Academies, childrens’ centres and the Sixth Form College cover a spectrum of educational needs. Barnfield College of Further Education, rated “outstanding” (Ofsted, 2007) trains people for vocational qualifications. The University of Bedfordshire offers a wide variety of courses and was shortlisted in The Times Higher Education Supplement University of the Year Awards in 2007.

The Luton and South Bedfordshire Growth Area, part of the Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Area is a geographical area identified by the Government in which to build 26,300 homes by 2021, and create 20,000 new jobs by 2031.

The Luton Forum is committed to working with the South Bedfordshire Local Strategic Partnership, North Hertfordshire, Aylesbury Vale and other Milton Keynes South Midlands partners on this important initiative, that includes consideration of the related aspects of this development, for example, jobs, health services, education services, transportation, and how all this could be achieved sustainably.

## Vision for Luton 2026

### People will be proud of Luton - a lively, hopeful, can-do town

We will take responsibility for our own and each others' well-being and will actively tackle deprivation and inequalities, reduce the isolation and exclusion of vulnerable people, respond to environmental challenges, and encourage active citizenship by working together to ensure all our communities are cohesive.

Our services will be recognised as among the best, locally, nationally and internationally. Foundations for this will be strong, realistic partnerships between citizens, the public, private and voluntary sectors who will encourage the engagement of communities, listen to people, respond creatively to their needs and wishes, and continuously improve services.

Our learning, leisure and community facilities will have improved to give them the highest standards of accessibility. There will be a high quality natural environment and public realm which our community will strive to enhance and protect. Green spaces will be maintained and new areas created.

Fear of crime, and its causes, will have diminished, replaced by a confidence that together we can effectively tackle crime. Young and old will feel safer on the streets of Luton. We will have improved physical and mental well-being by pursuing policies and delivering services which support people and their environment, and promote healthy and creative living, access to good food and physical activity.

Transport will have improved so people can travel to work and school, their appointments or to leisure facilities, cheaply and easily, and with the least possible environmental impact. Luton will enjoy strong economic growth and training needs will be matched to new jobs to ensure local people get good, well paid work that is satisfying and helps strengthen both families and communities. We will have worked with our neighbours to provide quality, environmentally friendly housing We will be alert to the effects of climate change, how to reduce our impact on it, and have ensured all developments have been and will be sustainable.

By following this Vision through, Luton will be a better place for everyone.



## Where we are, where we want to be and priorities for getting there

There are four themed areas for delivering our vision: Stronger and Safer Communities, Health and Wellbeing, Environment and economic development, and Children and young people.

Each theme has a partnership of organisations which focus on delivering change.

A panel of people representing a cross section of Luton residents spent the day with us telling us what they think and how they want the town to be in 2026. Their comments, which are in the boxed sections, reveal their ideal future for Luton if anything was possible.

The Thematic Partnerships have also explained the issues which concern them and solutions they have developed.

From these we have identified our Key Priorities to 2014 for the first part of delivering Luton's Sustainable Community Strategy.

### Stronger and safer communities

#### Where we are now

*Our **panel of residents** feel we are a multi-cultural town and are proud of how our communities live together in relative harmony.*

*However our communities do not always mix well together and segregation and isolation are very apparent including relationships between generations. For example adults and young people need to be more understanding of each other.*

*Crime and anti-social problems include certain parts of the town which have a reputation for being particularly unsafe and, although residents themselves feel safe in their locality, people from other parts of the town are afraid of going there.*



Luton's **Community Safety Executive** said Luton is third worst in the region for crime levels which are also higher than the national average. We must also remain vigilant on the potential threat from extremist groups and especially those who would use violence to achieve their goals.

To tackle concerns:

- safer Neighbourhood Plans for five areas and the town centre have been developed where residents have said what their concerns are for the locality. The Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams working with the council's Area Community Safety Co-ordinators, provide a visible and accessible local policing service working with communities to solve local problems - especially anti-social behaviour. Communication and feeding back results is integral to success
- Luton also has successful partnerships in place delivering innovative initiatives. For example, partnership working between the Police and the Council mean abandoned cars are removed within 24 hours of notification and our figures are showing that the number of abandoned vehicles and consequently arson is decreasing
- partners worked together on Luton Safe to improve the night time economy of Luton and this has made our town centre a much safer place to be. Violent crime that occurs most often in the town centre is showing a year on year decline
- the SoLUTiONs initiative involves every partner from Luton's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and external agencies working closely together during a series of intensive action weeks focusing on specific areas. Before the action week council officers and police knock on doors to find out what local people feel is really important in their neighbourhood. The SoLUTiONs action teams use the feedback to target the big issues. Results of these weeks range from reducing crime figures, prosecutions for breaking trading standards and environmental laws, and clean-ups that improve the immediate surroundings and reduce the incidence of arson.

Concerns from the Luton **Assembly** centred on the need for better community engagement. They feel some of the public agencies do not have the capacity to engage effectively at a local level, the capacity of local councillors to increase their roles within the grassroots structure is low and some public sector policies need to be worked on to improve levels of active involvement in the community.

The organisational capacity of many voluntary and community organisations is low and changes in funding streams and ways of working present a challenge. The provision of funding is often inconsistent and short term, and the funding of key neighbourhood management groups and empowerment bodies is ad-hoc.

There is a need for a multi-agency Community Engagement Strategy.

## Where we want to be in 2026

*Our **panel of residents** said they want to see a society without segregation where everyone is treated the same, equally with fairness and respect, and we are all happy. There will be no ageism and there will be improved opportunities for community engagement to dispel myths such as 'young people of today have no respect'. We will live in harmony with the environment, and there will be community spirit in the streets we live in. We will be racially tolerant, valuing each other's race, culture and religion.*

*Residents want Luton to be a town without fear, with no crime and everyone to feel safe. Children will be able to play outside and young people will feel safe to walk at night without carrying weapons. We will have more effective rehabilitation of offenders to reduce repeat offending.. Families will be safe at home and there will be good services to protect people from domestic abuse. There will be no intimidating gangs hanging around and putting people off from going into specific areas.*



*The **Stronger and Safer Communities Thematic Partnership** said detailed evidence and plans to respond to the evidence can be found in Luton's crime reduction strategies (see Appendix) as well as the Local Area Agreement.*

In 2026 we will be operating partnership plans for all aspects of crime – prevention, detection, rehabilitation - that will have reduced Luton's crime levels to the lowest possible.

Luton's community will be strong and resilient enough to cope with adversity and extremism, be it local, national or international. Our community will be cohesive and tolerant.

The voluntary and community sector will have the capacity and support to deliver services and activities that will bring people together and enable all citizens to reach their full capacity. Working with statutory agencies they will be implementing a joined up approach to raising awareness of issues and challenges and how to overcome them.

The Community Safety Executive will be receiving intelligence from a variety of sources e.g. neighbourhoods, Safer Neighbourhood Teams, SoLUTiON action teams, the Police, the Council and the Fire and Rescue service. This will enable all partners to reduce the incidence of crime in Luton. Where crimes are committed, timely and quality responses will be provided, crimes will be investigated and appropriate prosecutions made. Criminals will be supported to change their ways and return to being good members of society.

### Key priorities to 2014

Based on evidence from partners and community aspirations, priorities are:

- increasing the numbers of active citizens: people with the motivation, skills and confidence to speak up for their communities and say what improvements are needed
- strengthening communities: building the capability and resources of community, voluntary and social enterprise groups to bring people together to work out shared solutions
- creating partnerships with public, private and voluntary and community sector bodies: public bodies willing and able to work as partners with local people
- reducing anti social behaviour and the fear of crime, ensuring all people feel safe
- reducing crime including serious acquisitive crime, covering: burglary (dwelling), robbery, theft of a motor vehicle, theft from a motor vehicle, domestic abuse, criminal damage and hate crime
- management of offenders to reduce the number of prolific and persistent offenders
- tackling alcohol and drug abuse
- improving road safety
- more well-designed, safer and accessible open spaces.

## Health and wellbeing

### Where we are now

*Our panel of Luton residents said that we have good doctors in Luton but there is a lack of resources which leads to long waiting times and difficulties in getting appointments if it is not an emergency. They felt there was a lack of information about changes from official organisations such as the Council and the NHS.*

*Our panel of residents praised our leisure and cultural facilities, for example library and sports facilities, although some felt that the cost of the activities/facilities is too expensive for young people.*

*Local parks and easy access to the countryside provide opportunities to get outdoors more often. The plants and flowers on the roundabouts within the town were also praised.*



High rates of health risks in Luton centre on life style related illnesses such as smoking, obesity and alcohol related illnesses. Added to this physical exercise levels amongst adults are among the lowest in the region and are lower than the national average. Levels of participation in exercise by females are particularly low.

Unlike the national trend, smoking is not decreasing in Luton and is above the national average – it accounts for more than 260 deaths per year.

Obesity rates are also above the national average and increasing at a faster rate. Alcohol related mortality from chronic liver disease, particularly in men, is above the national average. As well as affecting health, alcohol also contributes to local crime rates and Luton is above the national average for crime which is attributable to alcohol.

Luton also features relatively high numbers of children with a complex disability, particularly within the South Asian community. Life expectancy is lower than the national average, and lowest in the East of England region, and there is a significant gap between the lowest and highest life expectancy rates in different parts of Luton.

There is also a higher proportion of overcrowded households than the average for England and Wales and despite some success in reducing homelessness there remain around 850 households in temporary accommodation. There are over 13,000 households living in non decent homes of which 4,000 households are considered vulnerable. The key reason for properties failing the decent homes standard being poor "thermal comfort" - they're difficult to keep warm.

Improving health and well-being is clearly a priority. Recent successes include:

- working in partnership to achieve goals such as a significant drop in teenage pregnancies and our approach to childhood immunisation has been cited as a model of excellence
- good progress has been made in improving performance on the assessment of carers' needs and offering carers support and services in their own right e.g. specific work with black and minority ethnic communities to identify "hidden" carers
- investment has been made in early intervention and preventative strategies and the responsiveness of local mental health services to the needs of the black and minority ethnic communities has improved to some extent
- Luton has good arts, cultural and leisure facilities, particularly with regard to the Carnival, the Hat Factory, St Georges Square, museums, libraries and parks.

## Where we want to be in 2026

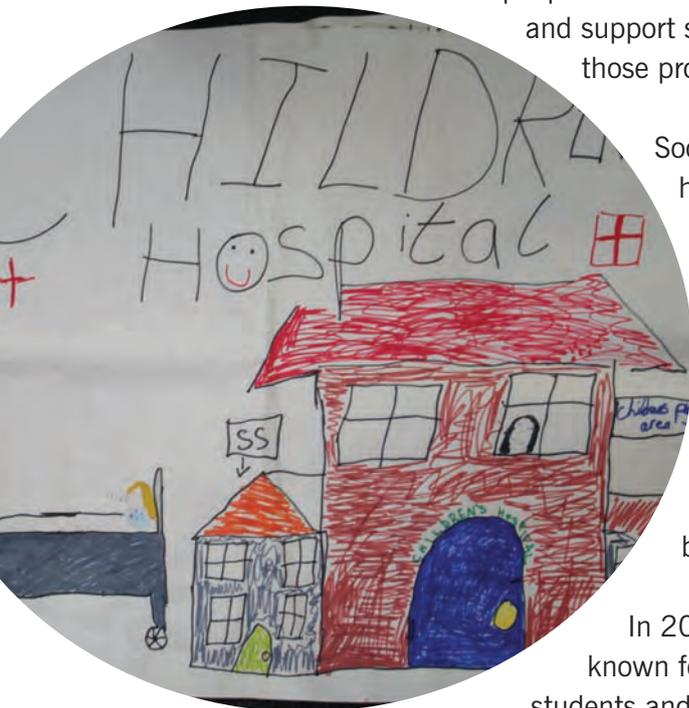
*Our panel of Luton residents said the health service will be better, appointments will be quicker and there will be a 24 hour walk in centre. Our children will be healthy and obesity will have decreased. Speedy health care will be available irrespective of wealth. More cancer treatment facilities will be available so people do not have to travel for treatment. The Luton and Dunstable Hospital will be state of the art and have all of the facilities that it needs to treat local people – a radiotherapy department of its own. We will have home midwifery services provided to specific cultural needs, for example, involving the whole family. There will be more homes and day centres for the disabled and the elderly.*

*More attractions will have been built in the town to try and encourage people to socialise locally and also to encourage non-residents to visit the town. More gyms and 'fun ways of getting fit' will be in place to tackle obesity. Safe transport will be provided for residents to get to and from facilities. Parks will have been made safe so everyone can enjoy the natural, free space that Luton has to offer*

The Luton Forum **Health and Wellbeing Thematic Partnership** said detailed evidence can be found within the Luton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and plans to respond to Luton's needs can be found in Luton's health and wellbeing strategies (see Appendix) as well as the Local Area Agreement.

The **Health and Wellbeing Thematic Partnership** said the health service will be improved by a greater focus on prevention and services provided in the community, including mental health services. Appointments will be more accessible with improved access to the right kind of care for urgent health needs. Children will be healthier and obesity will have decreased. Cancer patients will have timely access to the right kind of cancer treatment in the right place. The Luton and Dunstable Hospital will provide high quality services to meet the needs of local people. We will have better midwifery services with a choice of service to meet specific cultural needs. There will be significant improvements in closing the gaps in health inequalities between different communities.

We will aim to enable vulnerable people to live as independently as possible in their own home, for as long as it safe to do so, leading valued and fulfilling lives. We will focus on a move away from segregated services to more integrated provision, whereby vulnerable adults are enabled to access mainstream community facilities. We will also develop preventative services to help older people remain outside the formal care systems, such as information and support services, e.g. community alarms, and including those provided by the Voluntary and Community Sector.



Social care services for people with longer term mental health problems will be transformed through the introduction of individualised budgets and self-directed care. This more flexible and empowering approach to meeting peoples' needs significantly raises satisfaction ratings for the whole family unit including carers.

The number of homes in the town which fail to meet the decent homes standard or those occupied by vulnerable people will be reduced.

In 2026 the UK Carnival Arts Centre will be widely known for its teaching and workshop facilities bringing students and businesses into the town. Luton will be known for its Creative Industries sector, which will inspire and provide an environment for all types of arts and cultural events.

There will be a range of free and low-cost facilities for young people and excellent parks and open spaces with no area of the town experiencing accessible green space deficiency.

## Key priorities to 2014

Based on evidence, particularly the Luton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2008, from partners and community aspirations, priorities are:

- promoting healthy living and tackling the key risk factors which affect health
- focusing on prevention and early intervention
- supporting people to live independently
- improving housing conditions for existing and new housing
- improving mental health services
- improving services for carers
- improving leisure and cultural opportunities for all, and better access
- understanding that different service delivery will be necessary to ensure fair health and wellbeing outcomes for all.



## Environment and economic development

### Where we are now

Our **panel of Luton residents** said the cleanliness of the streets has improved. There is a rift between different groups with, for example, older people wanting the traffic to move faster, and younger people saying they felt that there was too much speeding traffic which made them feel unsafe.

Local parks and easy access to the countryside provide Lutonians with the opportunities to get outdoors more often. The history and heritage of the town needs to be maintained like Stonehenge e.g. Wauluds Bank and Drays Ditches.

Housing remains a real problem in a town with a growing population with only a few Brownfield sites in the town to build upon. There is a lack of affordable housing, particularly for young people.

While the training and development of young people has been a priority since the closure of Vauxhall, there remains a lack of confidence in the new companies in the town being able to provide high quality well paid work.

Further consultation revealed that noise pollution e.g. noisy neighbours, transport, and light pollution are issues.



Luton has a higher rate of unemployment than the national average with many low or no skilled adults. Job creation needs to be increased by 2.5 times to ensure full employment. There are higher levels of Incapacity Benefit claimants than the national average and higher rates of economic inactivity than the national average.

There is significant regeneration of the town's infrastructure which will improve the look and quality of life in Luton over the next six years:

- there has been good employer engagement in skills development and significant capital investment in learning facilities is either in process or planned at the

University of Bedfordshire, secondary schools, Barnfield College and Luton Sixth Form

- distribution of employment is in line with the regional picture although manufacturing, retail, motor related industries and real estate still represent significant areas of the local economy
- recent growth in other sectors has offset job losses in manufacturing
- the area is seeing an increasingly diverse economy with sectors such as child and adult care, transport and logistics, leisure and tourism, wholesale and retail, construction and health and social care
- we have signed the Nottingham Declaration on climate change and are meeting our recycling targets, with the challenge ahead of us to continue reducing and recycling and adapting for climate change.

## Where we want to be in 2026

*Our **panel of Luton residents** said there will still be green fields and countryside around Luton. We will have made better use of what we already have rather than just building more. We will have preserved what has been handed down to us and be educated about the wildlife and countryside that surrounds us.*

*Residents will recycle everything possible and less packaging will be used by local retailers. People will keep their own streets clean and children will be educated about caring for their environment. The number of cars will have reduced because we will have cheap and reliable public transport and a park and ride scheme. People will walk around the town more because they will feel safer.*

*There will be major employers in Luton that provide flexible working hours, good and equal pay and we will have more time to spend with our families. Jobs will be created for Luton's people as well as those that will come from outside the town to work here.*



The Luton Forum **Environment and Economy Thematic Partnership** said detailed evidence and plans to respond to the evidence can be found in Luton's environment and economic strategies (see Appendix) as well as the Local Area Agreement.

The **Environment and Economy Thematic Partnership** will work with local people and businesses to improve our existing green spaces, so they support more species, and ensure cleaner rivers so Luton is an attractive and safe place to visit and play.

We will ensure best practice sustainable design and construction is undertaken to reduce consumption and protect resources for current and future residents.

Through partnership working we will have reduced our carbon footprint, flood risk, adapted and mitigated for climate change, and minimised our impact on our local environment. We will also be passionate about the image of the town and safeguarding what we have for future generations, including valuable water supplies, parks and green spaces.

By 2021 there will be 26,300 new -households in Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis, and by 2031 we will have provided at least 20,000 new jobs. The business sector will be thriving due to a better educated and better trained workforce, having achieved NVQ Level 2 qualifications or above. Local employers will recognise the importance of qualifications and support lifelong learning and skills development. Local graduates will want to return to work in Luton. New businesses, including social enterprise and community development trusts will be supported, existing businesses will be encouraged to grow, and inward investment will have improved local supply chains.

People will be supported to overcome barriers to work with high quality provision of care for young people and older people to allow carers opportunities to access employment. There will be local provision of centres to develop skills to match local employment needs. There will be good access by public transport to key employment sites.

We will work closely with our local authority neighbours to manage and deliver growth, both housing and economic.

## Key priorities to 2014

Based on evidence from partners and community aspirations, priorities are:

- successfully adapting and mitigating for climate change
- protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment, including our rivers and natural habitats within Luton's green spaces
- reducing consumption of water, energy, materials and minimising waste, including support for renewable energy generation
- enhancing skills for employability and entrepreneurship and reducing differences in achievement levels between communities
- improving public transport, access and mobility and increasing travel to work by sustainable modes of transport e.g. public transport, walking, cycling
- increasing economic activity and good local jobs for local people by working with new and existing businesses and social enterprises and inward investors
- improving the amount and range of housing suitable for the needs of Luton's existing and future residents.



## Children and young people

### Where we are now

*Our panel of **young Luton residents** said children and young people are not always respected by their elders and feel they are often blamed for the actions of a small minority. They do not always feel the people who are paid to look after them, including teachers, police, youth workers, respect or care about them.*

*There are lots of things for young children to do in Luton and these are appreciated. But as they get older this feeling changes. Sometimes this is because some service providers such as the Council don't give good enough information about what's going on, others because the facilities they want such as sports facilities don't exist or are too difficult to get to or too expensive to use.*



Public services have been listening actively to the views of young people and using these in planning their services increasingly in recent years. For example, The Being Young in Luton Survey which informed the Children and Young People's Plan and the national TellUs survey which provided information on how to improve the lives of young people in Luton. Luton has a Youth MP and Youth Cabinet which inform youth services and participation in Luton.

All children and young people need to be given opportunities to make a positive contribution both in and outside school, this may be through the citizenship curriculum, via school councils and through a range of youth and community activities. In April 2008 our new Integrated Youth Support Service was set up to ensure all young people have opportunities to develop

themselves and are able to access a wide range of positive activities, breaking down barriers which may stop participation.

- We have increased the uptake of immunisations and vaccinations in young children and have also seen a substantial decrease in teenage pregnancy rates. However the levels of childhood obesity is a major concern and we are working to develop services both to prevent and offer support programmes for obese children. We have responded to the concerns of parents of children with disabilities who told us they need public services to work more closely together to improve the health and wellbeing of their children, by working together to deliver more integrated services.
- We have a well trained children's workforce which is aware of issues relating to safeguarding. Referrals regarding children's safety are responded to rapidly and assessments and reviews are timely and accurate. Thresholds are understood clearly and referrals are accurate and timely. We are working to reduce the number of children in care. The police have a dedicated domestic abuse team working closely with the social care team. Parents and carers are informed about risks and the incidence of fatal accidents and serious injury is significantly below national average
- Children and young people also told us they were concerned about their safety outside school and we are working to develop programmes to help make them feel safer and to tackle bullying.
- Childrens centres across the town have developed, providing a range of services and childcare for parents.
- Attainment at GCSE is improving year on year and is closing the gap with national averages. The performance of pupils from most minority ethnic groups is improving year on year. Attendance is improving and is now above the national average, although we have further work to improve the attendance of children in care. Very few pupils are permanently excluded from school.



- Campus Luton, our 14-19 partnership, is recognised regionally and nationally as an effective approach to developing collaboration to improve outcomes for young people.
- Over 5,000 16-18 year old learners are engaged in Luton colleges each year and thirteen providers offer apprenticeships across a diverse range of sector subject areas. Participation on full Level 2 courses has increased above the national and regional average over the past two years<sup>9</sup>.
- For many years Luton has successfully developed an inclusive education policy that has meant that an increased number of children and young people with disabilities/ learning difficulties are having their needs met successfully in mainstream schools. Special schools have been successfully reorganised to cater for pupils with the most significant and complex needs with six nursery schools receiving additional funding to do so. Despite the increase in the complexity of needs of children and young people, Luton educates very few children through costly out-of-borough provision.
- There has been a significant reduction in the numbers entering the youth justice system. Strong links have been developed between the Youth Offending Service and the specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

## Where we want to be in 2026

Our panel of young Luton residents said children and young people will be respected and positively appreciated.

All of our teachers and other youth workers will inspire all their students to reach their full potential. Teachers will be fully supported in dealing with bad behaviour and our schools will be characterised by respect and discipline. Young people will achieve better grades and more qualifications.

The streets will be safe and there will be great public transport so that young people can easily take advantage of all Luton has to offer.

Parents will be there for their children and know how to look after them and ensure they behave well. Support will be there for parents to help them be a positive influence on their children and to stop them going down a bad path. Seeking this support will not mean people are judged to be bad parents.

There will be educational facilities where people of all ages will go and study and learn. College and further education opportunities will be combined with job opportunities for young adults by way of apprenticeships and in-house training schemes.

<sup>9</sup> Source: Learning + Skills Council and refers to Bedfordshire and Luton combined

The Luton Forum **Children and Young People's Thematic Partnership** said that detailed evidence and plans to respond to the evidence can be found in the *Children and Young People's Plan* and other strategies (see Appendix) as well as the *Local Area Agreement*.

The **Children and Young People's Partnership** said by 2026 children will develop within a new learning environment with services across the community, arising from the Building Schools for the Future and Extended Schools work that which will have taken place. Technology will be most advanced available. Children in care will be cared for within the borough thus avoiding having to send them to facilities elsewhere in the county. Services for children will be joined up e.g. health, educational attainment, feeling safe. Differences in educational attainment between different groups of children will have been eliminated or much reduced.

### Key priorities to 2014

Based on evidence from partners and community aspirations, priorities are:

- listening to the views of children and young people
- improving the health of children and young people
- ensuring children and young people in Luton are safe and well cared for
- supporting our children and young people to achieve skills and experience to enhance their prospects for the future
- reducing the differences in educational achievement between ethnic groups
- providing positive activities for young people and reducing anti social behaviour
- better meeting the needs of children and young people with disabilities/learning difficulties
- supporting Building Schools for the Future.

## Next steps

The Luton Forum wants to know whether it is on track to achieve the vision it has set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Luton Forum will hold annual events for its partners and the wider community where residents will be able to give their views on our progress, and partners will provide statistical evidence to show how we are doing on achieving the Strategy.

The results of the annual reviews will inform the Local Area Agreement (the delivery plan for the strategy) and the six yearly reviews of the strategy itself.

## Further information

For further information on the Sustainable Community Strategy, please contact the LSP Support Team on: 01582 54 66 81 email: [lsp@luton.gov.uk](mailto:lsp@luton.gov.uk) or go to [www.lutonforum.org](http://www.lutonforum.org)

## Appendix

### Related Strategies, Plans and Evidence Sources

Bedfordshire & Luton Biodiversity Action Plan  
Bedfordshire & Luton Fire and Rescue Service Corporate Plan  
Bedfordshire & Luton Joint Economic Development Strategy  
Bedfordshire Police Annual Policing Plan  
Being Young in Luton Survey (2005)  
Bus Strategy for Luton  
Campus Luton  
Children and Young People's Plan  
City Growth Strategy  
Cycling Strategy for Luton  
East of England Plan  
East of England Regional Economic Strategy  
Equalities, Inclusion and Community Cohesion Strategy  
Employers Travel Plan Strategy  
Environment Agency Catchment Abstraction Management Plans  
Environment Agency Catchments Flood Management Strategy  
ERDF Plan for Luton  
ESF Co Financing Plan  
Extended Schools Programme  
Growth Area Strategy  
Integrated Development Programme  
Investing in Communities Delivery Plan  
Learning + Skills Council Annual Plan  
Local Area Agreement  
Local Transport Plan  
Luton & Bedfordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy  
Luton & South Bedfordshire Core Strategy: Issues and Options  
Luton & South Bedfordshire Green Space Strategy  
Luton & South Bedfordshire Integrated Development Plan  
Luton & South Bedfordshire Water Cycle Strategy  
Luton Borough Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessments  
Luton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment  
Luton Local Plan 2001-2011

Luton Not in Employment, Education or Training Strategy  
Luton Regeneration Strategy  
Luton Youth Justice Planning Framework  
Milton Keynes South Midlands Growth Strategy  
Neighbourhood Policing Strategy  
Rights of Way Improvement Plan  
Safer Neighbourhood Plans  
Supporting People Programme  
Train to Gain Programme  
Voluntary & Community Sector Compact  
Walking Strategy for Luton  
Water Framework  
Water Framework Directive

## Partners

Access 2 Sports  
Active Luton  
Aldwyck Housing Association  
Barnfield College  
Bedfordshire & Luton Economic Development Partnership  
Bedfordshire & Luton Combined Fire Authority  
Bedfordshire & Luton Fire & Rescue Service  
Bedfordshire & Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium  
Bedfordshire Climate Change Forum  
Bedfordshire County Council  
Bedfordshire Police  
Bedfordshire Police Authority  
Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity  
Building Schools for the Future  
Business Link East  
Campus Luton  
Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service  
Chilterns Conservation Board  
City Growth Board  
Community Development Trusts  
Community Legal Services Partnership  
Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership  
Cultural Services Trust –

East of England Development Agency  
Easter Group  
Energy Companies  
Environment Agency  
Green Business Network  
Health & Safety Executive  
Highways Agency  
I 10  
Job Centre Plus  
Learning + Skills Council  
London Luton Airport Operations Limited  
Luton & Dunstable Hospital nhs Trust  
Luton & South Bedfordshire Groundwork Trust  
Luton Assembly  
Luton Borough Council  
Luton Council of Faiths  
Luton Drug and Alcohol Partnership  
Luton Mediation  
Luton Quality of Life Report  
Luton Sixth Forum College  
Luton teaching Primary Care Trust  
Luton voluntary and community sector organisations  
Luton Youth Offending Service  
Marsh Farm Community Development Trust  
Natural England  
Princes Trust  
Probation Service  
Shape Your Future Report  
South Bedfordshire District Council  
Sport England  
The Chamber  
University of Bedfordshire  
Voluntary Action Luton  
Waste Disposal Authorities  
Water companies

## Notes

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Designed by Communications  
Luton Borough Council October '08 NMD 1729