

Luton

A Town Built on Fairness

OUR
JOURNEY...

INCLUSIVE
ECONOMY

NET
ZERO

POPULATION
HEALTH

CHILD
FRIENDLY

...TOWARDS
SOCIAL JUSTICE.

Luton



This is our social justice strategy

When we talk about social justice what do we mean?

We mean fairness in society. Fairness when it comes to opportunities, access to services, the expectation of living a long and healthy life, and fairness in being treated with dignity and respect.

Our vision for Luton 2040 is rooted in fairness. **By 2040 Luton will be a place where everyone can thrive, and no-one lives in poverty.**

We, the council and our partners across the public and private sectors and in the community, are committed to five key priorities to help bring this about. We want to create a **thriving economy** that benefits everyone, a **healthy town** where people can live well for longer, we want our town to be both **net-zero** and **child friendly**, and, above all, to be **built on fairness**.

The story of Luton and its people is bound up with a desire to improve the quality of life in the town for everyone. We want to defend human and social rights, tackle inequity, and contribute to the common good.

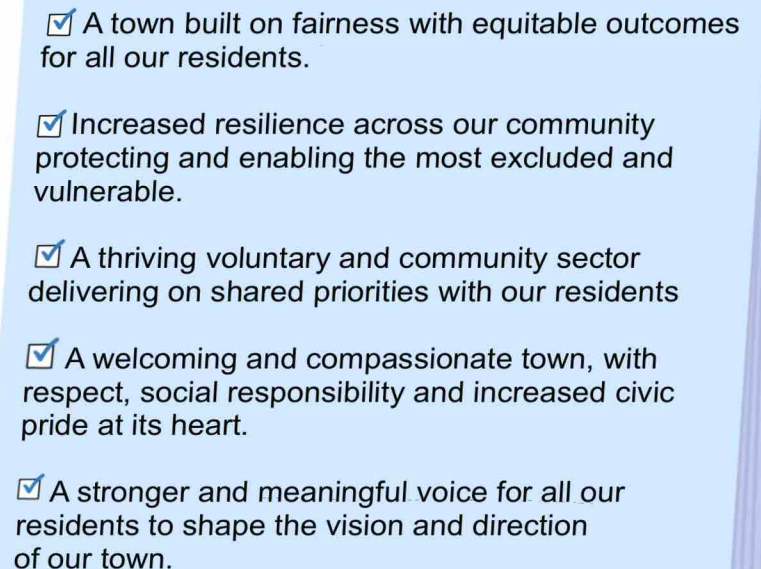
We want to create a fairer society for all.



Hazel Simmons MBE, Leader Luton Council
Robin Porter, Chief Executive, Luton Council



We will - all of us together - work tirelessly to achieve:

- 
- ✓ A town built on fairness with equitable outcomes for all our residents.
 - ✓ Increased resilience across our community protecting and enabling the most excluded and vulnerable.
 - ✓ A thriving voluntary and community sector delivering on shared priorities with our residents
 - ✓ A welcoming and compassionate town, with respect, social responsibility and increased civic pride at its heart.
 - ✓ A stronger and meaningful voice for all our residents to shape the vision and direction of our town.



We all share in the reward of making Luton a town built on fairness.

SUPPORTING A STRONG COMMUNITY, COMMITTED TO FAIRNESS AND LOCAL PRIDE, WITH A POWERFUL VOICE FOR ALL OUR RESIDENTS.



A TOWN BUILT ON FAIRNESS WITH EQUITABLE OUTCOMES FOR ALL OUR RESIDENTS

The words we use

When we talk about social justice we often use different words to talk about it. These include:

EQUALITY

Treating people the same way and ensuring they do not suffer discrimination because of who they are - but simply doing that might result in them not getting the end result they need!

We use the word **Fairness** to express these values.



EQUITY

Treating people fairly and recognising their needs as individuals – **we don't all start from the same place, so everyone needs to take steps together to put this right.'**

We cannot assume that being part of a group lets us know who they are or what they need.



DIVERSITY

→ Recognising people's many differences whilst understanding that people who share a common identity or characteristic are still individuals.

Different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued.

Strong, positive relationships are developed between people from different backgrounds.

People from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities



INCLUSION

Social measures taken to change situations where some people do not have equal access to the opportunities and services that allow them to lead a decent, happy life.

This includes people being able to give input and have their voice heard on the rules of the society in which they live.

COHESION

A condition of the community where there is an environment which offers a common vision and sense of belonging for all.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world.

What do we mean by social justice?

Social justice begins with **human rights**. We have all heard of for instance the right to life, the right to liberty and security, the rights to health, education and a decent standard of living, the right to a private and family life, amongst others. These are things that everyone can expect to enjoy. **But not everyone has the same ability to fulfil these rights.**

The aim of social justice is to eliminate the **harmful impacts of structural inequality** – social exclusion, discrimination, inequity, and poverty - that are **still experienced by many of our residents on a daily basis and that prevent them from enjoying their rights to the full.**

Our Luton 2040 vision describes Luton as “a place to thrive” but for that to become true we must, through hearing the voices of Luton’s people, understand these harmful impacts and seek to prevent and change them.

This means **focusing on the needs of the groups of people who are suffering higher levels of social exclusion** (the technical term for this is “targeted universalism”).

In doing so - in **reducing inequity and discrimination, in ensuring that we care for the most vulnerable** – we create **social and economic benefit for the whole community.**

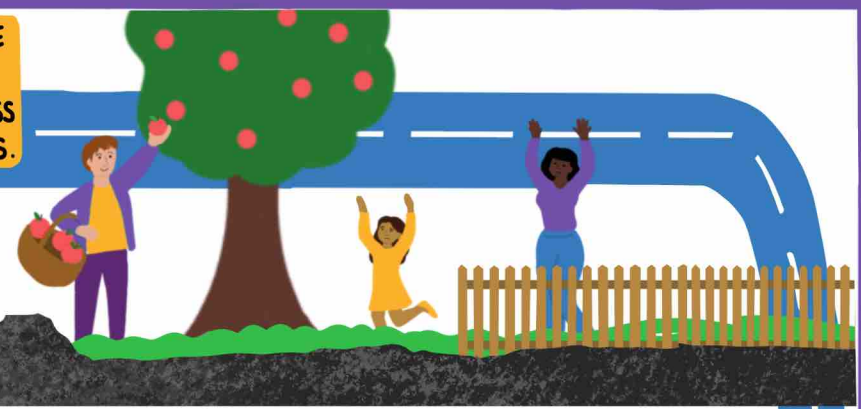
Wherever possible we must collaborate to make this change happen.



OUR STARTING POINT

WE HAVE TO COMPLY WITH EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS LAWS AND DUTIES.

WE MUST RECOGNISE THAT WE DON'T ALL HAVE THE SAME ACCESS TO OUR LEGAL RIGHTS.



SHARED VISION

THEN WE CAN MULTIPLY THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF THESE LAWS WITH...

RESPECT



TO CREATE... SOCIAL COHESION



IF RESOURCES ARE INVESTED STRATEGICALLY



WE WILL SEE INCREASED SOCIAL INCLUSION...



OUR GOAL OF SOCIAL JUSTICE BECOMES POSSIBLE

SOCIAL JUSTICE

... ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

... AND SYSTEM CHANGE FOR EQUITY.



Our social justice model

Understanding **what needs to change** and bringing it about can only be achieved when people are directly involved in the decisions that affect their lives.



Our first step in moving towards a just and fair society is to uphold the legal rights and responsibilities of the **Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010** and the **Public Sector Equality Duty 2011**. This is our legal obligation but also a goal that supports our vision of social justice.

We can build on our legal obligations by encouraging **widespread social and institutional respect** across our community and partnerships. When we see equality, diversity and respect combining we will see a society that is more cohesive.

A town free from hatred, where people from different backgrounds live alongside each other in harmony.

A cohesive society provides the foundations for people and groups to organise together – joining forces to create positive change. When **resources are invested strategically** into cohesive communities it leads to increased **social inclusion**.

When **social inclusion** is encouraged in this way by public institutions and active citizenship is enabled to **collaborate towards positive change, the means necessary for co-producing** and advancing towards the **goal of social justice becomes realisable**.

For the council and all its partners, the aim of a town built on fairness and social justice requires a shared culture of respect for equality, diversity and fairness. This culture must be fully embedded and evident in our residents' access to rights, economic and social opportunities, and services. It requires a focus on prevention and a clear commitment to tackle the causes and drivers of inequity.

It also means consideration of the steps necessary to re-distribute resources to those who need it most in order to ensure equity.

Finally, the principles required to achieve this goal must also shape our approach to community leadership. We must encourage and enable citizens' active involvement, contribution and responsibilities in the development of the town and its future.

Our strategy will ensure that these principles are the foundation and focus for our work across 3 key dimensions:

- 1) **Workforce and culture:** to become an exemplary employer for Luton.
- 2) **Community and residents:** as service commissioner and provider for our super-diverse community, meeting their needs and ensuring everyone's access;
- 3) **Citizens and civil society:** as community leader and partnership convener enabling shared work towards a town built on fairness and social justice for 2040.

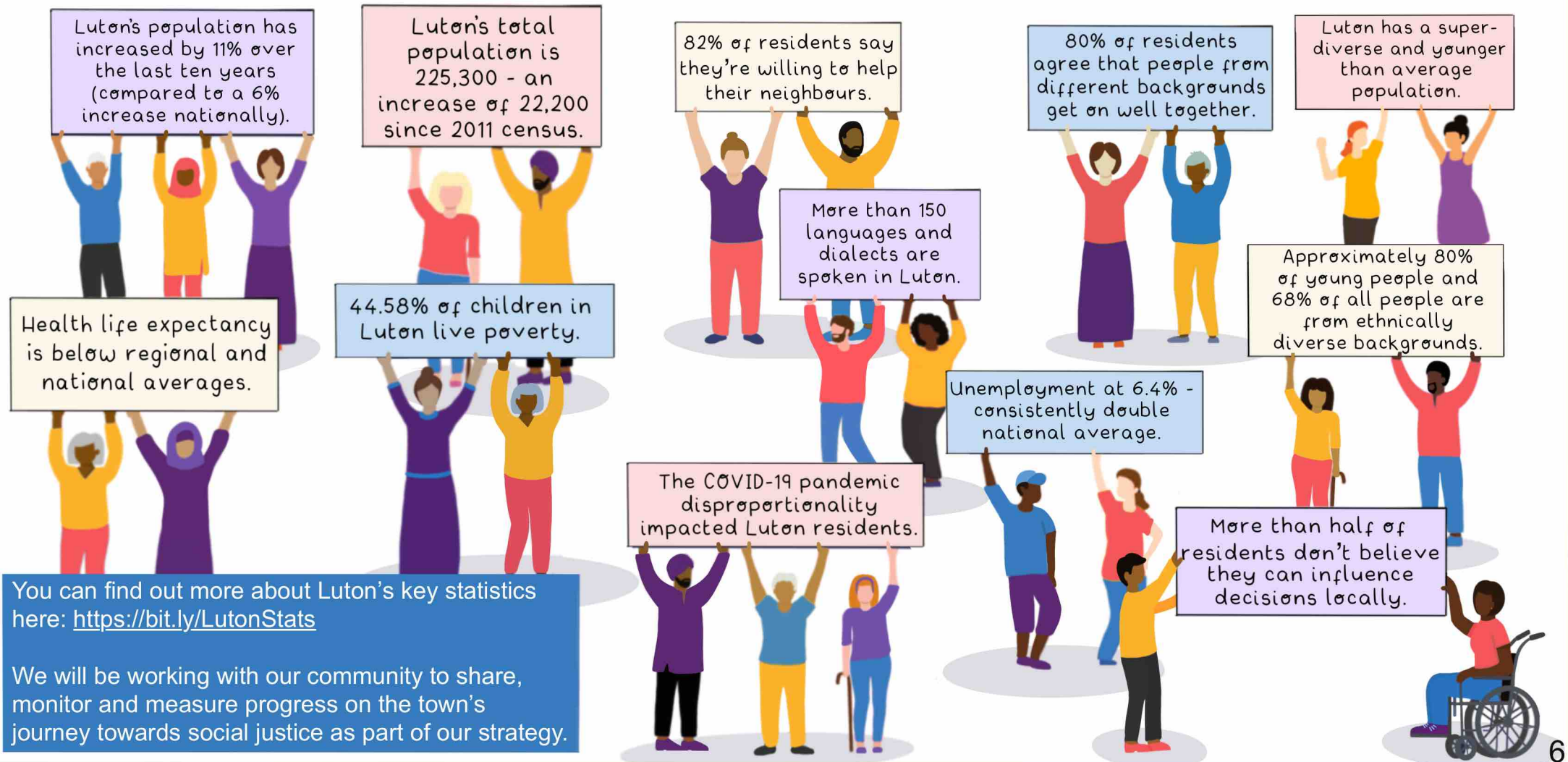
Luton - the place and the people

At the heart of our work towards a town built on fairness is our greatest asset – our community and their voice for change.

Whether as communities of identity, communities of purpose, communities of place, or communities working towards greater cohesion and harmony, however and whenever communities organise to improve life in the town we know this is the starting point for achieving fairness.

This is because it is always people's self-organisation that is the key driver in making changes happen to tackle inequity.

Below are some of the key things we know about Luton the place, its people and the inequality that still exists.



Communities of purpose



Communities of geography



ASSETS OF

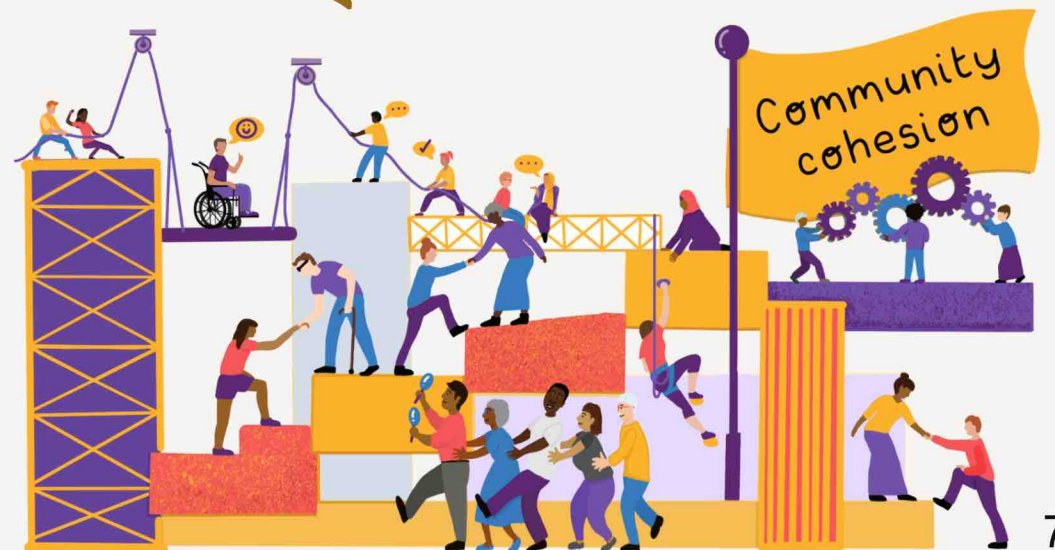
COMMUNITY

VALUE...

Communities of identity



Communities of harmony



What our community is telling us

To understand the challenges to fairness in Luton we must listen to the community. **When you speak, we need to listen, understand and act.**

We have set up equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) focus groups and networks across our community. These groups include over 300 residents from a wide range of identities, backgrounds, and equality characteristics.

There are some strong challenges and common themes that have already emerged from this dialogue including:

You shared a common perception that council engagement and dialogue is lacking and access is not enabled for diverse and excluded communities.



In response, we set up the **Fairness Taskforce, EDI groups and networks** across the community to encourage and enable everyone to get involved in making change happen.

Defining Luton in negative terms reinforces social exclusion and culture.



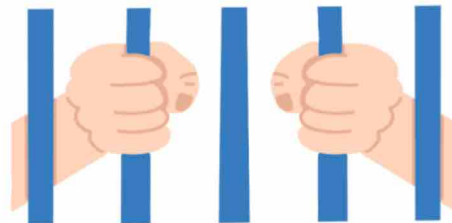
We're building a marketing campaign to show Luton in **a truly positive light** for promoting future investment and business, focusing on our community's **creativity, uniqueness and talent.**

You said the council's workforce needs to better reflect the community at all levels.



So we created a new People Plan, which includes a **clear commitment to make EDI a foundation** of our role as a recruiter and local employer.

Perception of unsafety – concerns around young peoples' vulnerability to exploitation and criminality.



We're supporting **community-led approaches** to safeguarding young people, tackling local criminal gangs and **seeking young people's ideas** on improving trust in the system.

What our community is telling us

You shared common concerns around disability and age that are creating barriers to employment and impacting income standards.



We are working with our disabled community to understand what Luton should look like as a 'Disability Friendly Town', and how we can achieve this together.

You said there is not enough access to services that support families such as early years and educational support.



We're developing family hubs and community networks across the town to provide services where they're needed and making sure community projects focused around improving the lives of children get funding.

Improve understanding of diversity and the individual needs of people across our services.



We've started EDI networks, recruited EDI coordinators and refreshed our impact assessments to support and meet the needs of our super-diverse community.

Lived experience of prejudice and discrimination is an everyday reality.



We are setting up a network for all community partners working towards 'a town built on fairness' and committing resources to ensure Luton is 'No Place for Hate'.

These themes are shaping the commitments in our strategy. We will continue to work with and develop these networks to ensure they continue to provide voice, insight and challenge to the council and all our partners.

Case studies for driving change

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, local community organisers worked with councillors to table a landmark “**Black Lives Matter**” motion for annual report back. **It received cross-party support.**

As a result, responding to this voice, the council has agreed some key priorities to work on with our community, which are relevant for all residents, including:

- ✔ Strengthening the council’s EDI commitment and practice with regard to its workforce;
- ✔ Making local diversity and community central to recruitment and ensure ‘Luton Rising’ (the council’s airport company run for community benefit) is working with the airport operator to make the airport an example of this.
- ✔ Addressing challenges around how education and the curriculum reflects community and identity in Luton;
- ✔ Tackling structural discrimination and inequality in the labour market;
- ✔ Advocating against structural inequality in national policy – for instance in areas such as immigration and criminal justice;
- ✔ Promoting and enabling deeper understanding of culture and identity amongst service providers across all sectors.

We want to see more of this approach. The people talk, the council listens and, together, we find solutions.



Following widespread concerns about the disproportionate impact of COVID 19, the council commissioned the University of Bedfordshire to undertake in-depth participatory research with diverse people from across African, Black Caribbean, and South Asian communities.

With over 1,000 local participants, the research programme broke new ground in terms of community voice and evidence-based perceptions of local services. The messages we heard included:

We feel targeted and blamed.

We have to work - no choice because on low paid jobs.

We feel we are being discriminated as employees and patients and we do not feel respected.

We do not have access to healthcare.

We want to see community diversity reflected in the local workforce to help break down language barriers and promote understanding of different cultures.

The delivery of specific recommendations for change are being driven through the 2040 partnership.

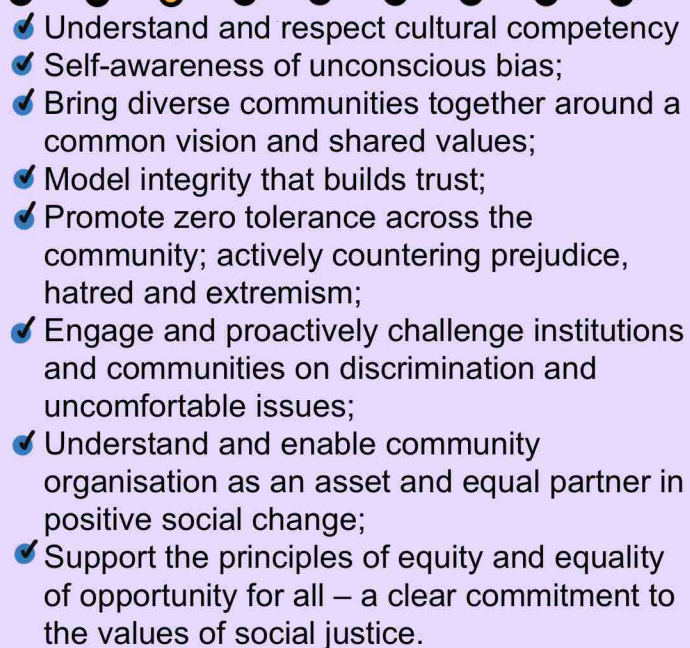
These insights reinforce the importance of ensuring the development of our strategy is clearly driven by lived experience and community voice.



Shared community leadership

Enabling leadership that can support our community on the journey towards social justice is fundamental to a town built on fairness. Whether from councillors and council officers, active citizens, our partners across public and voluntary sectors, or local businesses, we need leadership for fairness that is fully inclusive and collaborative.

To listen to, understand, and respond directly to our community as we work towards a town built on fairness and social justice requires highly developed leadership that can:

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- ✓ Understand and respect cultural competency
 - ✓ Self-awareness of unconscious bias;
 - ✓ Bring diverse communities together around a common vision and shared values;
 - ✓ Model integrity that builds trust;
 - ✓ Promote zero tolerance across the community; actively countering prejudice, hatred and extremism;
 - ✓ Engage and proactively challenge institutions and communities on discrimination and uncomfortable issues;
 - ✓ Understand and enable community organisation as an asset and equal partner in positive social change;
 - ✓ Support the principles of equity and equality of opportunity for all – a clear commitment to the values of social justice.

Developing these leadership qualities, skills and attributes across our workforce and in partnership with our community and anchor institutions is a key priority for our strategy.

Luton's Fairness Taskforce

The council has set up the Fairness Taskforce, in partnership with the Young Foundation, Beds and Luton Community Foundation, and the University of Bedfordshire.

Launched in November 2021, the Fairness Taskforce mobilises core principles of our strategy, finding new ways to invest in and enable collaboration with citizens, charities, faith groups, community groups, and partners towards greater equity in the town.

It aims to **create the force for change** – shifting from 'for' to 'with':

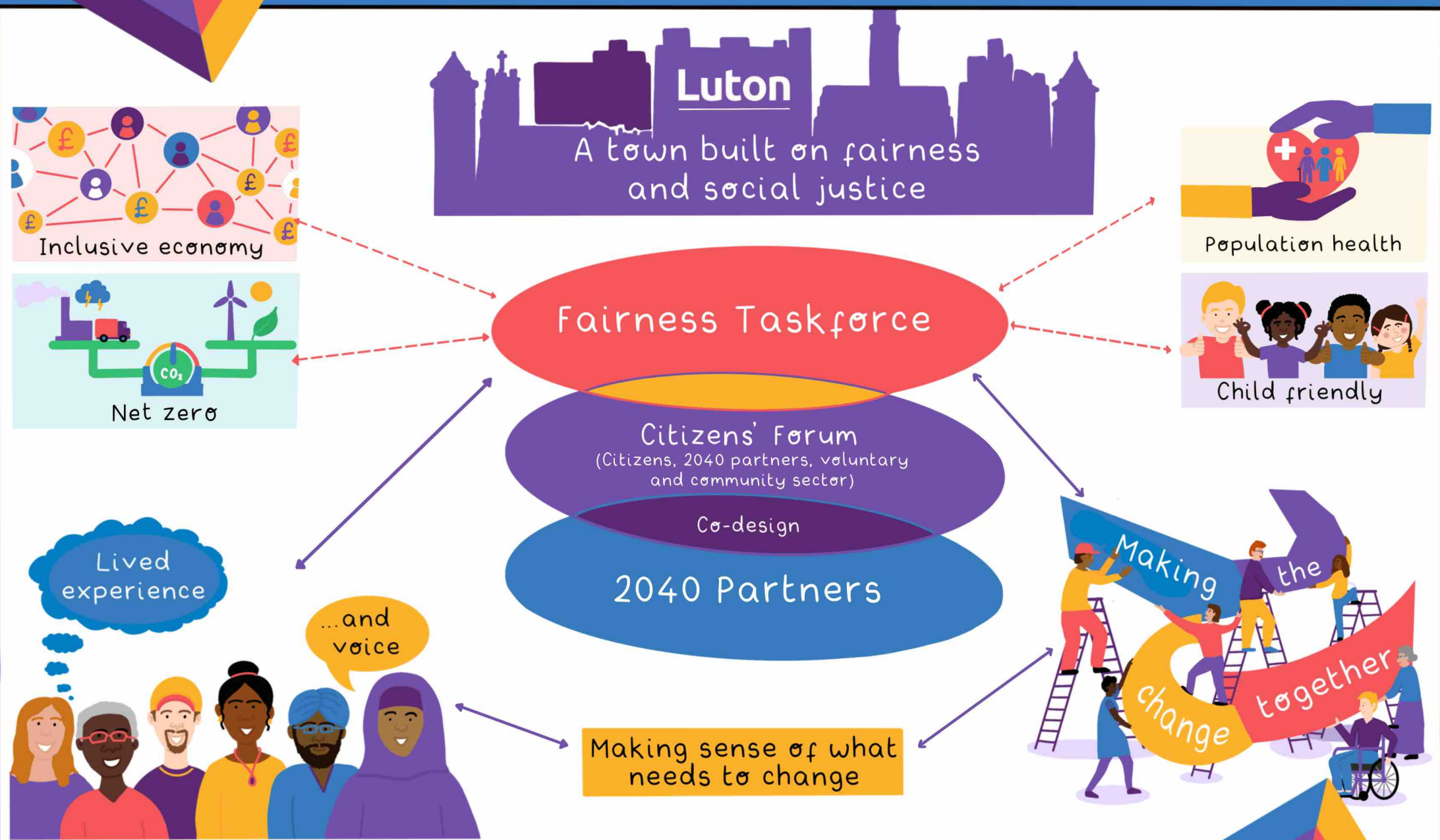
- **Starting with lived experience** – generating voice and insight through co-research.
- **Making sense** – sense checking and identifying what needs to change through co-design.
- **Making the change** – enabling new approaches across whole systems and community partnerships through co-production.

Luton's Fairness Taskforce will enable our community, citizens, charities and our faith and community groups to actively shape the future of the Luton 2040 vision and of the town. It will be a critical friend; challenging leaders to respond to new citizen-led solutions for reducing inequity, achieving net zero and enabling social inclusion in Luton.

As you can see from the following pages, it is already finding new ways to increase collaboration and investment with voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups and networks to address shared goals that increase fairness at all levels.



Luton 2020-2040: A place to thrive



Luton's Fairness Taskforce: Creating the force for change.

LUTON'S FAIRNESS TASKFORCE

YOU are the Luton Taskforce. Everyone in this room and everyone who wants to be part of it.

The Luton Taskforce has three key guiding principles:

1. Start with lived experience
2. Understand that experience and what needs to change
3. Make change happen collaboratively.

THIS IS YOUR TOWN. THE UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE IS YOUR UNIVERSITY.



THE TASKFORCE WAS ASKED TO FOCUS ON THREE KEY AREAS:

1. HOUSING
2. MONEY & DEBT
3. THE ESSENTIALS (FOOD, ENERGY, etc)

We've seen a **140% increase** in requests for food bank vouchers. I'm concerned about those who won't or can't access our services.

How can we say that Black Lives Matters when our carbon emissions are destroying black lives around the world?
- Jeremy Williams

WHAT DOES **"ALLYSHIP"** MEAN FOR THE LUTON FAIRNESS TASKFORCE? WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE IN **REALITY?**

BLACK LIVES MATTER MOTION HAS BEEN PASSED IN LUTON. WE CAN HOLD THE COUNCIL TO ACCOUNT ON THIS

Culture talk can blind us to the structural reasons why people are living the way they are.

We need a **REVOLUTION** of **LOVE** **COMPASSION** and **KINDNESS**

HOW CAN YOU ACCESS UNIVERSAL CREDIT IF YOU DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET ON YOUR PHONE?

DIGITAL ILLITERACY is **HIGH** HOW IS THIS GOING TO BE DEALT WITH?

WE NEED TO BREAK DOWN THE **BARRIERS** THAT WE KNOW ARE HOLDING US BACK.

CREATING A FAIR AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMY FOR ALL.

11% of our families live in deprivation despite their hard work. Do you want to do something about it?

LUTON'S FAIRNESS TASKFORCE

ATTENDEES WERE ENCOURAGED TO SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS AND IDEAS TO MAKE LUTON A FAIRER PLACE.

BY 2040 WE WILL HAVE ERADICATED POVERTY IN LUTON

Here are some of the ideas they shared...

MAP WHAT OPPORTUNITIES THERE ARE AND WHERE. THEN SHARE.

RAISING AWARENESS THAT ADULTS CAN STILL PURSUE THEIR CAREER GOALS.

CENTRAL SKILLS HUB WITH CROSS-SECTOR LEADERSHIP BUY-IN.

Change ~~MUST~~ HAPPEN

AS A TOWN WE'VE BEEN CONTINUALLY ENRICHED BY OUR MANY COMMUNITIES.

MANY VOICES. ONE TOWN.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT

COMMUNITY LEADERS ARE TRYING TO WORK WITH CONDITIONS AND BARRIERS THAT FEEL OUTSIDE THEIR CONTROL.

THERE'S A PROBLEM WITH ENGAGEMENT. ESPECIALLY POLITICALLY.

DISABILITY DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE

I HIT A GLASS CEILING DESPITE MY QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE, SO I HAD TO TAKE A RISK... NOW I'M SUCCESSFUL.

WE HAVE TALENTED PEOPLE HERE IN LUTON SO WHY ARE THEY NOT GETTING LOCAL JOBS?

WE BELIEVE THAT, IN DIVERSITY & INCLUSION THERE'S PHENOMENAL UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

YOU ARE DELUDED TO THINK WE THE EXCLUDED INCLUDED WITHOUT CHANGE

THERE ARE TWO OVERARCHING ISSUES:

1. RACE: PEOPLE OF COLOUR ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE UNEMPLOYED
2. CLASS: DISCREPANCY IN RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE

MY DISABILITY WAS IGNORED

WE NEED SUSTAINABLE FUNDING. WE ARE FIRE FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL. MY CHALLENGE TO LUTON IS TO ENCOURAGE MORE FULL COST FUNDING.

THERE'S A PERCEPTION THAT LUTON IS BORING & LACKS OPPORTUNITIES.

ATT10TIVE

ATT10TIVE

WHERE DOES POWER + PRIVILEGE SIT WITHIN LUTON?

Enabling system change

Serving a super diverse community and enabling change towards social justice means **working alongside people so they can achieve their hopes and dreams.**

This means ensuring communities can clearly influence decision making, and a positive culture where **system leaders look to find a way to make change happen**, wherever possible. It recognises the strength of an 'asset based' approach with communities.

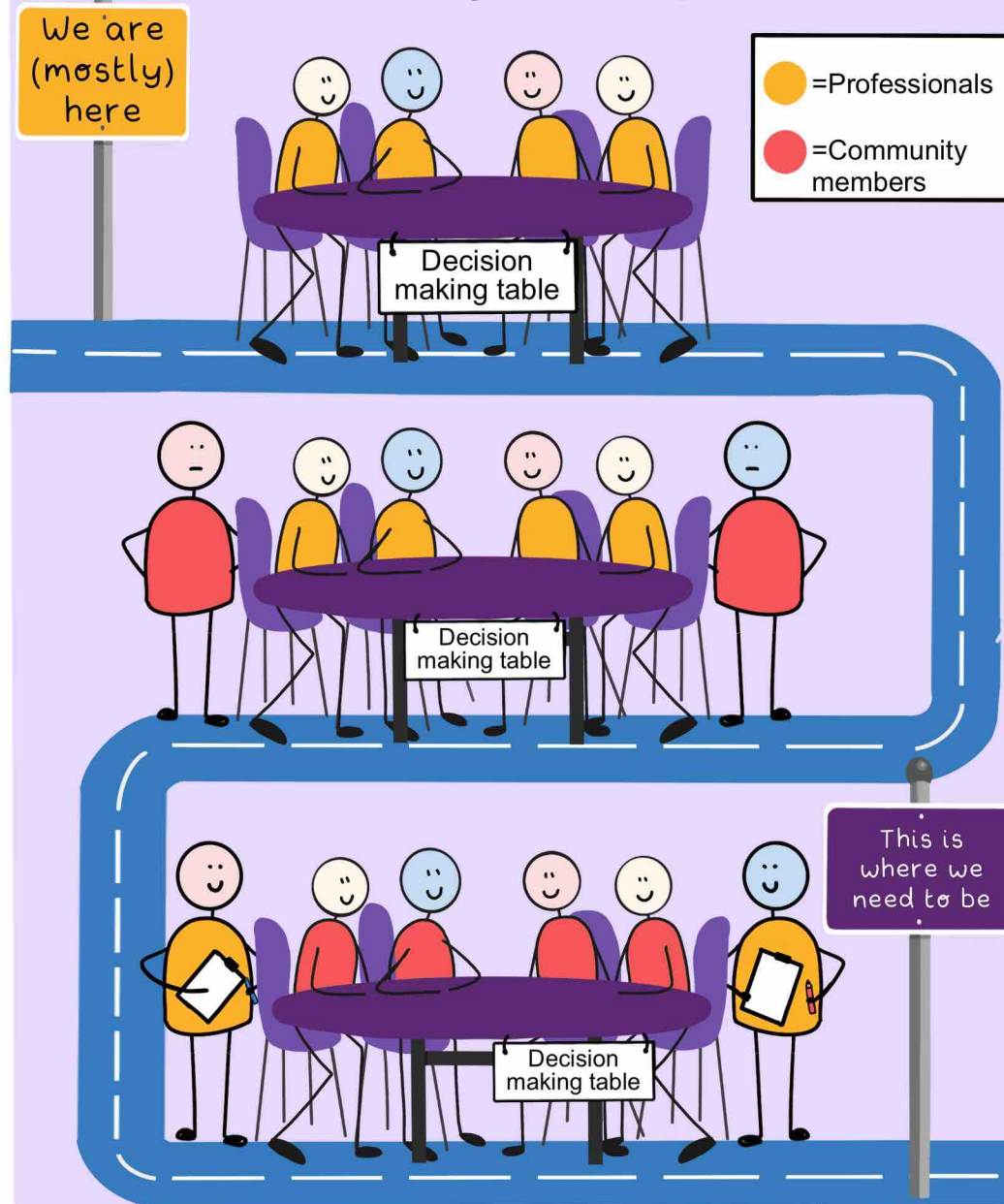


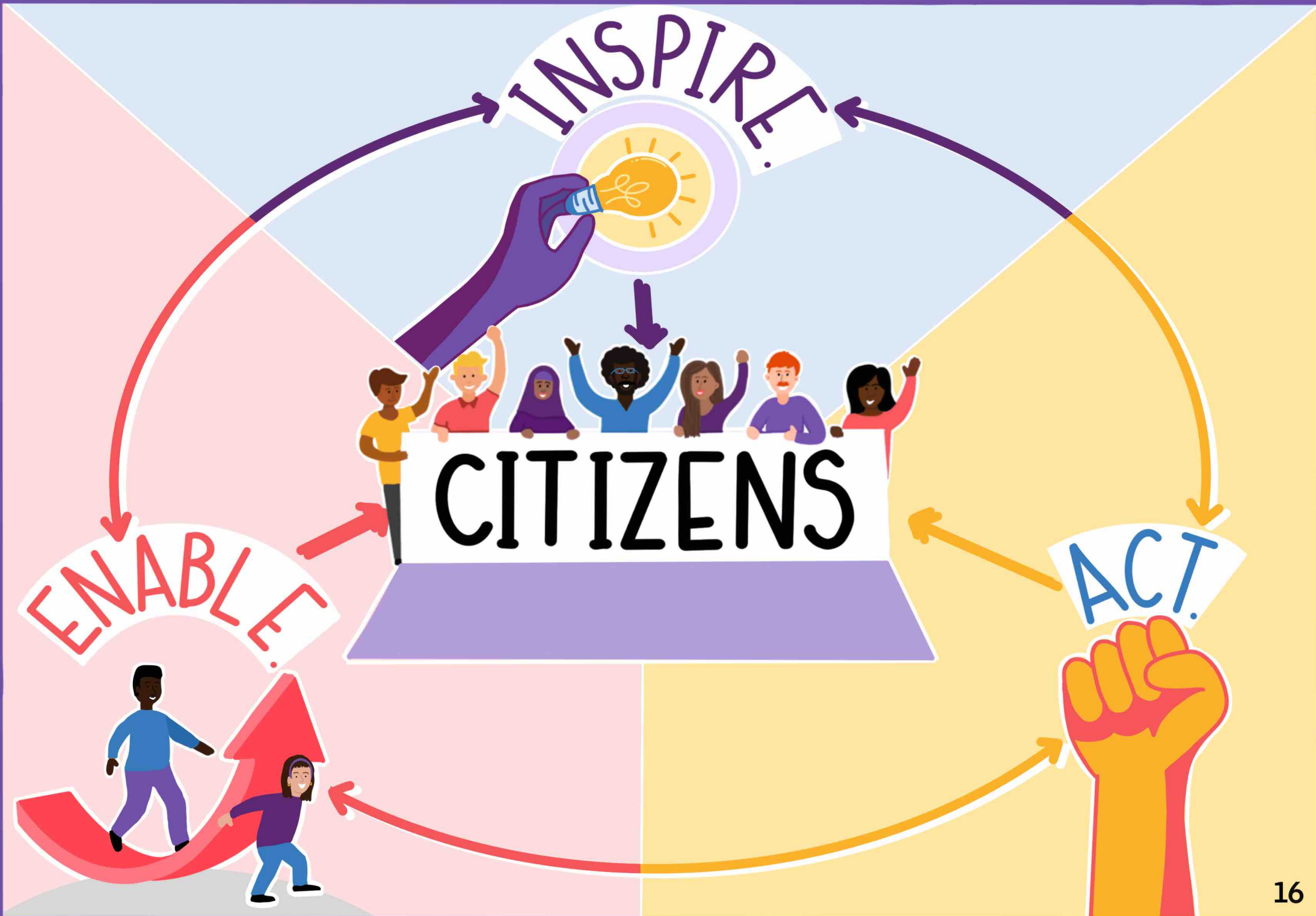
The role of system leaders is to **listen and support** these plans to become a reality. This support could come from skills sharing, community-asset transfers, funding, influencing partners and opening doors, or just keeping out of the way and letting the community get on with their work.

To do this we need **meaningful engagement**. We must adopt co-design and co-production principles as a standard way of developing solutions with and for local communities. **We need to give people the voice and opportunity to take direct action** over issues facing their communities.



Moving towards asset based community development





Active citizenship and community networks

As part of this strategy, the council will be following (and encouraging others to follow) a simple idea to enable and increase the power of citizens and communities to tackle inequity.

Inspire

we need to inspire our citizens and give them the trust and confidence to see that change can be achieved and they are at the forefront when it comes to thinking differently and trying new ideas;

Enable

we need to enable our citizens to take action, deliver change and be leaders in their communities;

Act

we need to remove barriers to allow our community leaders to act in the interest of the communities they serve.



As part of our commitment to tackling poverty and promoting social inclusion, the council will work with partners across the system to establish **place based networks and projects** providing access to services and support that can protect vulnerable and excluded communities and enable them to thrive

These neighbourhood networks and projects will work locally with council members, citizens, community organisations and partners on a range of activities identified including:



- Identifying issues that matter locally and supporting activity to address these using community feedback and data;
- Providing better access to advice and support across council and non-council services to help improve lives;

- Supporting more collaborative and joined up working across public, private and local voluntary sector services in local neighbourhoods and wards;
- Making better use of council-owned and other community based buildings to link local priorities to the 2040 agenda.



Our buildings and community assets should be used as far as possible to benefit our communities and enable them to come together and thrive. We will review the use of community assets for groups suffering higher levels of social exclusion. This will enable us to identify barriers and understand how we can create more equitable opportunities for wider access.

Due to the diversity of our communities and neighbourhoods different options need to be made available to maximise wider citizen engagement. We will work with our citizens and partners to develop approaches to share decision making and power, including:

- **Citizen assemblies** - where citizens come together to shape local solutions to issues, led by local residents, and linked into the Fairness Taskforce.
- **Community listening events** - deep dives into key issues and challenges faced by local people through building community networks and dialogue.
- **Participatory budgeting forums** – where citizens vote on the allocation of public budgets to specific projects proposed to address agreed priorities.

The aim of these events is to improve trust and share leadership and power between communities and system leaders. They can lead to the development of community-led action plans that are relevant to a specific neighbourhood, community or issue. The responsibility for delivery lies with everyone involved.

An illustration on the left side of the page shows several hands of different skin tones stacked together in a supportive gesture. The hands are wearing various accessories: a gold chain bracelet, a yellow bangle, a blue watch, and several yellow and black bangles. The sleeves are also diverse, including teal and dark blue stripes, white, and yellow. The background is white with a purple border on the left and bottom.

Many Voices
One Town
Fair for All



www.Luton.gov.uk/Luton2040

To get involved, contact socialjustice@luton.gov.uk