

MINUTE of MEETING of the LIVINGSTON NORTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 29 JUNE 2017.

Present – Councillors Dom McGuire (Chair), Alison Adamson, Robert De Bold, Andrew Miller

In Attendance –

Jim Jack, Lead Officer for Livingston North LAC
Scott McKillop, Community Regeneration Team Leader
Phyllis McFadyen, Housing, Construction and Building Services
Beverley Akinlami, CLD Youth Services Manager
Scott Hughes, Finance and Property Services
Sergeant Iain Wells, Police Scotland
Scott Williamson, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Brian Johnston, Livingston Village Community Council
Steve Egan, Eliburn Community Council

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The Local Area Committee approved the minute of its meeting held on 16 March 2017 subject to a correction as undernoted.

Page 150 – Item 7, point 2 should read:- “Can a handrail be fitted on the hilly path from Aller Place to Eliburn South?”

Matters Arising:-

Winter Maintenance/Gritting Around Peel Primary School (Page 50)

The Committee noted that this matter would be raised later in the meeting.

Handrail from Aller Place to Eliburn South (Page 50)

The Committee noted that the Lead Officer would provide members with the results of an assessment carried out by officers.

Youth Shelter, Peel Park

The Committee noted that a response had been circulated by the Lead Officer following the March meeting and this would be re-issued to LAC members.

Height of Speed Bumps at Aller Place

Noted that officers had examined these for compliance. The Lead Officer undertook to ask appropriate officers to respond to LAC members on the findings of their investigation.

3. LIVINGSTON NORTH MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing an update on the activity within the ward for the period up to 31 March 2017.

The report provided statistical information relation to the seven key priorities within the ward. It was noted that SFRS had dealt with 27 deliberate fires incidents during 2016/17 year to date reporting period in comparison to 6 during 2015-16 year to date reporting period.

In relation to Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals, it was reported that there had been 22 UFAS incidents during 2016-17 year to date reporting period, in comparison 29 in the same period during 2015-16.

In response to a question concerning the recall of some types of tumble dryers, it was noted that SFRS would not routinely be provided with such information from manufacturers. Scott Williamson undertook to provide LAC members with the number of incidents in West Lothian (if any) involving faulty tumble dryers and relevant information held by the service.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4. WARD 3 LIVINGSTON NORTH UPDATE

A report had been circulated by Police Sergeant Iain Wells providing an update on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period up to 28 February 2017.

Sergeant Wells reported there had been an increase in the number of anti-social behaviour calls to the Livingston North area, in particular Eliburn/Peel Park, Deer Park Golf Course and Livingston Station Community Centre. Whilst engaging with these youths, it had become clear that many of them came from areas outwith Livingston and that they had arranged to meet up with each through Social Media and through their schools. This migratory behaviour was a relatively new issue as historically, youths were normally territorial in nature and stayed within their own areas. Work was ongoing to address the increase in anti-social behaviour.

The report provided an update on road safety and parking issues.

In relation to traveller's sites, it was noted the Police Scotland had been involved in developing West Lothian Council's response to traveller's site.

As part of this Environmental Visual Audits (EVAs) had been undertaken by Police and West Lothian Council to assess the sites frequently used by travellers and a report of recommendations submitted.

There followed a discussion relating to the illegal traveller encampment on Cousland Road and also issues relating to the planned development in the area.

It was agreed that a report be brought to the next meeting examining the issues raised by LAC members concerning the encampment on Cousland Road. The report should provide options for addressing the problems in the short-medium term and should examine the feasibility of blocking off part of Cousland Road, the need for conditions to be attached to planning applications and details of the council's policy on Travelling Peoples Sites.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report; and
2. To agree that a report be brought to the next meeting examining the issues raised.

5. HOUSING CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an overview of the service activities within the ward.

The report examined property void and let performance for both mainstream and temporary tenancies.

The report also provided a table showing the level of rent arrears and number of tenants in arrears at end of March 2017.

In relation to the Capital Programme and New Build Council Housing, the report provided a table showing the number of units planned on the sites at Appleton Parkway, Deans South (Phase 1) and Deans South (Phase 2).

It was noted that, at the March meeting, officers undertook to provide information about the 117 units planned for Deans South and the current strategy concerning buying back of Council Houses. Officers advised that this would be included in the Housing report to the next LAC meeting.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. VACANT COMMERCIAL PREMISES IN CAMERON WAY, KNIGHTSRIDGE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated)

by the Head of Finance and Property Services providing an update on the current status of three vacant council owned commercial premises in Cameron Way, Knightsridge, Livingston.

The report was presented by Scott Hughes, Group Commercial Property Surveyor. He outlined the current position in the relation to:-

- The Former Harvester Public House
- 74/75 Cameron Way, Knightsridge (Adolfo's Takeway)
- 77 Cameron Way, Knightsridge (former Knightsridge Post Office)

The Committee was informed that the council owned the land upon which the former Harvester public house stood. The company (Harvester Livingston Limited) had been liquidated in April 2015, resulting in the ground lease becoming void. The building was inherently defective and in very poor condition with extensive rot throughout the property. There was no identified council operation requirement for the property and given the condition, it was considered to be commercially unviable.

Given the revenue costs relating to this defective property, Property Management and Development were progressing demolition and the site clearance. The future use of the cleared site would be determined in accordance with the council's approved procedures for the disposal of surplus land and buildings. This would include assessing interest in the site for commercial redevelopment and private/social housing.

In relation to Adolfo's takeaway, the premises had been closed and the business had not traded for a number of months. There had been an approach to the council by the existing tenant for the transfer of the lease to a new tenant who wished to re-establish the takeaway business. An agreement in principle had been reached between the parties and work was ongoing to conclude the transaction.

The Knightsridge Post Office had been leased by the council to the appointed Post Mistress for the Knightsridge branch. Following the resignation by the Post Mistress, the Post Office corporately had been unable to identify a replacement. The branch closed and the council took possession of the vacant premises on 17 March 2017.

To date, the Post Office had been unable to make the appointment of a new Post Master/Mistress, however, council officers were actively engaging with the Post Office in an attempt to address the matter.

Finally, it was noted that when the post office closed, the local community had lost access to the cash dispensing machine located within the branch. Council officers were engaging with national providers with a view to arranging a replacement facility in the immediate vicinity at the earliest opportunity.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee:-

1. Note the current status of the three vacant council owned

commercial premises in Cameron Way, Knightsridge, Livingston.

2. Note the work being undertaken by officers to address the future of each property.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7. SERVICE UPDATE - OPERATIONAL SERVICES

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services appraising members of the Operational Services activities for the ward for the period 1 February 2017 – 30 April 2017.

In relation to the Open Space Capital Programme, it was noted that a team from Open Space, Planning, Flood Prevention and Parks and Woodland had been awarded £20,000 by Central Scotland Green Network Development Fund for a feasibility study into improving the 'green/blue network' between Deans, Eliburn and Livingston Village, and joining up with Almondavale Park. Consultants would be appointed to consult with all key stakeholders and to provide recommendations going forward. Issues expected to be addressed included water courses, pathwoks, safety, woodland management and biodiversity.

It was suggested that a report be brought to a future meeting on the Livingston North Blue/Green Network.

In response to a question relating to the minor footway repairs in the Eliburn area (referred to on page 5 of the report), the Lead Officer undertook to provide details of the work completed.

In response to an issue raised concerning the car parking area serving the Livingston Station Community Centre and the adjacent Mosque, officers undertook to clarify who owned the land.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report; and
2. To agree that the Livingston North Blue/Green Network be added to the Workplan and a report brought to a future meeting.

8. COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT YOUTH SERVICES REPORT

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Learning Policy and Resources) providing an update on the progress made by Community Learning and Development (CLD) Youth Services, and partners, in relation to the action plan presented to Committee on 16 March 2017.

The report recalled that, following a review of CLD Youth Services in 2016, officers had identified four key actions. Developments to date were summarised as follows:-

Elburn and Carmondean

- CLD Youth Services and Youth Action Project staff undertook detached youth work over the period February to April 2017.
- Work commissioned through the Community Safety Unit was ongoing through the Youth Action Project.
- YAP was delivering a minimum of one session per week in Livingston North and the number of young people engaged was increasing.
- Focus groups had been organised in partnership with schools. Information collected from the young people and continued discussions with Livingston North Youth Providers Group and the Livingston United Parish Church would help inform future proposals and decisions concerning the youth learning offer and location of provision.

Mosswood Community Centre Management Committee and the Vennie Knightsridge Adventure Project Board

- Representatives of Mosswood Community Centre Management Committee and the Vennie Knightsridge Adventure Project Board were continuing to explore joint working opportunities.

Finally, it was noted that the service continued to participate in the Livingston North Youth Providers Group and was contributing to the developments and planning of youth provision in the ward.

It was recommended that the Committee note the content of the report.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report;
2. To agree that Helen Davies, West Lothian Youth Action Project be invited to attend the next LAC meeting to provide an overview of the Project's engagement with young people in the ward.

9. COMMUNITY REGENERATION

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration informing members of progress towards developing a regeneration plan within the ward, and related activities.

The Committee was informed that officers from the Community Planning

and Regeneration team were working on the basis that the first version of the Regeneration Plan would be in place for October 2017, as per Scottish Government requirements for Community Planning Partnership to implement their locality plans.

The report provided details relating to the Knightsridge regeneration group. As well as undertaking community engagement, the group meetings had also been used to document and develop ongoing activity within the area. This had helped keep services and community groups informed and was enabling the development of additional links between services. New partners including Carers of West Lothian and Almond Housing had attended the last meeting of the group to see how they could promote their services within the Knightsridge area and target residents who required their support most.

The report provided updates in relation to the undernoted local activities

The Vennie
Community Garden
Knightsridge-Ladywell Neighbourhood Collaboration
X-Route Partnership: Vennie-SEStran-Young Scot
The Community Heritage Conference 2017
'Hopscotch' Residential Trip
Partnership with Telugu Association of Scotland
Carers of West Lothian
Ogilvie School Campus
Almond Housing Association
Other Local Events

The Committee was also informed that, as was report to the Local Area Committee in March, Livingston United Parish Church had submitted a Stage 1 application to the council's Community Asset Transfer scheme with a view to acquiring Carmondean Community Centre (also known as Nether Bank Community Centre). Following discussion with council officers, LUPC had withdrawn this application in order for them to undertake feasibility work to help demonstrate their case. At present, Community Enterprise Limited is undertaking such work on their behalf.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee notes:

1. That the local regeneration group in Knightsridge was continuing to meet;
2. That community engagement activity was ongoing;
3. Updates on activity of regeneration partners within Knightsridge, most notably the Vennie; and
4. A Stage 1 Community Asset Transfer application had been temporarily withdrawn from Livingston United Parish Church in relation to Carmondean Community Centre

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

10. WORKPLAN

A copy of the Workplan had been circulated for information.

There followed a discussion about dates, times, location and frequency for future LAC meetings.

Decision

1. To agree to add the following items to the Workplan

- Presentation by the Headteacher from one of the Livingston High Schools
- West Lothian Youth Action Project
- Winter Maintenance Programme
- Livingston North Blue/Green Network
- Knightsridge Post Office in Cameron Way Update
- Illegal Travellers Site (Cousland Road)

2. To agree:-

- that meeting times should change from 8.30 am to 9.00 and
- that the Civic Centre would remain as the venue for the meetings.
- that six meetings be scheduled per year, instead of 4 per year.
- that the Clerk bring forward two options for the LAC's consideration and approval.

Option 1 – showing 6 proposed new dates taking into account other council Committee meeting dates

Option 2 – incorporating two additional dates into the current Timetable for 2017-18.