

MINUTE of MEETING of the FAULDHOUSE AND THE BREICH VALLEY LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 5 SEPTEMBER 2017.

Present – Councillors Cathy Muldoon (Chair), David Dodds, Pauline Clark

In Attendance –

Alice Mitchell, Lead Officer, Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley LAC
Sandy Ross, Housing, Construction and Building Services, WLC
Tony Fleming, NETs, Land and Countryside Services, WLC
Laura Wilson, Regeneration Team Leader, WLC
Tracey Loudon, Headteacher, Whitburn Academy
Desmond Donnelly, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley Local Area Committee approved the minute of its meeting held on 7 June 2017. The minute was then signed by the Chair.

3. WHITBURN ACADEMY - PRESENTATION BY TRACEY LOUDON, HEADTEACHER

The Chair welcomed Tracey Loudon (Headteacher, Whitburn Academy) to the meeting. Ms Loudon had been invited to provide an overview of the school's performance and levels of attainment.

Ms Loudon spoke of a year of change following the departure of Mr Adair in September 2016 to take up the post of Headteacher at Inverkeithing High School.

The presentation slides contained a table showing 'Performance Vs Virtual Comparator (School Leavers)' for the four years 2013 to 2016. The Committee noted that exam results for 2017 would be available later in September.

Ms Loudon provided details of performance by Department in 2017. At S4 National 5 level, the areas of concern were:- Biology, Chemistry and Computing. For S5/6 Higher level, areas of concern were Chemistry, Computing, Maths and PE.

The priorities for the school 2017 were listed as follows:-

- Review and refresh our vision, values and aims
- High quality learning and teaching

➤ Design and rationale for our curriculum

In relation to the wider life of the school, the Committee heard details of charity fundraising events and sporting successes.

Finally, the Headteacher responded to questions raised by LAC members.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked the Headteacher for her informative presentation.

Decision

To note the terms of the presentation.

4. FAULDHOUSE AND THE BREICH VALLEY MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing an update on the activity within the ward for the period up to 30 June 2017.

Desmond Donnelly (Local Area Liaison Officer - Falkirk and West Lothian, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service) presented the report, highlighting a number of improvements across the key priorities within the ward.

The Committee was informed that SFRS had dealt with 43 deliberate fires incidents during 2017-18 year to date reporting period in comparison to 36 during the same period in the previous year.

In relation to Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS), it was noted that there were 10 incidents during 2017-18 year to date reporting period in comparison to 18 during 2016-17 year to date reporting period. SFRS continued to engage with businesses to reduce demand from Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals.

The Committee was asked to note and provide comment on the Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley Multi-member Ward Performance Report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. POLICE SCOTLAND REPORT

There was no representative from Police Scotland in attendance at the meeting.

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Police Inspector Gregor Forbes providing an update on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period up to 31 July 2017.

The report contained statistical information relating to the six West Lothian

priorities. It was noted that there had been a rise of 9% in youth calls in the year to date and there had been 21 calls reported in July. This equated to 6 more in the year to date.

In relation to 'Making Our Roads Safer', it was reported that officers would be proactive and would continue to identify and deal with road traffic offences in the ward. The A71 corridor was an identified patrol route and the CAT officers had carried out and would continue to carry out speed checks in the area.

The Committee was asked to note the update on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period up to 31 July 2017.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES UPDATE

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 for the period 1 April – 30 June 2017.

The report contained information relating to Property Void and Let Performance for both mainstream and temporary tenancies.

In relation to rent arrears, it was noted that the ward position for Q1 of 2017/18 was £241,707. This was a decrease on the previous year's position. While there were 58 serious arrears cases, it was noted that 60% of cases were in the lower bands (£300 or less).

The report provided an update on the Capital Programme, noting that the 17/18 works were progressing well on the site at Lanrigg, Fauldhouse. At Cuthill Crescent, Stoneyburn, the work was in operation preparation stage. The continuation of this major area upgrading was due to restart on site in October 2017 and complete in March 2018.

Finally, the Committee was informed of activity relating to Tenant Participation and the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

It was recommended that the Committee note Housing, Building and Customer Service activity detailed in the report for the period 1 April – 30 June 2017.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7. SERVICE UPDATE - NETS, LAND AND COUNTRYSIDE

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

by the Head of Operational Services advising members of the recent activity of the NETs, Land and Countryside Services teams for the period 1 May – 31 July 2017.

It was noted that the routine grass cutting cycles continued, although the overall programme was currently behind schedule due to the wet weather during June and July.

The weed control trial that had been set up to assess other chemical and cultural methods for weed control to try and further reduce the use of Glyphosate was ongoing and was planned to be complete at the end of September. Thereafter the results of the trial would be reported to the Environmental PDSP in November 2017.

The report highlighted that work had started on the construction of the new pitch at Eastfield Road, with the drainage system being installed. Works would be ongoing over the coming weeks, with the pitch at St John the Baptist's also being completed by the same contractor. The football pitch at Longridge would also be drained before the end of the summer.

In response to a question raised, Tony Fleming informed members, that in general terms, there should be no fairgrounds on football pitches.

In relation to the pitch at St John the Baptist's, Committee members expressed concerns about damage to the pitch and drainage system as a result of fairground vehicles and machinery.

Tony Fleming undertook to convey concerns to Gordon Caldwell for consideration when an application for a fairground was made.

It was recommended that members:-

1. note the work carried out to date and future planned work.
2. advise of any areas that required further investigation or inclusion in future work plans.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report; and
2. To note concerns raised by LAC members concerning potential damage caused by fairground vehicles and machinery.

8. PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND PROVISIONAL ALLOCATIONS 2017

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration informing the Committee of the provisional allocations made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2017 to groups in the Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

The Committee was informed that thirteen applications form had been issued to groups across the ward, with ten returned to date. The intention was that the ten groups would be supported. The remaining three applications would be followed up. Appendix one to the report showed the organisations to be supported and the provisional allocation to each.

In relation to Livingston-wide and West Lothian-wide organisations, it was reported that one application had been sent to a Livingston-wide group. The application form had not been returned and this was being followed up. Two applications had been issued to West Lothian-wide groups and both had been returned. The intention was that both groups would be supported. Appendix two to the report showed the organisations and the provisional allocation to each.

During discussion, it was noted that a group (Young at Heart in Fauldhouse) did not appear on the list of applicants. Officers undertook to ascertain whether this group wish to apply to the fund.

It was recommended that the Committee note that ten groups within the ward had applied to the fund and would be supported.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

9. REPORT ON PROGRESS OF REGENERATION PLANNING

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

The report recalled that a report had been provided to the Local Area Committee in September 2016 outlining the background to developing regeneration plans, including the processes, structures and timescales involved.

The report also recalled that a decision had been taken by the Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley Local Action Group that meetings be held at individual village level. The villages were:- Addiewell, Stoneyburn, Fauldhouse and Polbeth. It was now reported that the four village groups had met a number of times and their progress was detailed within the report.

The Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration concluded that the process for developing regeneration plans was underway within the ward. Local action groups had been established and had begun the process of evidence gathering and statistical analysis. A programme of community engagement was currently underway and the information gathered from this would help to inform the plans.

Finally, it was noted that plans for the four villages would be drafted in

October 2017. A further update on progress would be brought to the next meeting of the Local Area Committee.

It was recommended that the Committee note:

1. that four local regeneration groups had been established and were active; and
2. community engagement activity was underway in all areas.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

10. WORKPLAN

A copy of the Workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the Workplan