

MINUTE of MEETING of the LIVINGSTON NORTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 21 SEPTEMBER 2017.

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

In Attendance –

Jim Jack, Lead Officer for Livingston
Scott McKillop, Community Regeneration Team Leader
Sandy Ross, Housing Manager
Deborah McAlpine, Social Policy
Alison Ritchie, NRT Manager
Sergeant Iain Wells, Police Scotland
Community Inspector Adam Smith, Police Scotland
Desmond Donnelly, 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 29 June 2017.

3. COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT YOUTH SERVICES REPORT

The Committee was informed that Helen Davies (West Lothian Youth Action Project) had been unable to attend the meeting due to illness.

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 the Youth Action Project, in relation to engagement activity with young people in Livingston North ward.

Councillor Miller stated that he had previously raised issues concerning Eliburn Pavilion. He requested that the Committee be provided with an update at the next meeting.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report and to agree that this item of business be continued to the next meeting to allow Helen Davies to attend.
2. To note that the Committee would be updated at the next meeting

on issues previously raised concerning Eliburn Pavilion.

4. WARD 3 LIVINGSTON NORTH UPDATE - REPORT BY POLICE INSPECTOR ADAM SMITH

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

Police Inspector Smith and Sergeant Wells presented the report, advising that there had been a reduction in ASB calls when compared to the same period in the previous year.

It was noted that during June and early July the area around Eliburn Park/Reservoir continued to be an issue with various reports from members of the public in relation to youths drinking alcohol/causing annoyance. As a result of this and in conjunction with partners, actions were carried out as listed in the report.

These pro-active measures had brought a significant reduction in the number of reported incidents.

The report contained a paragraph concerning the recent significant influx of travellers to West Lothian. A report on the matter would be considered later in the meeting and the Police Inspector would participate in the discussion, if appropriate. It was noted that police resources had been tasked to provide regular visits to these sites, with a number of persons being charged with various crime and vehicles used in commission of crime seized. This pro-active approach would continue over the coming months.

The Committee was informed that Police Scotland were currently undertaking a consultation process regarding the local police plan for the coming three years.

During discussion, a number of issues were raised. In particular, there were concerns about an area of public parkland at Livingston Village and that constituents had found it difficult to describe the location to Police Scotland. Community Inspector Adam Smith informed the Committee that beat officers would be prepared to meet with constituents to view the area.

In response to a question raised by Steven Egan (Elburn Community Council), Police Scotland undertook to look into issues raised concerning vehicles parked on the pavement and various other hazards around the path that leads from Arnold Clark to Raeburn Rigg.

In response to a further question, Inspector Smith advised that the Local Plan for West Lothian would be circulated to community councils in due course.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. LIVINGSTON NORTH 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.

The report provided statistical information in relation to the seven key priorities within the ward. It was noted that during the 2017-18 year to date reporting period, SFRS had dealt with 4 accidental dwelling fires in comparison to 2 during the 2016-17 year to date reporting period.

In relation to Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals, it was reported that there had been 20 incidents during 2017-18 year to date reporting period in comparison to 21 during 2016-17 year to date reporting period.

The Committee was invited to note and provide comment on the Livingston North Multi-member Ward Performance Report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. 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 Quarter 1 of 2017/18.

As requested at the previous meeting, the report contained information about the two phases of development at Deans South which were part of the 1,000 houses programme. The Committee was also informed that the council participated in the Scottish Government's Mortgage to Rent Scheme and had a policy of buying back former local authority houses which were on the open market. The report provided a link to both schemes.

Questions raised by members were dealt with by the Housing Manager. In addition, the Housing Manager undertook to respond to an issue raised concerning lack of information being provided to Deans South residents, particularly in relation to work being undertaken by utility companies.

At this point in the meeting, the Committee was informed of a late request

for a deputation. The Committee agreed to hear the deputation and the Chair then invited Phil Caven (Deans South resident) to address the meeting. Mr Caven spoke of the lack of information being provided to residents concerning a survey of existing premises prior to McTaggart starting work. He expressed serious concerns about heavy machinery on the site and the impact on existing properties, given the unsafe condition of these properties.

In addition, Mr Caven informed the Committee that, following an FOI request, Mr Caven had been provided with the results of a roof condition survey which had been too heavily redacted to be meaningful.

During discussion, members of the Committee expressed various concerns including (i) information not being provided to Deans South residents concerning work being undertaken by utility companies and (ii) the unsafe conditions of the remaining properties. A request was also made for the Depute Chief Executive to attend the next meeting of the Local Area Committee.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report.
2. To note issues raised by Committee members and by Mr Caven, summarised as undernoted:-
 - Information not being provided to residents concerning work being undertaken by utility companies.
 - Information not being provided to residents concerning a survey of existing premises prior to McTaggart starting work.
 - Residents had serious concerns about heavy machinery on the site and the impact on existing properties, given the unsafe condition of these properties.
 - Following an FOI request, Mr Caven had been provided with the results of a roof condition survey which had been too heavily redacted to be meaningful.
3. To agree that Graeme Struthers (Depute Chief Executive) be requested to attend the next meeting of the Local Area Committee.
4. To note that the Housing Manager would respond to members on the first two bullet points.

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 Livingston North from 1 May to 31 July

2017.

In relation to the Open Space Capital Programme, the Committee was informed 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 Almondvale Park. Consultants would be appointed to consult with all key stakeholders and to provide recommendations going forward. Issues expected to be addressed include water courses, pathworks, safety, woodland management and biodiversity.

An enquiry was raised by a Local Area Committee member concerning support/assistance to a group of Eliburn residents wishing to undertake a community clean-up. In response, the Open Space and Cemeteries Manager undertook to investigate the matter and discuss with the member outwith the meeting.

The Local Area Committee was asked to:-

1. Note the work carried out by the service within the local area.
2. Advise of any areas that required further information or investigation.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8. REPORT ON UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing the Local Area Committee with an understanding of the issues around managing the unauthorised travellers encampment on Cousland Road as requested during its previous meeting.

The Committee was informed that it was the remit of the council's Safer Neighbourhood Team to enforce in respect of unauthorised encampments. A multi-agency working group had been established during December 2016, whose purpose was to improve/streamline processes for dealing with unauthorised sites and to ensure that the council was consistent with its approach. The team had significantly improved processes and were acting swiftly and robustly when travellers were on council land (such as the Old Cousland Road site).

The Safer Neighbourhood Team appreciated the concerns residents had raised with problems that encampments might bring such as anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping and dumping of waste and all efforts were made to ensure that travellers dispose of waste in an acceptable manner. The Safer Neighbourhood Team regularly monitored sites. In the case of sites such as Old Cousland where residents had been subjected to repeat issues, the team would take immediate legal action to remove the

travellers and maintain contact with complainers.

The report went on to examine the Old Cousland Road site, explaining that it was a public road and access could only be legally restricted if a competent traffic regulation order was in force or if the road was legally stopped-up and taken off the list of public roads. The powers to restrict access were contained within the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Powers to stop-up a road were contained in the Road Scotland Act 1984.

The Committee was informed that the council could not promote a traffic regulation order to prevent access since the powers contained in the Road Traffic Regulation Act only allowed restrictions to be put in place for certain reasons, and access by travellers and alleged anti-social behaviour was not a competent reasons. Stopping-up the road under the Roads Scotland Act was not viable as it was still required for access. The road was well used by pedestrians and cyclists and, in addition, future development would require vehicular access via the route. It was therefore considered that there were no competent options for restricting access to this public road for the reasons of preventing illegal encampments or anti-social behaviour.

In relation to the development of the adjacent site to Cousland Road, it was envisaged that the sale of the site would conclude during the 2018/19 financial year, with the purchaser developing it for new build housing thereafter. There was a live planning application which had been submitted by Barratt Home.

There was a discussion concerning the planning application and whether or not any development would take place within the timescale reported. The Lead Officer considered that, at this time, it was not feasible to restrict access to the public road. He provided further advice concerning the process for a Stopping Up Order and explained that, should the planned development for the area be delayed due to educational constraints, then such a measure could be considered.

Members of the Local Area Committee expressed the view that a Planning Officer should provide a robust presentation to the Local Area Committee on the planning brief submitted to the council.

Decision

1. To note the term of the report.
2. To agree to request that a Planning Officer provide a robust presentation to the Local Area Committee on the planning brief submitted to the Council.
3. To note additional advice from the Lead Officer that the process for a Stopping Up Order was lengthy. However, if the planned development was delayed, then there was scope to consider this option.

ALLOCATIONS 2017

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

The Committee was informed that seven application forms had been issued to groups across the ward, with five being returned. The intention is that the five groups would be supported. The remaining two applications were being followed up. Appendix 1 to the report showed the organisations to be supported and the provisional allocation to each.

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 2 to the report showed the organisations and the provisional allocation to each.

Finally, it was noted that a full report on the final allocations would be made to the Voluntary Organisations PDSP later in 2017.

The Committee was asked to note that five groups within Livingston North ward had applied to the fund and would be supported.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

10. ALCOHOL DIVERSIONARY ACTIVITIES

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy providing information about an application for Alcohol Diversionary Activity Funding and outlining the process for such applications.

It was noted that one application had been received for consideration by the Livingston North Local Area Committee and a copy of the application was attached as Appendix 2 to the report. The project name was Friday Night Project and the amount of funding requested was £6,000.

Appendix 1 to the report was an example of the process for applications for alcohol diversionary funding for youth activities for Livingston North Local Area Committee.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee note and consider the application submitted for Alcohol Diversionary Funding against the Alcohol and Drug Partnership Joint Commissioning Plan's outcomes:

- Reducing Antisocial Behaviour

- Delivery of 1:1 alcohol brief interventions (ABIs)
- Changing group attitudes to drinking

Decision

To note the terms of the report and to recommend that the application (attached as Appendix 2 to the report) be approved.

11. UPDATE ON COMMUNITY REGENERATION ACTIVITY

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 a regeneration plan within the ward, and other related activities.

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

The report provided detailed information relating to the Knightsridge regeneration group.

The Committee noted that, following the report provided to the June meeting of the Local Area Committee, officers had continued to progress the following sites:-

- 77 Cameron Way (former Knightsridge Post Office Reinstatement).
- The Former Harvester Public House
- 74/75 Cameron Way (Vacant Chip Shop)

The report also provided updates in relation to the undernoted local activities:-

- The Community Heritage Conference 2017
- 'Hopscotch' Residential Trip
- Vennie Summer Programme/BBQ
- Big Lunch Event
- Deans Community High School
- Mosswood Community Centre Management Committee AGM

Finally, it was noted that following discussion with council officers, Livingston United Parish Church (LUPC) had withdrawn their application to the council's Community Asset Transfer scheme in order for them to undertake feasibility work to help demonstrate their case. The application related to the acquisition of Carmondean Community Centre (also known as Nether Bank Community Community Centre). Community Enterprise had been commissioned to undertake the feasibility work and LUPC were currently considering the findings of this before bringing it to council officers prior to any re-submission for Community Asset Transfer.

The Local Area Committee was asked to note:-

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, including developments with the local neighbourhood centre;
4. feasibility work had been undertaken by Livingston United Parish Church in relation to their proposal for a Community Asset Transfer of Carmondean Community Centre.

During discussion, a number of questions were raised relating to the demolition of the Harvester Site and the security of the buildings on the site prior to demolition.

Although not covered by the report, Steven Egan (Elburn Community Council) raised questions relating to the Winter Maintenance/Gritting Programme. The Lead Officer responded to questions raised, explaining that the Winter Service Policy had been reviewed by officers and would be scrutinised by the Environment PDSP.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report.
2. To agree that officers be requested to:-
 - Provide Local Area Committee members with a programme of works for the demolition of the Harvester Site.
 - Ensure the security of the buildings on the site prior to demolition.
 - Continue to examine options for a cash dispensing machine.
3. To note that, following review of the 2016/17 Winter Service Policy, there were no major changes planned and that the Plan had been scheduled for consideration by the Environment PDSP and, thereafter, submitted to the Council Executive for approval.
4. To note that the Lead Officer would examine whether there was scope for the Plan to come to the Local Area Committee for discussion.

12. MEETING DATES 2017/2018

The Local Area Committee considered a paper (copies of which had been circulated) providing meeting date options for the Committee's

consideration and approval.

Option 1 showed six proposed new dates taking into account other Council and Committee meeting dates.

Option 2 incorporated two addition dates into the current Timetable of Meetings for 2017-18.

Decision

To agree meeting dates for 2017/18 as outlined in Option 1 within the paper, and as shown below.

Meeting Dates:-

Thursday 21 September 2017 at 9.00 am

Thursday 9 November 2017 at 9.00 am

Thursday 11 January 2018 at 9.00 am

Thursday 8 March 2018 at 9.00 am

Thursday 3 May 2018 at 9.00 am

Thursday 28 June 2018 at 9.00 am.

13. WORKPLAN

A copy of the Workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the Workplan and that, in light of the decision to meet 6 times per year, further consideration would be given to the need for Police Scotland and SFRS representation at every meeting.