

MINUTE of MEETING of the LIVINGSTON NORTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within CONFERENCE ROOM 3, GROUND FLOOR, CIVIC CENTRE, on 9 NOVEMBER 2017

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

Absent – Robert De Bold

In Attendance -

Jim Jack, Lead Officer for Livingston North
Scott McKillop, Community Regeneration Team Leader
Alistair Shaw, Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services
Lorraine Donnelly, Housing, Customer and Building Services
Chris Nelson, Advice Shop
Beverley Akinlami, CLD Youth Services Manager
David Cullen, Operational Services
Police Inspector Adam Smith, Police Scotland
Stuart Pollock, Scottish Fire and Rescue Services
Helen Davies, West Lothian Youth Action Project
Brian Johnston, Livingston Village Community Council
Steve Egan, Eliburn Community Council

In the absence of the Chair at the start of the meeting, the Vice-Chair took the Chair. Councillor McGuire took the Chair on his arrival.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Deans South Update (Agenda Item 12)

Councillor Andrew Miller declared a non-financial interest as a resident of Deans South.

2. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Committee agreed a suggestion by the Chair that Item 12 (Deans South Update) be taken immediately following Agenda Item 3. Item 12 would then be followed by Items 6, 7 and 8.

3. DEANS SOUTH UPDATE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive providing an update on the current position at the Deans South estate.

The Committee was informed that, in September 2015, Council Executive had approved the Deans South estate being identified as a site for comprehensive redevelopment in the West Lothian Local Development Plan (LDP) (Proposed Plan).

It was note that McTaggart Construction had completed their enabling

works for a development of 54 council houses on the west side of the estate. The main contract was due to start in November 2017. A second phase on new build council housing at Deans South was currently planned, with Lovell Partnership currently preparing proposals for 63 new build council houses on the east side of the estate. It was expected that a planning application would be submitted by the end of 2017.

The report provided two appendices. Appendix 1 showed the 10 houses on the estate which were currently in private ownership. Appendix 2 showed the approved McTaggart layout, the proposed Lovell layout and illustrated how the balance of the site could be redeveloped for a further 116 houses.

The report went on to advise that the West Lothian Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2017-23 (SHIP) had been approved on 24 October 2017. The SHIP outlined the potential for RSL involvement in the redevelopment of Deans South. A private house building company was seeking to assemble land at Deans South with a view to building affordable homes for an RSL. Officers would continue to have dialogue with interested parties to establish there was potential to progress with detailed proposals.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee:-

1. Note that the demolition of 16 vacant blocks had been completed in 2016; 10 of the remaining houses at Deans South were in private ownership; the other 46 were owned by the council;
2. Note that 117 council houses were currently planned for Deans South across two sites; McTaggart were to build 54 and Lovell were to build 63; and
3. Note that there was interest from Registered Social Landlords in being involved in the redevelopment of parts of the estate and this was in accordance with the recently approved Strategic Housing Investment Plan.

At this point in the meeting, the Council was informed that a late request for a deputation had been made by Mr Phil Cavan. The Committee agreed to hear the deputation. The concerns raised by Mr Cavan related to health and safety issues. Mr Cavan also informed the Committee that he was supportive of the potential solution for a comprehensive redevelopment of the estate by a private developer.

The Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services responded to questions raised by the Committee and, in particular, provided an update in relation to proposals by McTaggart. The Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services also undertook to provide an un-redacted copy of the roof condition survey (subject to agreement by Legal Services) to the Chair of the Local Area Committee.

Decision

1. To note that the demolition of 16 vacant blocks had been

completed in 2016; 10 of the remaining houses at Deans South were in private ownership; the other 46 were owned by the council;

2. To note that 117 council houses were currently planned for Deans South across two sites; McTaggart were to build 54 and Lovell were to build 63; and
3. To note that there was interest from Registered Social Landlords in being involved in the redevelopment of parts of the estate and this was in accordance with the recently approved Strategic Housing Investment Plan.
4. To note advice by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services that McTaggart had prepared revised proposals and were satisfied that the work would not impact on existing properties. The information received from McTaggart would be shared with Local Area Committee members.
5. To note that the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services would provide an un-redacted copy of the roof condition survey (subject to agreement by Legal Services) to the LAC Chair.
6. To note that LAC members wished to be updated on the ongoing discussion with the private developers on the potential private developer solution.

4. MINUTE

The Local Area Committee approved the minute of its meeting held on 21 September 2017 subject to an amendment as undernoted:-

Page 11, Item 6 (Housing, Customer and Building Services) – To include in the body of the minute that Councillor Alison Adamson had suggested a meeting of council officers and those affected on the Deans South estate.

5. ADVICE SHOP SERVICE UPDATE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services informing the Local Area Committee of the work undertaken by the Advice Shop Service from April 2016 to March 2017.

Appendix 1 to the report showed the number of people the service had worked with over the year in the Livingston North area.

Appendix 2 to the report showed the wider work of the Advice Shop and the specific campaigns which were delivered across West Lothian alongside a range of projects which were provided in partnership with key agencies to target the most vulnerable in communities.

It was noted that all activity across the service was informed and prioritised by the 'Better Off: West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy'. The

overall purpose of the strategy was to help minimise the impact of poverty on the people of West Lothian. Its objective was to ensure that people were equipped to cope with the challenges they currently faced and the impact that this had on their health, education and community involvement, the aim being to help people to obtain and retain employment as a key route out of poverty.

It was recommended that the Committee:

- Note the Advice Shop provision in the ward; and
- Note the impact provision was having in terms of supporting the outcomes of the 'Better Off: West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy'.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. WARD 3, LIVINGSTON NORTH, UPDATE

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 25 October 2017.

The report provided an update in relation to concerns raised at the previous meeting concerning traveller's site. It was noted that, following a significant influx of travellers to the Livingston area, a number of Environmental Visual Audits (EVAs) and joint visits with WLC SNT officer had been conducted. A number of notices to quit had been served by West Lothian Council and private landlords and over the last two months, the majority of these sites had been vacated.

Inspector Smith advised that, as a result of good partnership work carried out in the reporting period, there had been a marked decrease in the number of youth calls to the Eliburn Park/Reservoir and Deer Park areas of Livingston.

The Local Area Committee was asked to note the content of the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7. LIVINGSTON NORTH MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE REPORT - REPORT BY SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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

The report provided statistical information in relation to the seven key

priorities within the ward.

It was noted that during the 2017-19 year to date reporting period, SFRS had dealt with 2 casualties due to fire in comparison to 0 during 2016-17 year to date reporting period.

There had been 20 deliberate fires incidents during 2017-18 year to date reporting period in comparison to 23 during 2016-17 year to date reporting period.

The number of unwanted fire alarm signals had risen to 42 incidents during 2017-18 year to date reporting period, compared to 32 during the same period in the previous year.

The Committee was invited to note and provide comment on the Performance Report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8. PRESENTATION BY PAULINE ALLISON - DEANS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Pauline Allison, Headteacher, Deans Community High School.

Ms Allison had been invited to attend the meeting to provide an overview of the school's performance and levels of attainment.

The Committee was informed that students attending Deans CHS came from a variety of backgrounds, including socio-economic and ethnic, with around 50 for whom English was their first language.

The Headteacher presented a table showing exam attainment performance for 2017 with comparative figures for 2016.

A presentation slide showed a range of student achievements., which included:-

- Sport Scotland Gold School Sport Award
- Winners of the St Andrews Day Debate at the Scottish Parliament
- S5/6 Natinoal Handball Champions
- Gold Award for the Deans Wind Ban in the Scottish Concert Band National Finals
- Fundraising for a wide range of charities, raising over £4500.

Finally, the Headteacher spoke of the school's priorities for improvements in attainment at Higher level.

The Chair thanked Ms Allison for her informative presentation.

Decision

To note the terms of the presentation.

To note that the Headteacher would arrange to add the four LAC members to the circulation for Deans Community High School Newsletters.

9. 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 tenancies and temporary tenancies.

In relation to rent arrears, the ward position for Q2 of 2017-18 was £247,251. This was an increase of £11,353 on the previous year's position. While there were 63 serious arrears cases, it was noted that 60% of cases were in the lower bands.

The report provided a table showing the sites in the ward which were included in the New Build Council Housing Programme, together with information on site start dates and site completion dates. A verbal update to the information presented in the report was provided by the Area Housing Manager.

Finally, the report provided an update concerning the unauthorised encampment in Old Cousland Road. The Committee also heard advice by the Lead Officer that arrangements were being made for a Planning Officer to give a presentation to a future meeting on the planning brief for the area. It was further noted that the Lead Officer had arranged to visit the site later in the day.

The Committee was asked to note Housing, Customer and Building Services activity as detailed in the ward report for the period 1 July 2017 to 30 September 2017.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

10. 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 for the period 1 August – 30 September 2017.

The Open Space and Cemeteries Manager amplified aspects of the information contained in the report and responded to questions raised by elected members.

In response to a question raised by the Chair of Elburn Community Council, officers undertook to check and report back on the nature of the work planned for Aller Place as the road was currently marked with yellow paint.

In relation to footpath gritting, the Lead Officer undertook to check with Legal Services the terms of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act and whether there was a legal basis for a Participation Request to be considered by the Council.

In relation to the Community Garden on the grounds of Mosswood Community Centre, the Regeneration Officer undertook to ascertain who was responsible for the maintenance of the garden and also the area of ground at the back of the Centre.

There followed a request by Councillor Andrew Miller that, following the end of the Transforming Your Council consultation period, and consideration of responses by PDSPs, ward information be brought to the LAC for information and discussion.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report; and
2. To record Councillor Miller's comment concerning ward information being brought to the Local Area Committee at the end of the consultation period.

11. COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT YOUTH SERVICES

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 over the period July to October 2017, in relation to engagement activity with young people in Livingston North ward.

The CLD Youth Services Manager presented the report, advising in the period July-October 2017, YAP had carried out 34 sessions in the Livingston North area. In total there were 60 visits undertaken over 34 sessions. The report contained a breakdown of the visits by area.

The report also advised that 142 young people were engaged; 106 males and 36 females.

A list of key concerns raised by young people were listed in the report.

The Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resource) concluded that YAP streetwork service contained to remain a presence in the Livingston

North area; however, due to the increase prevalence of youth anti-social behaviour in other areas of West Lothian; Bathgate, Whitburn and Blackburn, the visits had been reduced to one session per week.

YAP was an active member of Livingston North Youth Providers group and continued to support collaborative approaches to improve outcomes for young people as well as communities.

The Committee was asked to note the content of the report.

At this point in the meeting, representatives from Elburn Community Council and Livingston Village Community Council recorded their appreciation of the work undertaken to alleviate problems at Oldwood Place.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

12. PENSIONERS' CHRISTMAS FUND 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 allocations made from the Pensioners' Christmas Fund 2017 to groups in the Livingston North ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

The report advised that seven application forms had been issued to groups across Livingston North ward, with all seven being returned. The seven groups had been supported. The groups supported and the allocation to each was shown in Appendix 1 to report. Appendix 2 to the report showed the Livingston-wide and West Lothian-wide organisations.

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

The Committee was asked to note that seven groups within the Livingston North ward applied to the fund and had been supported.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

13. COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE

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 advised of the Vennie's application for funding from the Scottish Government's Aspiring Communities fund, closely supported by

the Economic Development and Regeneration service. This funding application had been approved and it would allow the Vennie to employ a development worker. As this was aligned to regeneration plans, this would also cover the other parts of the Livingston Central area (Ladywell and Dedridge) to support regeneration planning and work with the steering groups there.

The report went on to provide details of details of engagement in Knightsridge. The report also provided an update to issues previously raised relating to the Post Office reinstatement, the Cash Machine and the demolition of the Harvester.

In relation to the potential community asset transfer, officers had met with representatives from Livingston United Parish Churches (LUPC) to discuss the next stages following the feasibility study on their proposal for Carmondean Community Centre to be transferred to them. In the likelihood they did wish progress to formal application, this was unlikely to be until early next year by which point it was anticipated an updated policy of asset transfer would be in place to provide the framework for further progress..

Finally, the report provided an update on the Livingston North Youth Providers Group.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee note:-

1. that community engagement activity was ongoing;
2. the updates on activity of regeneration partners within Knightsridge, including developments with the local neighbourhood centre;
3. that feasibility work had undertaken by LUPC in relation to their proposal for a Community Asset Transfer of Carmondean Community Centre; and
4. the updates from the Livingston North Youth Providers Group.

During discussion, a request was made for an update to the next meeting on the demolition of the Harvester site and details of what would follow once the site had been cleared.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report; and
2. To note the request for an update to be provided to the next meeting on the demolition of the Harvester site.

14. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS

A paper had been circulated for information showing meeting dates and times for meetings to the end June 2018.

Decision

To note the Timetable of Meetings.

15. WORKPLAN

A copy of the Workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the Workplan and the intention to invite Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to report to the Local Area Committee on a quarterly basis.