

MINUTE of MEETING of BROXBURN, UPHALL AND WINCHBURGH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 14 DECEMBER 2017.

Present – Councillors Angela Doran (Chair), Chris Horne, Diane Calder and Janet Campbell

In attendance

Alan Bell, Lead Officer, West Lothian Council

David Lees, Cleaner Communities Manager, West Lothian Council

Phyllis McFadyen, Area Housing Manager, West Lothian Council

Christopher Nelson, Senior Advisor, Income Maximisation Team, WLC

Laura Wilson, Regeneration Team Leader, West Lothian Council

Des Donnelly, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Sargent Ian Wells, Police Scotland

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTE

The committee approved the Minute of its meeting held on 5 October 2017. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. POLICE SCOTLAND UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Inspector Scott Robertson, Police Scotland, providing an update on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period up to 31st October 2017.

The report provided information for the reporting period relating to a number of themes and provided comparative figures for the same period in 2016.

Sargent Wells stated that police officers continued to work hard within the community, working with partners in relation to a number of issues. He reported on initiatives that were taking place within the ward which included the continuation of Operation Borah and implementing road safety measures which included monitoring of traffic in and around some of the schools in the ward area supporting the "Park Smart" initiative. Officers have also been carrying out hand held radar checks at various locations. An update was also provided on operation "Jigsaw" with police officers patrolling hotspot areas where break-ins were occurring.

Sargent Wells then responded to questions from members of the committee. In response to a question relating to the proposed reduction of twenty-one council funded police officers within West Lothian, Sargent

Wells advised that this could have an impact on Youth Community Police Officers who carried out preventative work and cyber-crime interventions within the school environment. However, the community policing model would continue with support provided from the Community Beat Officers.

Concerns were also highlighted about reports of cars speeding at Niddrie Road, Winchburgh, with four accidents allegedly reported. Sargent Wells undertook to highlight these concerns to the Road Policing Officer and to bring this to the attention of Highways Officers. Councillor Calder recommended that an update on road safety in this area be included on the workplan for a future meeting due to concerns about speeding and the increase in the volume of traffic using this road due to the new build housing in this area.

It was recommended that the committee notes the contents of the report.

#### Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To note the recommendation for a report on road safety at Niddrie Road, Winchburgh, to be included on the workplan for consideration at a future meeting.

#### 4. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing details of activity for the ward up to 30 September 2017. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was a series of graphs that provided details of accidental fire dwellings, fire casualties and fatalities, deliberate fires, fires in non-domestic properties, non-fatal non-fire emergency casualties and unwanted fire alarm signals, provided on a ward basis, West Lothian basis and Scotland-wide basis over a number of years.

The Fire Officer, Des Donnelly, provided an update in relation to a number of initiatives taking place within the ward area. He advised that new build houses were being fitted with hard wired smoke detectors and officers would continue with the home fire safety visit programme. New tenants were offered fire safety visits and joint visits with housing officers were also carried out to tenants requiring support. There were 4 deliberate fires reported during 2017-18 year to date reporting period in comparison to 21 the previous year. Fire Officers continued to visit schools to raise awareness.

The Fire Officer then responded to a number of questions from members of the committee. In response to a question about the number of smoke detectors fitted in domestic premises within the ward area he undertook to provide members with information relating to the reporting period and confirmed that this information could also be included in future reports.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To note that the Fire Officer undertook to provide members with details of the number of smoke detectors fitted in domestic premises within the ward area for the reporting period and that this information be included in future reports.

5. 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 update on the housing service activities for the ward for the period 1 July to 30 September 2017.

The report provided an overview of the activities of Housing, Customer and Building Services, specific to the Broxburn ward for the second quarter of 2017/2018 and examined property void and let performance for both mainstream and temporary properties for the reporting period, confirming that there were 9 policy voids. It was noted that voids existed for various reasons and delays in re-letting occurred for a variety of reasons. Council services continued to work together to ensure a seamless process existed to avoid any unnecessary delays.

The report continued by providing details of rent arrears for the ward noting that for Quarter 2 of 2017/18 the arrears were £168,396, which was a decrease of £2,695 from the previous year's position. It was also reported that work continued to provide financial advice and assistance with a view to ensuring positive outcomes in terms of welfare benefits and income maximisation.

Details were also provided relating to the capital programme and new build council housing, tenant participation and safer neighbourhood council officer ward information.

The Housing Manager then responded to questions from committee members and undertook to provide the following information:

- An update on the number of houses due to be handed over at Kirkhill, Broxburn and the number already occupied;
- An update on the most recent number of property voids in the ward area;
- An update on the proposals for the work to be carried out at Almondell Road, with a request that members be kept updated on the progress being made;
- An update relating to the 'Rate your Estate' event held in Armadale in August 2016 and confirm whether a similar event could be organised within the Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh ward area.

The Local Area Committee was asked to note the Housing, Building and Customer Service Activity as detailed in the report for the period 1 July to 30 September 2017.

#### Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To note that the Housing Manager undertook to provide members with an update on the information outlined above.

#### 6. SERVICE UPDATE - NETS, LAND & COUNTRYSIDE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing details of the NETs, Land and Countryside services for the period 1 August to 31 October 2017.

The report provided a summary of works carried out and enquiries received in relation to grounds maintenance, garden maintenance and cleaner communities.

Enforcement Officers dealt with enquiries in relation to various environmental issues within the area and carried out patrols. Several abandoned/nuisance vehicles were dealt with and removed from streets by gaining compliance following negotiation, verbal warnings, warning letters, official notices served or WLC contractor removal. Further details of the work carried out by Enforcement Officers were outlined within the report which included Parks and Woodland enquiries and Open Space and Cemeteries. Finally, the committee noted that the weed control trial had finished at the end of September, with the results scheduled to be reported to the Environmental PDSP in December 2017. Routine grass cutting had also been completed for the year. The Enforcement Officers had been involved in a number of community projects within the ward, with the aim of raising awareness of environmental issues.

The Cleaner Communities Manager then responded to questions from members of the committee. In response to a question on whether it was the council's responsibility to clear up the leaf fall at particular areas within the ward he undertook to investigate this and report back to councillors.

During the course of the discussion members of the committee raised their concerns about the proposals to reduce the number of recycling centres in West Lothian and the impact this could have on fly-tipping. The Cleaner Communities Manager agreed to liaise with colleagues from Waste Management and report back on whether there was information available from other local authorities who had reduced recycling centres and the impact this had.

The committee thanked the officers within the service for all their efforts and hard work carried out in the ward.

It was recommended that the committee note the work carried out to date

and future planned work and advise of any areas that required further investigation or inclusion in future work plans.

### Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To note that the Cleaner Communities Manager undertook to investigate the enquiries from the committee and provide an update thereafter.

## 7. ADVICE SHOP SERVICE UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services providing an update on the work undertaken by the Advice Shop Service from April 2016 to March 2017.

The report and attached appendices summarised the work of the Advice Shop service in the Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh ward area and provided an overview of the Advice Shop Service as a whole. The committee noted a typographical error in Appendix 1 (Ward Profile April 2016-March 2017) as the Advice Shop Clients chart age groups should be 16-64 and not 16-24.

The Senior Advisor, Income Maximisation Team, then provided details of the work carried out to provide a free, impartial and confidential service to help the people of West Lothian with a focus to alleviate poverty, promote inclusion and equality through advice, assistance and advocacy. The Advice Shop service was funded through a core council budget, European Social Fund, Macmillan Cancer Support and the Scottish Legal Aid Board. All activity across the service was informed and prioritised by the 'Better off: West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy' with an objective to ensure that people were equipped to cope with the challenges they were facing 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.

The Senior Advisor then responded to questions from members of the committee. He advised that the Business Gateway office in Broxburn was closing which had given the service an opportunity to review its provision. Increased sessions were available at Strathbrock Partnership Centre. The service worked closely with its partners and supported 56 families in the ward to sustain their homes.

The committee requested an update on the closure of the Business Gateway office in Broxburn. The Lead Officer undertook to forward this request on to the relevant officer to provide members with an update.

The Committee commended all staff working within the service for the excellent work carried out.

The Local Area Committee was asked to note the contents of the report

and the intention to report on activity in the ward area on an annual basis.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report subject to noting the typographical error at Appendix 1; and
2. To note that the Lead Officer undertook to contact the relevant officer to provide an update to members on the closure of the Business Gateway office in Broxburn.

8. PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2017

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing details of the allocations made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2017 to groups in the Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups. Appendix 1 to the report provided details of the organisations to be supported within the ward area and the allocation to each. Appendix 2 provided details of the Livingston-wide and West Lothian-wide organisations to be supported.

A full report on the final allocations would be made to the Voluntary Organisations PDSP. Letters were issued to groups in late October 2017 advising them of the amount of funding they would receive and payments would be made directly to the bank accounts of groups during November via PECOS.

The committee was asked to note that 10 application forms were issued to groups across Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh ward, with all 10 being returned. The proposal was that the 10 groups that applied would be supported.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

9. REVISED TIMETABLE OF REMAINING MEETINGS IN 2017-2018

The committee noted the revised timetable of the remaining meetings in 2017-2018 (copies of which had been circulated).

The committee agreed to the revised timetable but suggested that future meetings be held within the ward area. The clerk undertook to check out what venues were available and update members thereafter.

Decision

1. To agree to the revised timetable of remaining meetings in 2017-2018; and
2. To note that the clerk undertook to check out suitable venues within the ward for future meetings.

10. WORKPLAN

The committee noted the workplan (copies of which had been circulated).

The committee recommended that the following items be included on the workplan:

- Niddrie Road, Winchburgh, Road Safety Update; and
- Ecclesmachan Road Safety Update.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the workplan; and
2. To note that the Lead Officer undertook to contact Operational Services regarding the request from the committee for road safety update reports to be submitted to future meetings.