

MINUTE of MEETING of the VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 17 MAY 2018.

Present – Councillors Kirsteen Sullivan (Chair), Andrew McGuire, Tom Conn, David Dodds, Bruce Fairbairn, Chris Horne and David Tait

In attendance

Bridget Meisak, Chief Executive Officer, Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian
Ian Buchanan, Senior People's Forum Representative
Fiona Pearson, Network Co-ordinator, WLSen
Matt Pearce, Manager, West Calder & Harburn CDT

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 8 – An Enterprising Third Sector

Councillor Bruce Fairbairn declared an interest as the Chair of the Board for West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network.

2. MINUTE

The Panel confirmed the minute of the meeting held on 15 March 2018 as being a correct record. The Chair thereafter signed the minute.

3. UPDATE ON REGENERATION PLANS

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update on the progress made towards developing regeneration plans for West Lothian's most disadvantaged communities.

A report was provided to Local Area Committees in September 2016 outlining the background to developing regeneration plans, including the processes, structures and timescales involved. In November 2016 the Community Planning Partnership Board agreed that regeneration plans would be adopted as West Lothian's Locality Plans, as required by the Community Empowerment Act 2015.

The Regeneration Team Leader advised that regeneration plans were being developed in eight targeted areas in West Lothian, covering thirteen individual communities, based on the data zones within the bottom 20% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Details of the process and progress made to date were then provided to members of the panel.

The regeneration plans would be flexible, working documents which would provide a long-term targeted action to improve the daily lives and life chances of people living in our most disadvantaged communities. Plans would be developed with input from communities and partners.

Quarterly updates would be provided to the relevant Local Area Committees and annually to the Community Planning Partnership Board (CPPB). The CPPB would be asked to approve the plans for publication in June 2018.

The Regeneration Team Leader then responded to questions from the Panel. In response to an enquiry relating to asset mapping she confirmed that an online interactive map has been created for each of the regeneration areas which was currently being updated and populated with all relevant local assets and points of interest. The Regeneration Team currently administered the maps but it was expected that a key community organisation in each area would also be granted administrator rights in order to keep the maps up to date.

During the course of the discussion the CEO of VSGWL advised that the service could provide support to assist with any funding applications to help regeneration within communities. She also stated that The Scottish Government Third Sector Unit visited as part of the follow-up from the recent national TSI Review to assist in the delivery of social enterprise outcomes. Information available following the visit could be shared with the Community Regeneration Team to assist in devolving control and engagement to local communities.

The Panel acknowledged the excellent work carried out by the Regeneration Team to support the most disadvantaged communities.

It was recommended that the Panel notes:

- That thirteen regeneration plans were being created for identified areas of deprivation in West Lothian;
- That each area has a steering group which was leading the regeneration planning process; and
- That the Community Planning Partnership Board would be asked to approve the plans for publication in June.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

4. ASPIRING WEST LOTHIAN PROJECT

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by West Calder & Harburn Community Development Trust providing an update on the Aspiring West Lothian project.

The Panel welcomed Matt Pearce, Manager, West Calder & Harburn CDT, to the meeting. Mr Pearce advised that The Aspiring West Lothian project was a consortium of five community development organisations, details of which were outlined within the report. The consortium applied for and was successful in securing £248,000 from The Scottish Government's Aspiring Communities fund to support the project delivery.

The funding was being used to employ a full time development worker for 16 months in each of the five communities of Armadale, Blackburn, Whitburn, Knightsridge and Polbeth. The development worker would deliver a variety of projects and interventions within their area and would work closely with the regeneration steering groups. The posts were for 16 months however it was hoped that they could be sustained at the end of the project. There was an expectation that the 16 months of development work would be directed towards development of longer term organisational viability, leaving the organisation in each area in a stronger position to affect long term change in its community once the project concluded. In addition, the project would enable all organisations to develop new or refreshed long term strategies and business plans aligned to locality plans.

Members were then provided with details of the project aims and objectives. The overarching aims of the fund were to increase capacity in the host organisation and in the host community. A number of broad project aims would be delivered by all five community organisations while still allowing for a locally tailored programme of interventions for each area.

The Panel acknowledged the excellent work carried out and agreed that a consortium and partnership working was beneficial to support building capacity and sustainability within the community organisations.

It was recommended that the panel notes:

- That a consortium of five community organisations have been awarded £248,000 from the Aspiring Communities Fund; and
- The potential impact the project would have on the five regeneration areas the project was based in.

Decision

To note the contents of the report and the update from the Manager of West Calder & Harburn Community Development Trust.

5. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GATEWAY WEST LOTHIAN

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update on the activities being undertaken by the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL) in providing an effective single point of access for support and advice and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups within West Lothian.

The report explained that the role of the third sector interface (TSI) was to provide an effective single point of access for support and advice for the third sector within a local area. It was expected that the TSI would provide a strong cohesive conduit between the third sector and the local authority and Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and that it was well

managed, governed and effective.

Bridge Meisak, Chief Executive Officer, VSGWL, provided members with an update on the work being carried out. She advised that VSGWL had recently moved from North Bridge Street to Bathgate Business Centre, 6 Whitburn Road, Bathgate. A number of uncertainties were ongoing, particularly in relation to funding and sustainability. As the number of organisations within the third sector increased there was a role for TSIs to support organisations and assess efficiencies. Organisations benefitted from working together and a more modern, flexible approach was in place to support organisations and signpost them to other appropriate organisations enabling them to work together to deliver on a larger scale with increased efficiencies. Interactive tools were being developed on VSGWL web site to assist organisations who were thinking about forming a new partnership or consortium. VSGWL continued to work in partnership with WLSSEN.

During the course of the discussion the Panel noted the comments in relation to commissioning work provided through Community Benefit Funding and whether this could be used to further benefit the voluntary sector. The Panel also noted the comments relating to the delay taken for council funding to be paid to voluntary organisations and whether this could be expedited in future. Officers agreed to investigate this.

It was recommended that the Panel notes the positive outcomes in regard to the work undertaken by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian in supporting and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups within West Lothian.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report and the update from the Chief Executive Officer, VSGWL;
2. To note that officers undertook to investigate whether Community Benefit Funding could be used to benefit the voluntary sector; and
3. To note that officers undertook to investigate why there was a delay in council funding being paid to voluntary organisations and whether this could be expedited in future.

6. AN ENTERPRISING THIRD SECTOR

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update on the activities being undertaken by West Lothian Social Enterprise Network to support a more enterprising third sector in West Lothian.

West Lothian Council was committed to supporting volunteering, voluntary organisations, social enterprises and the development of more enterprising and sustainable third sector organisations that contributed to the key Community Planning Partnership outcomes.

A report from WLSN on the activities they have undertaken since the previous meeting of the panel was attached at appendix 1 to the report. The report highlighted the current position with regards to membership of WLSN, local organisations who were engaged in the Enterprising Third Sector Support programme and updated the panel on operational changes within WLSN.

The Network Co-ordinator, Fiona Pearson, then provided the Panel with an update, advising that a more comprehensive report would be submitted to the next meeting of the panel. She advised that the format and number of Network Meetings were changing from 4 to 6 with the focus of meetings being on Learning and Networking. Workshop-style meetings would enable improved learning from both experts and peers. The change of format was as a result of comments received following a recent consultation. The next meeting would focus on new members and would be an introduction to a range of support organisations, with the opportunity to meet and “Ask the Experts” any questions.

During the course of the discussion members of the Panel were advised that two events were being held during week commencing 4 June 2018 to recognise the work carried out and contributions from the voluntary sector.

It was recommended that the Panel notes the positive outcomes in regard to the work undertaken by West Lothian Social Enterprise Network to support enterprising third sector organisations.

Decision

To note the contents of the report and the update from the Network Co-ordinator.

7. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DAY

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing details of the proposed development day with representatives from the Voluntary Sector and West Lothian Council.

The Economic Development and Regeneration Manager advised the Panel that the development day was being held on 18 June 2018 at West Lothian College. The purpose of the development day was to set a vision for future working and collaboration. It was intended to review and update the work previously carried out to the West Lothian Partnership Agreement and the enterprising Third Sector Framework and start the process of developing a new Compact. The proposed agenda for the development day was outlined within the report.

During the course of the discussion members acknowledged the excellent work carried out in the community and welcomed the opportunity to work with the third sector to look at what the collective vision was for working together in the future.

It was recommended that the Panel notes the date of the development day, contents of the agenda and the proposals to start the process of developing a new Compact.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

8. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2018-2019

A copy of the Voluntary Organisations Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel timetable for meetings in 2018/2019 had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the timetable of meetings for 2018/2019.

9. WORKPLAN

A copy of the workplan was circulated for information.

Decision

To note the contents of the workplan.