

MINUTE of MEETING of the EAST LIVINGSTON AND EAST CALDER LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 7 MARCH 2019.

Present – Councillors Dave King (Chair), Damian Timson, Frank Anderson and Carl John

In Attendance –

David Maule, Lead Officer, West Lothian Council

Lesley Keirnan, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council

Dougie Grierson, Community Regeneration Manager, West Lothian Council

David Lees, Nets, Land and Countryside Services, West Lothian Council

Sandy Ross, Housing & Customer Services, West Lothian Council

Julie Calder, Headteacher, West Calder High School

Sergeant Iain Wells, Police Scotland

PC Chris Grey, Police Scotland

Lee Clark, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

Jonathan Bertram, Almond Housing Association

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair ruled in terms of Standing Order 11 that an appendix to Agenda Item 10 (Nets, Land and Countryside Services Update) would be considered as it was an integral part of the committee report.

3. MINUTE

The committee approved the Minute of its meeting held on 6 December 2018. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

4. WEST CALDER HIGH SCHOOL -

The Chair welcomed Mrs Julie Calder, Headteacher, West Calder High School to the meeting who provided an overview of the school.

Mrs Calder commenced the presentation by advising that the school had a roll of 742 pupils and had six cluster primary schools associated with it; these being Addiewell; East Calder; Kirknewton; Mid Calder; Parkhead; and Woodmuir. The school had recently been subject to a HMI Inspection and that whilst three areas had been identified for improvement there had been significant improvement at the school since it was last inspected. Additionally the inspector was very complimentary of the school facilities.

The presentation continued by providing details of attainment levels in the senior phase; meeting learners needs; curriculum content; learning and

teaching and wider achievement opportunities.

The presentation concluded by noting that the priorities for the school were as follows :-

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing; and
- Improvement in employability skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people.

Mrs Calder then responded to a number of questions from committee including providing an overview of the work being done in terms of mental health and well-being which was a major focus for the school. Mrs Calder explained that the school had Mental Health Champions, which was pupil-led and a self-reporting system was also in place. Additionally the school was fortunate enough to have a teacher who was also an experienced counsellor.

The Chair thanked Mrs Calder for the informative presentation

### Decision

To note the contents of the presentation

## 5. SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE 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 in the ward for the period up to 31 December 2018.

Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was a series of graphs showing details of accidental dwelling fires; fire casualties and fatalities; deliberate fires; fire in non-domestic properties; special services casualties; and unwanted fire alarm signals.

Mr Clark then provided further detail in relation to Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals which had seen an increase since the previous reporting period. Committee were advised that this was as a result of a spate of malicious calls to the Letham Young Person's Centre so was quite a unique situation. However the subject of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals remained a focus of attention for the fire service across the whole of Scotland.

With regards to Deliberate Fires, the committee were advised that there had been a recent spate of wheelie bin fires in the ward and fire officers when attending these incidents were coming under attack by local youths. Therefore the fire service was actively working with colleagues at Police Scotland to identify the perpetrators of these attacks.

Mr Clark concluded his presentation by advising that the fire service was involved in West Drive 2019 which was an initiative that would see

partners working with sixth year pupils on safe driving techniques. The event of was taking place in August and Mr Clark encouraged the local ward members to attend as it was a very interesting and informative event.

In relation to fire-raising incidents in the ward a suggestion was made by a local ward member that the BBQ facility at Almond Park tended to become a centre of attention for local youths involved in anti-social behaviour and therefore would the removal of the BBQ assist in any way, particularly as it was not being used by local residents.

Sergeant Wells responded by saying that this could be of some assistance but was a matter for the council to take forward.

#### Decision

- 1) To note the contents of the fire report;
- 2) To note some of the initiatives that were being undertaken by Scottish Fire and Rescue; and
- 3) To request that council officers investigate the possible removal of the BBQ facility at Almond Park

#### 6. POLICE SCOTLAND UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Police Constables Russell Rosie and Peter Robertson providing an update on activities and issues across the ward for the period up to 31 January 2019.

The committee were advised that Police Scotland were still without a local analyst however stats for the whole of West Lothian were available by following a link provided in the committee report.

Sergeant Wells then provided the committee with an overview of a number of initiatives that were underway in the ward (and across West Lothian) and included high-visibility patrols in relevant areas; dealing with anti-social behaviour at Craigshill Rugby Club; running a social media campaign in conjunction with the Youth Action Project to encourage parents to know where their children were going; giving advice to householders regarding safely storing keys for high-performance cars; and the development of a strategy for bogus callers.

In relation to sheep-worrying incidents that had been reported in the ward, Sergeant Wells explained that Police Scotland was conducting a social media campaign to encourage responsible dog-ownership. A local ward member requested if it would be possible to get posters for placing around the community to continue to deliver that message. Sergeant Wells undertook to source such materials for forwarding to local members.

Issues concerning parking in and around both the local mosque and Craigswood Sport Centre were also raised. Sergeant Wells confirmed that

patrols continued in and around the areas in question and that part of the problem was a lack of parking spaces to service the needs of both facilities.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee note the contents of the report.

#### Decision

- 1) To note the contents of the report; and
- 2) To request that Sergeant Wells provide local ward members with suitable advertising materials to encourage responsible dog-ownership particularly in light of an increase in sheep-worrying incidents in the ward.

### 7. ALMOND HOUSING REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Almond Housing Association which provided an overview of the upgrade maintenance works that was being carried out on those properties belonging to the association. This included boiler upgrades; external wall insulation; partial electrical upgrades; window replacements; and external render/balcony enclosures.

The report also provided information on the work of Changeworks, which was providing energy advice to tenants and also The Action Group, which was providing welfare benefits and money advice to tenants. Information was also provided on work being done by the association on sustaining tenancies, Housing First for Youth and winter food parcels.

The report concluded with an update on a number of community initiatives that the association was involved in and included the Riverside Community Fridge Project, Get Cooking courses, Food Voucher Scheme and a careers event with Inveralmond Community High School.

The committee was asked to note the contents of the report.

#### Decision

To note the contents of the report

### 8. HOUSING WARD REPORT

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.

The report examined Property Voids and Let Performance for both mainstream and temporary tenancies for the period October to December 2018. In the reporting period there were 7 property voids with reasons for the delay in re-letting the properties summarised in the report.

The Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services continued by providing details of the rent arrears for the ward, noting that for Quarter 3 2018/19 it was £116,541, which was an increase of £46,244 for the same period in the previous year. For the whole of West Lothian the position had increased by £879,735 from the previous year. It was noted that the overall increase in comparison to last year was as a result of Full Service Universal Credit being introduced in West Lothian from May 2018, along with other welfare benefit reforms and the current economic climate.

Further information was also contained in the report with regards to the new build council house programme, tenant participation and the safer neighbourhood team. With regards to the new build council house programme it was reported that there would be a meeting on 11 March 2019 between the council and the contractors with regards to the site at Drumshoreland which had yet to see any completed houses handed over to the council. An update would be provided to local members thereafter.

A discussion was also undertaken with regards to the reasons behind property voids, which in some cases was because of the presence of asbestos. The Housing Manager explained that in some cases the presence of asbestos was not always evident until other remedial works were underway and that once discovered careful removal had to be undertaken to avoid problems continuing into the future. The Housing Manager also confirmed that tenants were always advised in their Tenant Pack about the possibility of asbestos being present in a tenancy they were undertaking with the council.

It was recommended that the local area committee note the housing activity in the ward for the period 1 October to 31 December 2018.

### Decision

To note the contents of the report

## 9. SERVICE UPDATE - NETS, LAND AND COUNTRYSIDE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing an update on the work of the Nets, Land and Countryside Service teams for the period 1 November 2018 to 31 January 2019.

The report provided a summary of works carried out and enquiries received in relation to Grounds Maintenance; Garden Maintenance; Cleaner Communities; Enforcement Action; Parks & Woodland; Ranger Service; and Open Space Enquiries.

A number of enquiries were then raised by committee members which officers undertook to investigate and provide further details to all local ward members on in due course. These included alternative bin provision at the new houses at Mansfield/Xcite East Calder which were regularly over-flowing and the costs associated with the new 32G pitch at East Calder Park.

The report recommended that committee :-

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

#### Decision

- 1) To note the contents of the report; and
- 2) To agree that officers respond to the following enquiries :-
  - i. Bin provision at Mansfield/Xcite East Calder; and
  - ii. Costs for the 3G pitch at East Calder Park

### 10. 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 advising of progress towards developing a regeneration plan within the East Livingston and East Calder ward.

After the identification of eight regeneration areas (or 13 communities) across West Lothian work began on developing regeneration plans for these areas.

For the Craigshill area a steering group was formed and had now produced the first version of its regeneration plan, a copy of which was attached to the report. The plan was divided into two sections. These being :-

- The community priorities generated from the community consultation findings; and
- The overarching Regeneration Group's priorities agreed from the statistics, community consultation and mapping of services and organisations

The plan was considered to be a "live" document and the priorities contained within would be reviewed as social and economic factors changed.

The draft plan had also been distributed to the action group for feedback and approval. The action group was now starting or organise themselves around the challenges and priorities contained in the plan with a number of initiatives already underway, details of which were summarised in the report.

The report concluded that the regeneration process was continually evolving through a bottom-up approach, with different community groups,

services and organisations organically taking on actions as they emerged. The impetus was now to encourage the current actions into long term outcomes for the Regeneration Plan to benefit the Craigshill community.

It was recommended that the local area committee note :-

1. That a findings report had been produced and verified by the community;
2. Mapping activity of services and organisations was complete and community priorities along with the action group challenges had been identified ;
3. That the first draft of the plan had been written with the priorities and challenges included; and
4. The additional community activity in the ward that linked in with regeneration

#### Decision

- 1) To note the contents of the report; and
- 2) To thank the officers for all their efforts in supporting the community develop the regeneration plan.

#### 11. WEST LOTHIAN VILLAGES IMPROVEMENT FUND - UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration inviting consideration of a number of applications received for funding from the West Lothian Villages Improvement Fund.

The report recalled that in 2012 the Council Executive agreed the eligibility criteria for a West Lothian Villages Improvement Fund. Funding of £1.65m had been made available to support eligible schemes with funding phased over five years. The fund had two work streams; these being a shop frontage/shop improvement scheme; and small scale village improvements and initiatives.

Six villages within East Livingston and East Calder were eligible under the scheme and distribution of funding was based on village size and was as follows :-

- East Calder £125,000 (£16,979 remaining)
- Midcalder £125,000 (£0 remaining)
- Kirknewton £55,000 (£0 remaining)
- Pumpherston £55,000 (£396.25 remaining)
- Uphall Station (£55,000) (£42,070 remaining)

- Wilkieston (£20,000) (£15,000 remaining)

Two applications had recently been received for funding; one from Uphall Station Bowling Club; and the second from the East Calder Community Resources Association. Further details on the two applications were summarised in the report.

Additionally committee was advised of changes to existing projects previously approved. These consisted of the re-allocation of £15,000 of funding that was originally earmarked for village gateway signage for Mid Calder which was to be re-directed towards the Bank Street car park after the need for sub-surface exploratory work was identified and the match funding secured by the Mid Calder Masonic Lodge for like-for-like window replacements.

With regards to the village of Wilkieston the west Lothian History and Amenity Society (WLH&AS) were asking for additional funds to complete a feasibility study of the A listed Hatton Gateway and which had been awarded £5,000 by the local area committee in 2016. The additional funding being sought by WLH&AS was to enable the study to include a detailed structural report which required £3,000 for scaffolding and £2,000 for further ivy removal that had not been envisaged in the original application.

If committee was agreeable to an additional £5,000 being provided to WLH&AS then this would leave a balance of £10,000 in the fund for the village of Wilkieston. Therefore committee was being asked to note that this balance could be used in the future by the WLH&AS to acquire some of the original stone features from the gateway subject to verification by the specialist conservation architect. A further report would be provided to committee in due course on progress with this project.

It was recommended that the local area committee :-

1. Notes that four villages from the six eligible villages had a budget remaining;
2. Notes that the total remaining balance was £74,445.25 from a pot of £435,000;
3. Agree to support the two applications received;
4. Note that East Calder application for bins, benches and notice board project was subject to agreement with relevant council services;
5. Ratify the reallocation of funding within Mid Calder;
6. Agrees that Wilkieston receive an additional £5,000 to complete the A listed Hatton Gateway feasibility study; and
7. Agrees in principle to the allocation of the last of the Wilkieston allocation as set out in the report.



Decision

1. To approve the recommendations of the report;
2. To agree that a report would be brought back to a future meeting of the local area committee concerning the remaining balance of £10,000 allocated to Wilkieston village; and
3. To agree that officers provide all local ward members with details of those independent retailers who had benefited from the shop frontage improvement scheme.

12. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2019/20

The committee considered a timetable of proposed meetings (copies of which had been circulated) for the period 2019/20.

The committee was asked to approve the timetable of meetings for 2019/20.

Decision

To approve the timetable of meetings for 2019/20

13. WORKPLAN

A copy of the workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the contents of the workplan