

MINUTE of MEETING of the LIVINGSTON SOUTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within CONFERENCE ROOM 3, GROUND FLOOR, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 22 AUGUST 2013.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), Danny Logue

Absent – Peter Johnston, John Muir

In Attendance

Steve Field, Lead Officer, West Lothian Council

Sarah Crowe, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council

Keir Stevenson, Sport and Outdoor Education Coordinator, West Lothian Council

Andy Robertston and Raphael Dunbar, Construction Services, West Lothian Council

Phyllis McFadyen, Housing Services, West Lothian Council

David Lees, NETs and Land Services, West Lothian Council

Brian Sivess and Kenny Omond, Livingston Skatepark User Group

Donna McMaster, Head Teacher, Inveralmond Community High School

Sergeant John Forsyth and Inspector Jocelyn O'Connor, Police Scotland

Robin Lever, Dedridge Community Council

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The Local Area Committee noted the minute of its meeting held on 31 May 2013.

3. REQUEST FOR DEPUTATION IN RELATION TO LIVINGSTON SKATEPARK PROJECT - LODGED BY BRIAN SIVESS AND KENNY OMOND (REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SKATEPARK USER GROUP)

The Local Area Committee was asked to consider a deputation request in relation to Livingston Skatepark Project. The request had been lodged by Brian Sivess and Kenny Omond on behalf of Livingston Skatepark User Group.

Decision

To agree to hear the deputations.

4. INVERALMOND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL - PRESENTATION BY DONNA MCMASTER (HEAD TEACHER)

The Chair welcomed Donna McMaster, Head Teacher, Inveralmond Community High School, to the meeting. Ms McMaster had been invited to attend the meeting to provide an overview of the school's performance

and levels of attainment.

Ms McMaster presented detailed information concerning the school, highlighting the school's strengths as follows:-

- Committed hard working staff
- Effective Partnership Working
- Strong Areas of Learning and Teaching
- Positive Ethos
- High Expectations of Good Behaviour
- Uniform
- Facilities

The presentation included statistical information relating to Standard Grade and Higher Grade performance and the Committee noted that there had been a significant improvement in attainment in comparison to previous years.

Ms McMaster reported a reduction in the number of exclusions and informed the Committee that the school aimed to develop the full potential of every young person, affording equal opportunities to all.

Finally, Ms McMaster responded to questions raised by members of the Committee, emphasising that strong partnership working was essential to ensure that the aspirations of young people became realities.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked Ms McMaster for her informative and uplifting presentation.

#### Decision

To note the presentation concerning Inveralmond Community High School.

### 5. POLICE REPORT: WARD 4

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Police Inspector Myles Marshall providing an update on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period up to 1 January 2013.

Sergeant Forsyth and Inspector Jocelyn O'Connor amplified aspects of the information contained in the report. In particular, it was noted that anti social behaviour remained relatively low within the community. Officers were engaging with youths on the street and were actively targeting reported 'party houses'.

Sergeant Forsyth spoke of the Friday Night Project, highlighting that a large number of youths were regularly attending the project and there was evidence that attitudes were changing amongst young people in relation to drugs and anti-social behaviour.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. LIVINGSTON SKATEPARK UPDATE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Services providing an update on progress with the Livingston Skatepark project.

The report recalled that the previous skatepark update report to the Committee on 31 May 2013 noted that discussions were still ongoing with the contractor over actions to remedy issues raised by the Livingston Skateboard User Group.

Since that meeting, further productive discussions had taken place with a list of actions being agreed between council officers, the local user group and the contractor.

The contractor had, to date, made progress with a number of these agreed actions with completion of all, including the maintenance works on the existing skatepark, targeted for September 2013.

Keir Stevenson, Sport and Outdoor Education Coordinator then reported that a site visit had been held at 10.00 am on 22 August 2013 attended by council officers and representatives of the user group.

At that meeting, an itemised list of additional actions had been agreed between council officers and the user group and these were summarised as follows:-

- “Nipple” feature to be broken out and re-installed. The feature to either be reduced in height or the width increased. Contractor to carry out water test to identify most appropriate position. This position and dimensions of the feature needed to be agreed with Brian Sivess and Kenny Omond (user group) in advance. Construction Services would seek costs and progress with the contractor;
- Grind rail to be installed at the east end of the plaza area to prevent boards straying into the half-pipe area, with rail to be extended around the corner (above the “Andover” feature) as previously agreed. Construction Services to seek costs and progress with the contractor.
- Quality of recent remedial work to step feature in the plaza area to be raised with the contractor. Construction Services to progress with the contractor;
- Planned hard-standing area behind the quarter-pipe not to be progressed with the contractor. Alternative proposals including consideration of spectator facilities/equipment to be considered

outwith and post contract;

- Agreed that council officers, the user group and the contractor would monitor usage, quality and gauge feedback in relation to the large bowl in the extension area. The user group suggested that the quality of build was unacceptable and requested consideration be given to instructing this feature to be broken out and replaced, with potential for re-designing the feature also to be explored. Construction Services/Sport and Outdoor Education to explore contractual arrangements and action for progressing this. Agreed that this work should not take place until suitable weather/temperatures in the Spring of 2014.
- User group requested confirmation on maintenance works to be progressed on existing skatepark and agreement over monitoring/presence on site by a skate expert;
- Snagging list to be updated with completion timescale to be confirmed with the contractor.

During discussion, the Committee heard from Brian Sivess on behalf of the user group. Whilst he reported that lines of communication had improved, the user group still had concerns about the contractor's desire to complete the outstanding work within the agreed timescale. The Chair considered that the project had moved forward as a result of constructive discussions between the council and the user group.

The Committee was asked to note the progress made as outlined in the report, and to note the outcome of the site visit held on the morning of 22 August 2013.

#### Decision

1. To note the terms of the report.
2. To note the list of additional actions agreed between council officers and the user group at the site meeting.
3. To note that the user group wished to record thanks to the Committee for their co-operation in relation to the project.
4. To record the Committee's appreciation of the assistance provided by the user group.

### 7. HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING SERVICES

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Construction and Building Services providing an overview of the service activities within the ward.

Phyllis McFadyen (Area Housing Manager) amplified aspect of the report and responded to questions raised by elected members. In particular, the Committee noted that eight mutual exchanges had been carried out in the

ward during the reporting period to resolve issues with size criteria. Rent arrears of tenants who were affected by the Housing Benefit size criteria had risen from 18.2% of the total rent arrears on 1 April 2013 to 24.2% of the total rent arrears at 30 June 2013. The number of tenants affected by the Housing Benefit size criteria who were in arrears had risen from 34% to 69% during the first quarter of 2013/14. The report contained information on a number of actions being taken by council officers to mitigate the impact of Housing Benefit reform on its tenants.

In relation to the new build houses at Scott Brae, it was noted that only one property remained unallocated. Completion of 45 homes at the site at Alderstone Road was expected around January 2014.

The Committee was asked to note the activity as detailed in the report.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

### 8. OPERATIONAL SERVICES UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services appraising members of the NETs, Land and Countryside Services activities for the ward for the period 1 June to 31 July 2013.

In relation Environmental Wardens enforcement action, a number of fixed penalty notices had been issued during the period and these were detailed in the report.

In relation to an issue raised earlier in the meeting concerning bins at Livingston Skatepark, David Lees (NETs and Land Services) undertook to report the matter back to the service.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

### 9. POLLUTION OF THE DEDRIDGE BURN

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing an update on progress tackling pollution in the Dedridge Burn.

The report advised that in the first quarter of 2013, there had been three separate one-off pollution incidents, each of which caused visible discolouration in the burn. Although investigations had been carried out, the nature of the pollutant had not been determined conclusively and the polluter(s) had not been identified.

Following the incidents, a site meeting had been held attended by Scottish Water, SEPA, local people and an officer from the council. It had

come to light there at the time of one of the incidents, local people had not been contacting SEPA in the recommended way and had not contacted Scottish Water at all. The meeting was helpful therefore in clarifying the roles of the respective organisations.

The report went on to advise that a bid for capital investment had been successful and it was proposed to construct a wetland on open space in Bellsquarry Village owned by the Council and Woodland Trust Scotland. The project would form part of the Livingston South Blue-Green network project and the proposed location was shown on Appendix 1 to the report.

The report also provided details of a trial of SmartSponge. The trial would conclude shortly and the findings would determine whether the Council would continue to use the product at the location of the Advanced Treatment System (ATS) (as shown in Appendix 1 to the report).

Finally, it was reported that restoration of Bellsquarry Pond had been a great success and the scope for the pond to be contaminated had been much reduced. The report also contained an update from SEPA.

The Committee then heard from Bill Elliott, Scottish Water. He spoke of Scottish Water's response to each of the three incidents referred to in the report. He also highlighted the telephone number for Scottish Water's Customer Contact Centre, and advised that he would provide members of the Local Area Committee with his direct dial number.

The Panel was asked to note the approach taken by the Council, Scottish Water and SEPA to tackle the ongoing issues of pollution affecting the Dedridge Burn.

### Decision

To note the terms of the report

## 10. LIVINGSTON SOUTH BLUE GREEN NETWORK PROJECT

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services informing the Committee of a new, community-led initiative, which already had the support of the council to invest in and improve the quality of public open space and the water environment in the ward.

The report explained that the Landfill Communities Fund, administered by LandTrust, currently had a significant sum available for disbursement for eligible projects in West Lothian. The Livingston South Blue Green network was a community-led initiative steered by representatives from three environmental groups within the Livingston South area, which shared a vision to reconnect fragmented habitats, improve access, restore the water environment, reduce cyclic maintenance and upgrade infrastructure. Bids had been submitted on behalf of the Steering Group, seeking financial support to realise its vision of an integrated environmental improvement project.

The Committee was informed that the Council Executive had noted the background to the establishment of the Livingston South Blue Green Network and had approved the council's support for the work of the LSBGN Steering Group, which had been established to oversee significant investment in open space and the water environment in Livingston South for the benefit of all. It had also approved the use of £20,000 of existing capital funding already allocated for the improvement of the water environment in Livingston South during the period 2013-15 as seed corn monies to allow the Central Scotland Forest Trust to further develop the project pending confirmation of external funding.

The Committee was asked to note:-

- the background to the establishment of the Livingston South Blue Green network.
- the council's support for the work of the Network's Steering Group, which had been established to oversee significant investment in open space and the water environment in Livingston South for the benefit of all.
- the use of £20,000 of existing capital funding allocated for the improvement of the water environment in Livingston South during the period 2013-15 as seed corn monies to allow the Central Scotland Forest Trust to further develop the project.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

#### 11. PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND PROVISIONAL ALLOCATIONS 2013

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Services setting out the provisional allocations made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2013 to groups in the Livingston South was, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

In Livingston South ward, six application forms had been issued, with all six returned. Appendix 1 to the report showed the six organisations to be supported and the provisional allocation to each.

Appendix 2 to the report showed the provision allocations to Livingston-wide and West Lothian-wide organisations.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

#### 12. WORKPLAN

A copy of the Workplan 2013-14 had been circulated.

Decision

To note the Workplan.