

MINUTE of MEETING of LINLITHGOW LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within the EDUCATION ROOM, BURGH HALLS, LINLITHGOW, on TUESDAY 12 AUGUST 2014

Present – Councillors Tom Conn (Chair, Martyn Day and Tom Kerr

In Attendance –

Graeme Struthers, Leader Officer, West Lothian Council
Dougie Grierson, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian
Elizabeth Butters, Social Policy, West Lothian Council
Phyllis McFadyen, Housing, West Lothian Council
Kate Marshal, Social Policy, West Lothian Council
Alex Hume, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
Desmond Donnelly, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTE

The committee approved the Minute of its meeting held on 27 May 2014. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. LINLITHGOW MULTI-MEMBER WARD OPERATIONAL PLAN 2014-2017

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to consult with the local ward members on the draft Linlithgow Multi-Member Ward Operational Plan for 2014-2017, a copy of which was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report advised that following the publication of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian 2014-2017, which identified key priorities for Scottish Fire and Rescue Service activities in West Lothian, the Local Senior Officer for Falkirk and West Lothian then produced a ward operational plan for each multi-member ward area to support and deliver against the key priorities.

The seven key priorities identified within the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian was assessed in relation to their impact within each ward area. The assessment process included a survey of the West Lothian Citizen's Panel. The assessment within the Linlithgow Ward identified those areas which were considered either a continuous priority, high priority or medium priority, a summary of which was provided in the report.

The Linlithgow Local Area Committee was invited to provide comment on the Linlithgow Multi-Member Ward Operational Plan 2014-2017 and to consider ways in which they could support its implementation within the local area committee area.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

4. POLICE WARD REPORT

Prior to consideration of the Police Ward Report it was noted that Police Scotland was not represented at the meeting

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Inspector O'Connor, Police Scotland, which summarised police activity in the ward for the month of July 2013 compared to July 2014 and year-to-date.

The report provided information on national priorities, West Lothian priorities and the specific community engagement priorities for the ward.

The report also provided information on issues of note including multi-agency working, neighbourhood concerns, prevention and enforcement and funded officer extraction.

The report concluded with information on forthcoming events and local police contact details.

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

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. Requested that the Lead Officer investigate non-attendance by a representative of Police Scotland.

5. 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 housing performance for the period April to June 2014.

The performance figures for property void and let for mainstream and temporary tenancies were detailed in the report and committee noted that for the period April to June 2014 there was a total let of 8 properties for mainstream tenancies and a total let of 5 properties for temporary tenancies.

The report also provided a summary of rent arrears for the period April 2013 through to June 2014. For 2014-15 the Arrears Task Group had agreed, as an interim measure, to monitor against a £1.3m target which would allow time for some actions from the Rent Strategy to be put in place therefore the target would be subject to change later in the year. The council had also conducted a high-profile rent arrears campaign in the summer. Additionally workload priorities agreed by the Arrears Task Group would ensure that those tenants who engaged with the council were

offered support and advice in relation to applying for Housing Benefit, Scottish Welfare Funds and referrals to the Advice Shop.

The Arrears Task Group would continue meeting throughout financial year 2014-15 as there were many challenges to come in the management of rental income due to the on-going phasing in of Welfare Reforms, increasing fuel costs and reduced household incomes.

The report concluded with an update on local area team activity, ward specific capital and environmental programme, new build information, Scottish Social Housing Charter, homelessness, good neighbour awards and the work of the council officer and youth worker based in the safer neighbourhood team.

In relation to a question asked the Housing Officer undertook to ascertain the number of tenancies that existed in the ward and how many tenancies had been sold in the ward.

Decision

1. To note the content of the report; and
2. Requested that the Housing Officer provide the members with the number of tenancies that existed in the ward and how many tenancies had been sold in the ward.

6. COMMUNITY HEALTH CHAMPIONS

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive, Community Health and Care Partnership providing a health profile for the ward in support of Community Health Champions, a copy of which was attached to the report.

The report explained that health inequalities existed across West Lothian communities with a difference in male life expectancy of 9.2 years and for female life expectancy of 8.7 years between the communities with the highest and lowest average life spans.

The nature of health inequalities was complex and could not be attributed to a single risk factor as they were usually as a result of social circumstances and reflected the underlying distribution of power and resources in the population.

The health profiles provided were based on ward profiles produced by Community Regeneration in 2012 and had been updated where new information was available. The report then provided indicators on Quality of Life, key statistical information, health and population & benefits.

In presenting the report it was noted that many of the statistics related to either 2011 or 2012 and therefore officers were asked if it would be possible to provide more up-to-date figures in future reports to the local area committee.

The report concluded that the health profile had been developed to support the local area committee to prioritise health issues and agree/develop actions. The next step in the community health champion's approach would be to recruit local people and groups to work towards identifying and addressing issues.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

7. PENSIONER'S GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND – PROVISIONAL ALLOCATIONS 2014

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Service advising of the provisional allocations made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2014 to groups in the Linlithgow ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

In 2014 the total amount available was £28,481 with the fund being divided by the total number of beneficiaries which for 2014, was 3,904. In the Linlithgow Ward there were 38 beneficiaries with an allocation of £277.40.

To date six applications had been issued across the Linlithgow Ward with two having been returned. It was intended that these two groups would be supported. Appendix 1 attached to the report demonstrated those organisations that would be supported with a provisional allocation to each. For those applications not yet returned officers were following up on these and until such time the figures provided were to be considered provisional.

One application had also been sent to a Livingston-wide group and two applications had been sent to West Lothian-wide groups. Appendix 2 attached to the report provided further details on these applications.

Later in the year a full report on final allocations would be presented to the Voluntary Organisations Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel with letters being issued to organisations in late October advising them of the amount of funding they would receive.

It was recommended that the local area committee note that to date two groups within the Linlithgow Ward had applied to the fund and would be supported.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report;
2. To note that it was thought that the Bridgend Senior Citizens Tuesday Club no longer existed and that officers would need to investigate this; and
3. To note that officers should double check the contact details for St Michaels Day Care Centre as they had recently changed internet

provider.

8. ALCOHOL DIVERSIONARY ACTIVITIES

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy advising the local area committee of a decision of the ADP Sub-Group with regards to an application made to the fund from Focus Friday.

The application received from Focus Friday had received support from the Linlithgow Local Area Committee at its meeting on 27 May 2014. However since this time the ADP Sub-Group had subsequently considered the application and as it did not meet the criteria it had been rejected and the group had been asked to re-submit. The group had indicated that they would be able to re-submit the application and this would be presented to the local area committee in due course.

It was recommended that the local area committee note that the ADP Sub-Group had returned the application from Focus Friday as it had not focussed enough on early intervention and prevention work with young people.

Decision

To note the contents of the report

9. UPDATE FROM NETS AND LAND SERVICES – 1 MAY TO 31 JULY 2014

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Service providing information on the activities of the NETS and Land Services Teams from 1 May to 31 July 2014.

The report and appendices provided the committee with detailed information on those areas that had been addressed by the teams during the reporting period, as well as providing an overview of grounds maintenance, NETS and street cleansing; work of the Environmental Wardens and future proposals and initiatives.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

10. WEST LOTHIAN VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT FUND - APPLICATIONS

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning and Economic Development advising of an application that had been received seeking funds from the West Lothian Village Improvement Fund 2013-14, a copy of which was attached to the report.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development explained that in 2012

the Council Executive agreed eligibility criteria for a West Lothian Villages Improvement Fund with funding of £1.65m available to support eligible schemes with the funding being phased over a five year period.

Distribution of funding was based on village size and three villages in the Linlithgow Ward were eligible under the scheme; these being Bridgend, who had been allocated £55,000, Philipstoun who had been allocated £20,000 and Newton, who had also been allocated £20,000.

An application had been received from Bridgend Community Group to repair and update the kick pitch and the group were applying for £18,944 to support the resurfacing of the pitch. The work would provide young people with a much improved facility with a surface that was commonly used across other areas of West Lothian.

In discussing the application received the Provost sought clarification as to the latest position with regards to the flooding issues being encountered at Bridgend Community Centre. Therefore officers undertook to investigate the matter further and to bring an update report back to the next meeting of the local area committee.

In the meantime the application received from Bridgend Community Group met the eligibility criteria and therefore it was recommended that the local area committee :-

1. Note that one application had been received for funding;
2. Note that the proposal met the eligibility criteria for supported projects;
3. Support the funding for the Bridgend Repair and Upgrade of the Kick Pitch Project; and
4. Agree that the Head of Planning and Economic Development should make an offer of funding as per the details set out in the report.

Decision

1. To agree the recommendations of the report; and
2. To agree that an update report on the flood issues being encountered at Bridgend Community Centre would be brought forward to the next meeting of the local area committee.

11. COMMUNITY REGENERATION REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Services advising of progress made against the targets set in the Linlithgow Ward Action Plan 2013-15 and new areas of work.

The report described a range of services and support offered by the Regeneration and Employability Team and recalled a number of key

activities which had taken place over the past few months and which included the Queens Baton Relay, a successful outcome of the Linlithgow BID ballot and a walkabout by auditors in Linlithgow at the conclusion of an Audit of Community Planning.

In conclusion the report reflected achievement to date against planned activity from the Regeneration and Employability Team and its partners, aimed at making a significant contribution to improving the quality of life of citizens in the Linlithgow Ward.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

12. LINLITHGOW LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The committee noted its work plan for the period to August 2014 (a copy of which had been circulated)

Decision

To note the contents of the work plan.