

MINUTE of MEETING of EAST LIVINGSTON AND EAST CALDER LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST Lothian COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, LIVINGSTON, on THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2015

Present – Councillor Frank Toner, Dave King and Carl John

Apologies – Councillor Frank Anderson

In Attendance :-

Siobhan Mullen, Lead Officer, West Lothian Council
George Scott, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council
Daniel McComisky, Nets & Land Services, West Lothian Council
Inspector Jocelyn O'Connor, Police Scotland
Martin Brandrick, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Sandy Young, Almond Housing Association
Phyllis McFadyen, Housing Manager, West Lothian Council
Siobhan McGarty, Headteacher, St Margaret's Academy
Chris Alcorn, West Lothian Council
Alan McGregor, Pentland Regional Park Manager

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTE

The committee confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 4 December 2014. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. PRESENTATION BY HEADTEACHER SIOBHAN MCGARTY OF ST MARGARET'S ACADEMY

The Head Teacher of St Margaret's Academy, Siobhan McGarty provided the committee with an overview of the workings of the school with a particular emphasis on achievement and attainment.

The committee were presented with various slides that provided details of Highers' attainment for the period 2010 through to 2014 and which also included a three-year average. Areas for improvement were also detailed along with the strategy of how the school was going to track the pupil's successes.

The Head Teacher continued to explain that the school had much to be proud of and continued to develop a culture of being aspiring and ambitious with many examples detailed in the presentation; these included a successful trip to Barcelona in September 2014, 21st Anniversary Lunch in November 2014, Children in Need S6 Event and the Senior Awards Ceremony in October 2014.

The presentation concluded that each pupil was given the tools to achieve their own personal growth and with the right teaching skills and strategy in place each pupil could go from strength to strength.

The Chair thanked the Head Teacher for the very informative presentation. There then followed a questions and answer session.

Decision

Noted the contents of the presentation by Head Teacher, Siobhan McGarty, St Margaret's Academy.

4. PENTLAND HILLS REGIONAL PARK ANNUAL REPORT 2013-14 AND POSSIBLE EXTENSION TO REGIONAL PARK BOUNDARY

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning and Economic Development advising of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Annual Report 2013-14 and of the proposal, potentially via a private members bill, that the regional park be extended.

The committee were advised that West Lothian Council co-operated with Midlothian and The City of Edinburgh Council in the management of the Pentland Hills Regional Park (PHRP) with the area of the park in West Lothian around 10% of the designated area.

Each year the PHRP Service produced an annual report that was reported to the relevant council committee. The 2013-14 annual report summarised the park's achievements in terms of what had happened as a result of the work carried out throughout the year. It was noted that once again the regional park had received an excellent score during the "Green Flag Award Mystery Shop" with the Pentland Hills being the only Regional Park in the UK to achieve this green space award.

The annual report also set out a number of common themes under which the regional park made an important contribution. These themes were summarised in the report and included information on how they related to West Lothian and included matters such as Local Economic Development, Health & Well-Being, Community Partnership & Participation, Learning, Development & Responsible Citizenship, Environmental Quality & Climate Change and the Potential Extension to Regional Park Boundary.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development continued to advise that in relation to the extension of the park boundary 65 responses had been received to a consultation on the matter with 51% (33) of respondents in favour of the aim of the proposed Bill. West Lothian Council had also taken the opportunity to respond to the consultation and a summary of the response was detailed in the report. Concerns were raised in that response with regards to the funding for the park and the overall economic need, alongside a suggestion for a feasibility study to be undertaken before any further action was taken. However despite officer's having attended a number of joint committee meetings to discuss this matter no further progress had been made.

The next step in the process was expected to be that Christine Grahame MSP would lodge a Private Members Bill with the Scottish Parliament in

the Spring of 2015. As further information became available if the expansion proposal progressed reports would be provided to the appropriate Panel meeting and Council Executive.

It was therefore recommended that the Local Area Committee :-

1. Note the terms of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Annual Report 2013-14;
2. Note the update on the proposal by Christine Grahame MSP to extend the area covered by the regional park designation across the full Pentland Hills range; and
3. Note that a further report on the extension to the park would be presented to the Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel and Council Executive if the proposal progressed beyond the Private Members Bill stage.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report; and
2. Noted the suggestion that the Pentland Hills Park Management give consideration to allowing those businesses that were on the periphery of the park boundary be able to use the brand "Pentland Produce".

5. NETS, LAND SERVICES AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing details of recent activity of NETS, Land and Countryside Services for the period 1 November 2014 to 31 January 2015.

The report provided details of the work carried out by the Grounds Maintenance Team, Street Cleansing Team and the Garden Maintenance Team, noting that the garden maintenance season would recommence in March 2015.

A summary of the issues dealt with by Environmental Wardens were also detailed in the report.

The Head of Operational Services also provided an update in relation to the development of a new cemetery in East Calder noting that it had been agreed to extend the tender return date to Thursday 19 February 2015 to allow consultants more time to accurately calculate the bill of quantities for the earthworks which were a major part of the project. The extension would not alter the proposed March/April 2015 start on site.

And finally an update was provided with regards to the open space programme which included improvements to the play areas at Queens Gardens, East Calder which had a budget of £41k and Melbourne Street, Craigshill which had a budget of £60k. Local schools would be

encouraged to engage in the development process noting that a dedicated web site had been set up to assist with this process.

The committee was asked to :-

1. Note the work carried out by the services for the local area;
2. Note the update on the new cemetery in East Calder; and
3. Advise of any areas that required further information or investigation.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report; and
2. Noted the committee's concerns that the development of the new cemetery appeared to be behind schedule particularly after commitments had been made to the local community.

6. POLICE WARD REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had circulated) by Inspector Jocelyn O'Connor, Police Scotland, highlighting performance activities and police issues across the ward for the period up to 31 January 2015.

Contained within the report was a table of information demonstrating recorded and solved crimes in Groups 1 to 5 for the whole of West Lothian comparing figures from 2013-14 with those from 2014-15.

There was also a table of information showing the number of recorded incidents by category for the whole of West Lothian, with year-on-year comparisons and also for the East Livingston & East Calder Ward.

The Inspector continued to advise that the Community Policing Team continued to work in partnership with West Lothian Council and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to target those involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour in the community. As a result of this partnership approach and vigorous use of ASB legislation there were currently no party houses in the local area.

With regards to prevention and enforcement activity the Inspector reported that as part of Operation Cleanslate, which was a festive initiative run throughout the month of December, high visibility patrols were carried out in the East Livingston and East Calder ward and compared with December the previous year, vandalism and alcohol related incidents dropped substantially. This in turn meant that anti-social behaviour calls and public space assaults were significantly down over this period, which meant fewer victims of crime.

The report concluded with details of forthcoming events including Community Policing Days noting that from the 4 March 2015 the

Community Policing Tem would see a significant increase in officer numbers with these officers working from Livingston Police Station.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report;
2. Noted the concerns of members with regards to indiscriminate parking on Main Street at the Tesco store;
3. Noted the update with regards to the new structure for the Community Policing Team which would take affect from 4 March 2015;
4. Noted that Operation Monarda (tackling bogus workmen) would shortly be getting underway;
5. Noted that Police Scotland would have more police personnel patrolling on foot and on bike; and
6. Recorded a note of thanks to Inspector Jocelyn O'Connor who would soon be replaced by Inspector Miles Marshall for the ward.

7. ALMOND HOUSING ACTIVITY

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Almond Housing Association providing information on a number of issues as summarised in the report.

The report covered areas such as capital projects for 2014-15 which were now all complete, funding for a post based at the Citizens Advice Bureau and landscaping in the groves area of Craigshill.

With regards to digital inclusion the Association advised that they had interviewed over 300 tenants from areas which showed little or no internet usage to find out why they were not online. The results had provided plenty of information for the Association to work with to try and get more tenants to see the benefits of being online. The Community Engagement Officer had a number of projects which would follow on from the survey.

Details were also provided on the Almond Hosing Association in the Community and included details of the funding donations that had been made to a variety of projects including donations to the West Lothian Youth Action Group and Craigshill Good Neighbour Network.

The report continued to provide details of fuel poverty noting that Almond Housing in conjunction with Changeworks had identified the Craigshill area as having high fuel poverty. Therefore the Association had made an application for funding to the People and Communities Fund for a project to tackle fuel poverty in Craigshill, the outcome of which would be known by the end of February 2015.

The report also provided details of the Almond Enterprises

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report;
2. Noted that Almond Housing Association had been successful in securing extended funding for a post based at the Citizens Advice Bureau to assist tenants with debt management;
3. Noted the update with regards to Almond Housing Associations involvement in the council's Digital Inclusion week; and
4. Noted the advice that both Almond Housing Association and Almond Enterprises were open to requests for social funding.

8. HOUSING WARD REPORT

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 East Livingston and East Calder Ward.

The report provided information in relation to property void and let performance for mainstream properties and temporary tenancies from October to December 2014.

Arrears performance was also outlined in the report and it was noted that as at the end of December 2014 the arrears caseload was 4,980 totalling £1,636,398.21.

Further information was also contained in the report and included the following :-

- East Livingston and East Calder Area Team Activity;
- Capital Programme and New Build Council Housing;
- Tenant participation update; and
- Safer Neighbourhood Council Officer Ward Information.

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report; and
2. Requested that members be provided with details of those flats in Adelaide Street that had been let.

9. ADVICE SHOP AND ADULT BASIC EDUCATION SERVICE UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Services advising of the work undertaken by the

Advice Shop and Adult Basic Education Services from April to December 2014.

The Head of Area Services explained that the Advice Shop and Adult Basic Education Service delivered different services but to the same targeted customer groups, such as those who were vulnerable, disadvantaged and likely to be in poverty.

The Advice Shop was 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 Adult Basic Education Service (ABE) worked under the strategic guidance and principles for effective teaching and learning which were contained in the Scottish Government's "Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland : 2020" Strategy.

Both the Advice Shop and ABE services were funded through a core council budget, European Social Fund, Scottish Funding Council, West Lothian Growth Fund, Macmillan Cancer Support, West Lothian Challenge Fund and the Scottish Legal Aid Board. All activity across the service was informed by the "Better Off - West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy", the purpose of which was to help minimise the impact of poverty on the people of West Lothian.

Appendix 1 attached to the report identified the number of people the service had worked with over the last nine months, noting that the Advice Shop had helped 900 customers, the Court Advice Project had worked with 59 families and Adult Basic Education team had worked with 96 hard to reach families.

The service had also identified a number of priorities over the 2014-15 year; namely to provide additional resources to meet lip-reading needs, maintain a range of short course opportunities, continue to work with a range of partners to support clients of the Families Included Project and to increase the number of drop-in sessions at the Business Gateway Shop. All these priorities had been moved forward and were on track to be achieved by the end of the year.

It was recommended that the local area committee note :-

1. The Advice Shop and Adult Basic Education Service in the ward;
2. The intention to report annually on service activity in the area; and
3. The impact the provision was having in terms of supporting the outcomes of the "Better Off – Anti Poverty Strategy".

Decision

Noted the contents of the report.

10. ALCOHOL DIVERSIONARY ACTIVITIES

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy providing details of two applications that had been received, seeking funding for Alcohol Diversionary Activities.

The committee was asked to consider the following applications for funding, further details of which were attached to the report at Appendix 2 :-

- Booze you Looze - £15,070
- Off Beat - £16,600

It was recommended that the East Livingston and East Calder Local Area Committee note and consider the applications submitted for Alcohol Diversionary Funding against the Alcohol and Drug Partnership Joint Commissioning Plan's outcomes which were to reduce antisocial behaviour, deliver 1 to 1 alcohol brief interventions and change group attitudes to drinking.

Decision

Approved the terms of the report.

11. WEST LOTHIAN VILLAGES IMPROVEMENT FUND - APPLICATIONS

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning and Economic Development advising of the applications received from within the ward area seeking funding from the West Lothian Villages Improvement Fund in 2014-15.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development provided a summary of the scheme which included the shop front improvement scheme and the small scale village improvement scheme.

Under the village improvement scheme six villages within the ward were eligible for funding. These being :-

- East Calder - £125,000
- Midcalder - £125,000
- Kirknewton - £55,000
- Pumpherston - £55,000
- Uphall Station - £55,000
- Wilkieston - £20,000

The report then provided a narrative on the three applications that had

been received. One application had been received from East Calder and Wilkieston Community Council for £19,206 to upgrade a path connecting the village to East Calder and Almondell Park and the other had been received from Pumpherston Community Council; one to provide toilet facilities at Pumpherston Junior Football Park and the other to support an extensive planting programme across various village sites.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee :-

1. Note that three applications have been received for funding;
2. Note that the proposals all met the eligibility criteria for supported projects;
3. In respect of the Pumpherston Toilet facility application, approve the cost for the planning permission and the further costs to deliver the project pending planning approval;
4. Support funding for the projects; and
5. Agree that the Head of Planning and Economic Development should make an offer of funding as per the details summarised in the report.

Decision

Approved the terms of the report.

12. COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Services providing an update on community regeneration activity in the East Livingston and East Calder Ward.

The Head of Area Services provided a summary of some the activities that had taken place in the ward and included an update on engagement with community groups, local arts activity, village improvement fund applications, early years activity, the work of the Youth Issues Group, orienteering courses and support to community councils.

The Community Regeneration Officer then advised committee that with regards to the date for the training/networking event for Community Councils the report advised this would be taking place on 10 March 2015 when in fact this would take place on 11 March 2015.

The report concluded that the activities outlined in the report continued to contribute to the East Livingston and East Calder Ward Action Plan and enabled community planning partners to contribute to the Single Outcome Agreement at a local level.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report.

13. EAST LIVINGSTON AND EAST CALDER MULTI-MEMBER WARD
QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing an update on activity in the ward for the period up to 31 December 2014.

The committee were advised that following the publication of the East Livingston and East Calder Multi-Member Ward Operational Plan, the Local Senior Fire Officer for Falkirk and West Lothian had produced quarterly performance reports detailing activity against key priorities.

The seven key priorities for the ward were detailed in the report.

Attached the report, at Appendix 1, was a summary report that provided a series of graphs showing details of accidental dwelling fires, deliberate fires, fires in non-domestic properties, non-fatal non-fire emergencies and unwanted fire alarm signals for Scotland, West Lothian and the ward.

The Fire Manager continued to advise that Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals Per 100,000 head of population was quite high for the ward. This was due to Houston Industrial Estates being situated within the ward. The Fire Service was also continuing to work with the businesses located in the industrial estate to reduce the number of incidents.

It was recommended that the local area committee note and provide comment on the East Livingston and East Calder Multi-member Ward Quarterly Performance Report.

Decision

Noted the contents of the report

14. TIMETABLE OF LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2015-16

The committee considered the timetable of meetings (copies of which had been circulated) for the period August 2015 through to June 2015 for the East Livingston and East Calder Local Area Committee.

Decision

Approved the timetable of Local Area Committee meetings for the period August 2015 through to June 2015.

15. WORKPLAN

The committee considered the Work Plan (copies of which had been circulated) by the Lead Officer for the local area committee.

Decision

Noted the contents of the workplan.