

MINUTE of MEETING of the FAULDHUSE AND THE BREICH VALLEY LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within ROOM 1, WEST CALDER COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTRE, WEST CALDER, on 19 MAY 2015.

Present – Councillors David Dodds (Chair), Cathy Muldoon

Apologies – Councillor Greg McCarra

In Attendance –

Laura Wilson, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council

Ian Alcorn, Principal Planner, West Lothian Council

Inspector Gregor Forbes, Police Scotland

Eric Burton, Stoneyburn and Bents Venture Group

Alan McLaughlan, West Calder and Harburn Community Council

Sarah Rankine, Scottish Power Renewables

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Committee agreed a suggestion by the Chair that the presentation (Agenda Item 6) be taken later in the meeting to allow officers to resolve technical difficulties relating to the equipment needed for the presentation.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. MINUTE

The Local Area Committee noted the minute of its meeting held on 17 February 2015.

4. WORKPLAN 2015-16

A copy of the Workplan 2015-16 had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the Workplan.

5. FAULDHUSE - LONGRIDGE: MISSING LINK PATH CONNECTIONS

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning and Economic Development informing the Committee about the provision and funding of the missing link path between Fauldhouse and Longridge and recent provisional grant award from Sustrans to upgrade the surface of the main cycle path between both villages.

The report explained that the missing link path related to around 300m of missing path from the east edge of Fauldhouse at Lanrigg Road, eastwards towards Longridge and the countryside style path built along the south boundary of the Ecosse Regeneration site in 2013.

The report went on to provide details of the work undertaken to date and the funding secured to complete the improvement works.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee:-

1. Note the provision of the missing link footpath between Fauldhouse and Longridge with the help of grant aid from The Levenseat Trust and
2. Note the recent provisional award of a grant from Sustrans to upgrade the remainder of the existing path linking Fauldhouse and Longridge.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development concluded that the provision of a safe walking route between Fauldhouse and Longridge had been a long standing desire for both local communities and after several years of difficulties securing a budget, alongside some problematic design and utilities location issues, the main missing link had now been started on site, while the upgrade for the remaining lengthy section should be completed in 2015/16 with Sustrans grant funding.

The Principal Planner invited the Local Area to consider arrangements for an event to mark the opening of the path.

Decision

To note the terms of the report and that the Principal Planner would liaise with Local Area Committee members concerning arrangements for an event to mark the opening of the path.

6. POLICE SCOTLAND - WARD 6 UPDATE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Inspector Gregor Forbes providing an update on Police Scotland activity in the Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley ward for the period up to 27 April 2015.

The statistics within the report showed that antisocial behaviour was down across the ward area with the exception of hate crime, which had increased over the year. This could be attributed to a number of factors including an increase of reporting such offences at Addiewell Prison.

The Committee was informed that the new Policing Model for West Lothian had been implemented on 4 March 2015. The new model placed community policing at its heart.

The report provided details of prevention work in the areas of Anti-social

Behaviour, Substance Misuse, Road Safety and Acquisitive Crime.

Inspector Forbes then responded to questions raised by Committee members. He also advised that every effort would be made for Police Scotland to be represented at Community Council meetings.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7. BLACK LAW WIND FARM: HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLAN - REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PRESENTATION BY SCOTTISH POWER RENEWABLES

Report by Head of Planning and Economic Development

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning and Economic Development informing the Committee of the ongoing improvement works associated with the Habitat Management Plan for Black Law Wind Farm, south west of Fauldhouse.

The report advised that construction work on Black Law windfarm south west of Fauldhouse had commenced in 2004. As part of the planning application process and approval, a Habitat Management Plan for Black Law had been drawn up by Scottish Power Renewables. The development was located in an area extensively damaged by mining, afforestation and drainage of wet heath.

The Habitat Management Plan outlined what and how work would:-

- mitigate or compensate for the impacts caused by the development, or
- enhance the natural heritage interest of the area.

The Committee was informed that the Habitat Management Group met once a year on site to oversee the monitoring of the Habitat Management Plan. The group was comprised of 2 ecologists from Scottish Power Renewables, officers from Forestry Commission Scotland and the RPS and representatives from the 3 local authorities involved: South Lanarkshire, North Lanarkshire and West Lothian.

RSPB worked closely with Scottish Power Renewables to deliver considerable habitat mitigation and enhancement to benefit breeding waders, farmland birds and blanket bog-habitat. They were of the view that "this was one of the first windfarm developments in Scotland to integrate habitat enhancement with windfarm development, working with key stakeholders throughout the process and as such was a good example of sustainable land use."

Finally, the Head of Planning and Economic Development informed the Committee that Scottish Power Renewables continued to progress the aims and actions contained in the original Habitat Management Plan

associated with the development of the wind farm at Black Law that straddled the boundaries between South and North Lanarkshire and West Lothian. Alongside the generation of renewable energy, the developer had sought to restore the blanket bog habitat typical of the area.

Presentation by Sarah Rankine, Scottish Power Renewables

The Chair welcomed Sarah Rankine to the meeting. Sarah had been invited to provide an overview of the role of the Ecology Team, Scottish Power Renewables and to inform the Committee of the work carried out at Black Law.

Sarah listed the aims of the Black Law HMP as follows:-

- Restore condition and quality of deforested blanket mire habitat.
- Restore condition and quality of unplanted blanket mire habitat
- Improve quality of heathland/grassland habitat
- Maintain planted woodland and hedgerows.

The Committee heard that, in relation to the deforested mire restoration, there was currently no accepted methodology or guidance. SPR had been researching the issue since 2006, and the low water table levels and conifer regeneration had been identified as major issues. A ground-smoothing technique had been trialled in 2010 and 2011 at Whitelee and Black Law and the results of the monitoring were extremely promising.

The information presented by Sarah also covered Tree Planting, Bird Monitoring, Riparian Mammals. Finally, Sarah spoke of future work and challenges ahead.

In response to an invitation extended by Sarah for councillors and interested parties to visit the area, it was agreed that the Community Regeneration Officer would liaise with the Principal Planner to progress arrangements for a visit. It was suggested that such a visit could include representatives from Fauldhouse CDT, West Lothian Development Trust, pupils from West Calder High School and students from Oatridge College.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report.
2. To note the presentation by Sarah Rankine, Scottish Power Renewables and to thank Sarah for her informative presentation.
3. To agree that officers progress arrangements for a visit to the area.

8. 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.

The report examined property void and let performance for both mainstream tenancies and temporary tenancies.

A table within the report showed the level of arrears and the number of tenants in arrears in the ward from end September 2013 at the start of the Rent Arrears Campaign and the level of arrears at the end of March 2015. There had been significant improvements, in both value and volume of arrears cases over the period.

The report advised that good progress was being made on the 1000 houses new build programme. A planning application had been submitted for the site at Eastfield, Fauldhouse. Forty homes were planned for the site and Lovell Partnership would be carrying out the work.

In relation to the local capital upgrades, it was noted that the flats in Bents at Burnlea Place and Meadow Place had been demolished and the last block at Redcroft Place would be demolished by end April 2015.

In the absence of an Area Housing Manager, any questions arising from the report would be taken back by the Community Regeneration Office.

It was noted that Local Area Committee members wished to be updated in relation to the Eastfield New Build site.

In response to a question raised by the representative of Stoneyburn and Bents Venture Group, officers undertook to provide an update in relation to the use of the land following demolition of the flats at Burnlea.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

9. 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 an update on the Community Health Champions approach.

The Committee was informed that the Elected Member Raising Awareness Sessions had been delivered on 13 January and 24 February 2015. Details of the sessions were outlined in the report. It was now proposed that key community organisations were identified and invited to participate in the shortened version of the well-established, evidence-based Health Issues in the Community course.

The Depute Chief Executive concluded that the community health champions approach was progressing to the local development stage and this would be carried forwarding working in partnership with area based colleagues and agencies. It was proposed that the Health Issues in the Community course would be offered in 3-4 locations to allow maximum participation and learning.

During discussion, the Chair indicated that he would welcome the opportunity to attend the Elected Member Raising Awareness Session, should these sessions be repeated in the future.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

10. 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 attaching three applications received from within the local area committee for funding from the West Lothian Villages Improvement Fund (WLVIF) in 2015/16.

The applications for this round of funding were:-

1. West Calder and Harburn CDT – Main Street/Union Square Improvements - £5,108.
2. West Calder and Harburn CDT – Path Feasibility Study - £8,117
3. Addiewell Community Action team – Environmental Improvements - £3,300

The Chair reminded members that, with only two members present, the Committee could not agree that an offer of funding be made as recommended within the report.

It was noted that the applications detailed in the report met the eligibility criteria of the Village Improvement Fund and the Committee was asked to support them.

Decision

1. To note the three applications that had been received for funding and that the proposals met the eligibility criteria for supported projects.
2. To note that the two members present supported the funding applications.
3. To agree that the report be forwarded to the Council Executive with the recommendation that the applications be approved.

11. COMMUNITY REGENERATION - WARD ACTION PLAN

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Services informing members of progress against the targets set in the Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley Ward Action Plan 2013-15, and presenting the new Ward Action Plan for 2015-16.

Appendix one to the report contained the completed Ward Action Plan for 2013-15 showing Regeneration, Employability and partner activity across the ward.

Appendix two to the report contained the Ward Action Plan for 2015-16 showing Regeneration, Employability and partner activity across the ward. The plan had been designed to show what the various services would be working together to achieve over the coming year, what outcomes they were working towards and how they would measure progress against these. The plans were reviewed every six months at which time new activities would be added as appropriate.

The Community Regeneration Officer presented the report, highlighting areas of significant achievement in 2014 and providing examples of key planned activities for 2015-16.

Finally, the Committee was informed that an update report would be presented to the Local Area Committee in November 2015 and June 2016.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee note:-

1. the progress made against targets in the period November 2014 to March 2015;
2. that the Ward Action Plan for 2013-15 was now complete; and
3. that a new Ward Action Plan was now in place for the period 2015-16.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

12. FAULDHOUSE AND THE BREICH VALLEY MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service updating the Committee on the activity within the ward for the period up to 31 March 2015.

Appendix 1 to the report provided performance information designed to provide citizens, stakeholders and partners with information relating to ward based activity undertaken by SFRS.

The Performance Report aligned to the key priorities of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian 2014-2017, the West Lothian Strategic Assessment of Community Safety and continued with the excellent partnership working on Community Safety, which was evident in West Lothian.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

13. REVIEW OF SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE RESOURCE BASED CREWING ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN WEST LoTHIAN

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing members with a review of the implementation of the Resource Based Crewing (RBC) model at Bathgate Fire Station, which had been implemented on 1 September 2014.

The report informed members that, in the period 1 September 2014 to 28 February 2015, the ISU had been mobilised 13 times to incidents in the West Lothian area in comparison to 47 times in the period 1 January to 31 July 2014. This reduction was as a result of changes that had been made to mobilising protocol for the ISU, where it was mobilised automatically to incidents where the equipment that it carried could be used for life saving purposes and 'on request' to all other incident types.

With the introduction of RBC at Bathgate fire Station, there had been no significant reductions to frontline emergency service delivery in the Bathgate and West Lothian areas, as they physical resources (appliances) had remained in place and unchanged.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

14. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2015-16

A paper had been circulated showing meeting dates for 2015-16 for consideration.

Decision

To agree the Timetable of Meetings and that the next meeting, scheduled for 17 September 2015) would be held in the Civic Centre, Livingston.

To note that, in relation to holding meetings in the ward, the current arrangements would be reviewed and a decision taken in due course.