

MINUTE of MEETING of the EAST LIVINGSTON AND EAST CALDER LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 1 SEPTEMBER 2016.

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

Apologies – Sandy Young, Almond Housing Association

In Attendance – David Maule, Lead Officer WLC, Des Donnelly (SFRS), Sergeant Kris Linejs (Police Scotland), David Lees, Nets & Land Service WLC, Phyllis McFadyen, Housing WLC, Clare Stewart, Community Regeneration WLC, Ted Finch & Michelle Kirkbright, Parkrun and Suzie Young & Donna Paterson, Inveralmond Community High School.

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair ruled in terms of Standing Order 11 that Agenda Item 8 (Fire Services Performance Report) would be considered immediately following consideration of the Minute to facilitate attendance by fire service personnel.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3. MINUTE

The committee confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 16 June 2016. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

4. EAST LIVINGSTON & EAST CALDER MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE 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 within the ward for the period up to 30 June 2016.

Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was a summary report that provided a series of graphs showing details of accidental fire dwellings, deliberate fires, fires in non-domestic properties, non-fatal non-fire emergencies and unwanted fire alarm signals; each of the graphs demonstrated the statistics as they related to the whole of Scotland, the whole of West Lothian and for the ward.

The Fire Officer amplified a number of issues in relation to unwanted fire alarm signals many of which were in buildings owned by the council. It was noted that fire service personnel were actively working with council colleagues to reduce the number of unwanted fire alarm signals and

included a number of initiatives ranging from training for key holders of council buildings to simple tasks such as moving equipment, for example toasters away from smoke alarms. It was anticipated with some of these small changes progress would be made by the end of the year.

It was recommended that the committee note and provide comment on the East Livingston and East Calder Multi-Member Ward Performance report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report

5. INVERALMOND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

The committee considered a presentation by Suzie Young, Head Teacher of Inveralmond Community High School and which provided an overview of the achievement of the pupils for the year 2014-15.

The committee were presented with a series of slides demonstrating pass results in National and Higher qualifications and some of the success stories in a number of subjects including Higher PE, Higher English and Higher Music. Positive school destinations were also detailed noting that the school was keen to see an increase in pupils starting modern apprenticeships.

The Head Teacher assisted by the Depute Head Teacher, Donna Patterson, continued to explain that the number of subjects available to study had greatly increased over the years and included subjects such as modern studies, creative industries and design & manufacture.

It was also explained that the teachers, pupils and their parents had access to a tracking and monitoring system that allowed them to monitor their progress. This proved to be a very useful tool for a dialogue between pupils and their teachers on where improvements could be made.

The presentation concluded with a three minute video which provided a number of personal testimonies from S5 pupils sharing their experiences of the school.

The Chair thanked the Head Teacher and Depute Head Teacher for the very informative presentation.

Decision

To note the terms of the presentation.

6. LIVINGSTON PARKRUN

The committee considered a presentation which provided an overview of Parkrun which was a free running event that took place every Saturday morning at 9.30am and started and finished at West Lothian Civic Centre.

The committee were advised that Parkrun was a free running event with 414 of them taking place every week throughout the UK with Livingston being just one of them. As the event was free fundraising had been crucial particularly at the beginning but a number of organisations including the council had contributed funds which had proven extremely helpful.

The event was very much a run and not a race and since the inaugural run in Livingston on 9 January 2016, there had been a total of 33 runs, with 1694 participants which equated to an average of 181 runners per week.

The assistance of volunteers along the route was important to the success of the event and they were provided with details of what to do in the event of an emergency. The council had also been instrumental in co-ordinating the route particularly during the recent upgrades to the area and footpaths around the Civic Centre and assisting with matters such as licensing and publicity.

The presentation concluded with a selection of testimonies from some of the participants and the volunteers who had been involved in Parkrun.

There then followed a questions and answer session and the Chair thanked Ted Finch and Michelle Kirkbright for their very informative presentation and wished them every success into the future.

Decision

To note the contents of the report

7. POLICE WARD REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Police Scotland providing an update on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period up to 30 June 2016.

The report provided statistics for the month of May and June 2016, together with comparative figures for the same period in 2015 noting that there continued to be a fall in public space assaults, a general fall in youth calls, vandalism and fire raisings and an overall decline in anti-social behaviour.

The report continued by providing details on the enforcement and educational activity that was taking place in the ward including speed monitoring of HGV's, parking infringements and the problems caused by the temporary amalgamation of East Calder and Kirknewton Primary Schools. It was also noted that PC Ryan McCartney had submitted a request to the council to have double yellow lines placed along one side of Main Street from the junction with Langton Road to the Grapes Public House.

The committee continued to be advised that when the new school term resumed Ward Officers had been tasked, in conjunction with Road

Policing colleagues, to work with local community groups and schools to address parking and driver behaviour in and around schools – specifically at drop off and pick up times. Sustainable options such as the Walking Bus were also being investigated.

Further information was contained in the report and which related to high visibility patrols on cycle and foot and Operation Pinpoint, which was trying to tackle the problem of off-road motorbikes which was a problem for the whole of West Lothian. It was also noted that the same two Community Ward Officers were regularly attending Community Council meetings even to the point where they were being asked to change their shift rota to ensure that they were available to attend meetings.

In relation to traffic the members raised a number of concerns including the proposal for double yellow lines along Main Street between the junction of Langton Road and the Grapes Public House noting that this would cause parking problems elsewhere in the village, concerns for indiscriminate parking in and around the newly renovated Fork & Field Public House and the need for a traffic light control at Kirknewton Primary School. Sergeant Linejs noted these concerns and undertook to investigate them as appropriate.

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

Decision

- 1) To note the contents of the report;
- 2) To note the interventions being undertaken by Police Scotland in relation to traffic in the villages of East Calder and Kirknewton;
- 3) To note attendance by the same two Community Ward Officers to meetings of the Community Council;
- 4) To note the request from ward members in relation to indiscriminate parking in and around the Fork & Field Public House; and
- 5) To note the request from ward members in relation to the need for traffic lights at Kirknewton Primary School.

8. SERVICE UPDATE - NETS, LAND AND COUNTRYSIDE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services appraising members of the Nets, Land Services and Countryside activities for the ward for the period 1 May to 31 July 2016.

The report provided a summary of works carried out and enquiries received in relation to Grounds Maintenance, Garden Maintenance, Street Cleansing and Environmental Enforcement.

The report also provided a narrative on the tree and woodland works taking place at Almondell and Calderwood and open space routine work at Craigspark.

With regards to Almondell Cemetery the project was progressing well with practical completion now concluded. Phase 1 had 831 lairs, with capacity for approximately the next 25 years and Phase 2 would have the capacity for 736 lairs, with capacity for approximately 25 years. In addition there would be 120 infant lairs. Work was now beginning on the formal opening ceremony of the cemetery.

The Local Area Committee was asked to :-

1. Note the work carried out by the services for the local area; and
2. Advise on any areas that required further information or investigation.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To request further information in relation to the statistics relating to fly-tipping and whether or not these represented an increase/decreased on previous years.

9. HOUSING, BUILDING AND CUSTOMER SERVICES UPDATE

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

The report examined Property Void and Let Performance for both mainstream and temporary tenancies for the months of April, May and June 2016 noting that 14 mainstream properties had been let in the void period of 0-2 weeks. There were also 4 Policy Voids in the ward; 1 was being used for a decant and the others were for structural upgrading.

In relation to rent arrears the report provided a graph comparing rent arrears in 2016 with those in 2015 noting that there are had been a slight increase in the first quarter compared to the previous year. The number of serious arrears (£1,000+) remained at 3. A strategy for 2016-17 had been devised by the council for addressing rent arrears and these were summarised in the report and include increasing Direct Debit take-up, benchmarking with other local authorities, a campaign programme and performance monitoring.

The report continued by providing details of the capital and new build council house programmes noting that as of 27 June 2016 14 new units at Hamilton Court, Pumpherston had been let. It was also reported that the five houses in Wilkieston planned to be upgraded at Orchardfield Terrace and Bonnington Road were now expected to begin in August, following

the expected acceptance of the PV Panel Tender.

The committee were also advised of other notable activity in the ward including a Tenant Participation update, the work of the Homeless Network and the work of the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

The Local Area Committee were asked to note the Housing, Building and Customer Service activity detailed in the ward report for the period 1 April to 30 June 2016.

Decision

To note the contents of the report

10. ALMOND HOUSING REPORT

The committee noted that a report from Almond Housing had been circulated as part of the agenda but a representative of the organisation had been unable to attend the meeting and therefore the item was not discussed in any detail.

Officers intimated that if ward members did have any questions on the content of the report these could be relayed back to Almond Housing.

Decision

To note the content of the report.

11. GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL PROPERTY PROGRAMME UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services advising on property capital investments completed during 2015-16 and those approved for 2016-17 and 2017-18.

The council, on 29 January 2013, approved a five year capital investment and asset management strategy for 2014-15 to 2017-18. Within this capital resource a number of property investments for the ward were proposed with a number of these already completed.

Firstly, in relation to 2015-16, the total investment in the ward was approximately £1.724m with the largest projects being :-

- Kirknewton Primary School which was subject to an internal refurbishment;
- East Calder Primary School Nursery replacement which was nearing completion;
- The development of a new pavilion at Uphall Station Park which was nearing completion; and

- Rewiring and internal wall works at Craigwillow Gymnastics Centre.

Significant progress had also been made on the largest investment in the ward in recent years with works commencing on the construction of the East Calder Partnership Centre.

Over the next two years it was projected that investment in the ward would be approximately £8.351m and would include the following :-

- ❖ Completion of the East Calder Partnership Centre with a soft opening programmed for March 2017;
- ❖ Mid Calder Nursery replacement which was commencing in September 2016 with completion scheduled for February 2017;
- ❖ Kirknewton Changing Pavilion which would see a new facility being constructed on the site of the temporary nursery which was being removed now that the primary school refurbishment was complete; and.
- ❖ Transfer of Craigsfarm to community management.

The report concluded that the significant level of capital investment that the projects and planned improvements represented, demonstrated the continued emphasis of ensuring that council property assets were suitable for the delivery of modern services

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee note the capital update provided in the report.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To note all the good work that was either underway or being planned for the ward.

12. COMMUNITY REGENERATION - REGENERATION PLANS

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising of the process that would be followed for developing and implementing regeneration plans.

The report recalled that the Regeneration Framework, approved by Council Executive in February 2014, contained a commitment to develop regeneration plans in key areas of deprivation in West Lothian. Eight regeneration areas had been identified, based on the data zones within the bottom 20% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). These were Armadale, Blackburn, Boghall, Bridgend, Craigshill, Fauldhouse & Breich Valley, Livingston Central and Whitburn.

Community planning partnerships were required, by October 2017, to have locality plans in place for areas experiencing the poorest outcomes. Regeneration Plans met this requirement for locality plans and would address the themes within the Regeneration Framework at a local level. The themes in the framework were :-

- Employability & Employment
- Early Years & Family Learning
- Health & Wellbeing
- Economic Development; and
- Community capacity & cohesion

The framework provided a long-term plan for targeted action to improve the life chances of people living in the most disadvantaged communities in West Lothian and would provide fresh impetus and greater clarity to the targeting of interventions to address deprivation and economic exclusion within specific areas. Not all interventions would apply in every area; plans would be developed dependent on the needs of each target area and the assets available.

The process to develop regeneration plans would include launch events, the establishment of steering groups for each area, mapping of community assets and evidence gathering. It was anticipated that the finalised plans would be implemented by April 2017.

Once the Regeneration Plans had been devised they would be live documents and would reflect the need for long term transformational change and as such would allow for short, medium and long term processes, actions and targets to be detailed in the plans.

With regards to performance monitoring and reporting the overarching target, as set out in the Regeneration Framework, was to reduce the gap between the most deprived 20% and the West Lothian average over 20 years. High level indicators had been determined across each of the five themes in the framework and baseline figures had been established for each indicator.

Community Regeneration Officers would have a responsibility to ensure that plans linked with the Regeneration Framework and the Single Outcome Agreement. Additionally a Regeneration Framework Steering Group had been established to support the whole process. The Board would be chaired by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration and there would be a named person for each of the five themes within the framework. Quarterly updates would be provided to Local Area Committees and an annual report would be prepared for the Partnership & Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

The report concluded that Regeneration Plans were being developed in eight targeted regeneration areas in West Lothian. The plans would be

flexible, working documents which would provide long-term targeted action to improve the life chances of people living in the most disadvantaged communities in West Lothian.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee note :-

1. That Regeneration Plans would be developed in eight targeted West Lothian communities; and
2. The timescale for the implementation of the plans.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

13. PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND PROVISIONAL ALLOCATION 2016

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration informing members of the provisional allocations made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2016 to groups in the East Livingston and East Calder ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

It was reported that, from the total fund in 2016 (£29,106.54), East Livingston and East Calder ward had an allocation of £7,495.29.

The Committee was informed that thirteen application forms had been issued to groups across East Livingston and East Calder ward, with all thirteen returned. The intention was that all thirteen would be supported. One application had been sent to a Livingston-wide group but this application had not yet been returned and this was being followed-up

The Livingston-wide and West Lothian-wide organisations, and the provisional allocation to each in 2016, was shown in Appendix two to the report.

It was recommended that the Committee note that thirteen groups within East Livingston and East Calder ward had applied to the fund and would be supported.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

14. WORKPLAN

A copy of the workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the contents of the workplan