

MINUTE of MEETING of the FAULDHUSE AND THE BREICH VALLEY LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 21 FEBRUARY 2017.

Present – Councillors David Dodds (Chair), Greg McCarra

Apologies – Councillor Cathy Muldoon

In Attendance

Alice Mitchell, Lead Officer, Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley LAC

Laura Wilson, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council

Kate Ward, Housing Services, West Lothian Council

Tony Fleming, NETs, Land and Countryside Services, West Lothian Council

Lisa Grubb, Headteacher, West Calder High School

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair made reference to the meeting being the final Local Area Committee meeting in the current Administration. The Chair thanked Headteachers, other external organisation representatives, council officers, the LAC Lead Officer, Regeneration Officer and Clerk for their contribution to meetings of the Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley LAC. The Chair then thanked ward councillors for their support and co-operation during the period 2012-2017.

3. MINUTE

The Local Area Committee noted the minute of its meeting held on 29 November 2016.

4. WEST CALDER HIGH SCHOOL - PRESENTATION BY HEADTEACHER

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Lisa Grubb, Headteacher, West Calder High School. Ms Grubb had been invited to present an overview of the school's performance and levels of attainment.

The Committee was informed that, within West Lothian, the school had the highest number of young people achieving 5 or more National 5 qualifications. Other successes and strengths were:-

- Almost all young people transitioning into positive, sustained destinations
- Revised vision and values

- Improved learning and teaching – Inspired Learning Space
- Staff actively involved in leading improvements
- Meeting learning needs – reduction in exclusions from school
- Positive Relationships Positive Learning
- Assertive mentoring programme
- Strong examples of community and partnership work
- Increased pupil voice and pupil leadership opportunities

The Headteacher spoke about the significant reduction in the number of exclusions in 2016/17 when compared to the previous year.

The Headteacher went on to outline the priorities for the school for 2017-18.

The Headteacher then responded to questions raised by members. In particular, it was noted that the school was well prepared for its move to new premises in 2018 and that there were opportunities for staff to talk to others who had been through a similar transition.

Finally, the Committee heard that there had been little impact on the school due to the closure of the A71.

The Chair then thanked the Headteacher for her informative presentation.

Decision

To note the terms of the presentation.

5. HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES UPDATE

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

The report examined void performance in relation to both mainstream tenancies and temporary tenancies.

The Committee was informed that the ward position for Q3 of 2016/17 was £258,524 which was a decrease of £36,538 on the previous year's position. The West Lothian overall position had decreased by £245,116 from the previous year and at week 38 was £1,562,678. While there were 60 serious arrears cases (£1,000+), the Committee noted that 55% of cases were in the lower bands (£300 or less).

The report went on to provide an update in relation to the capital programme and new build council housing.

The Committee was asked to note Housing, Customer and Building Service activity as detailed in the ward report for the period 1 October to 31 December 2016.

In response to a question raised, the Housing Manager undertook to

provide members with details of the external wall insulation work being undertaken at Kirk Brae, Longridge.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. POLICE SCOTLAND REPORT

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Police Inspector Gregor Forbes providing an update on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period up to 31 January 2017.

The report provided statistical information in relation to crime Groups 1 to 5.

The report provided details of forthcoming events. 'Prevention' events organised included: 'Safer Internet Day', 'Act Now – Counter Terrorism Event in High Schools', 'Youth Army Outreach' and various inputs to high school pupils on personal safety, substance misuse and 'No knives better lives' and in the community action against Bogus Workman type activities.

The Committee noted that Police Scotland was not represented at the meeting.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7. MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing an update on the activity within the ward for the period up to 31 December 2016.

Station Manager Ritchie Hall presented the report, highlighting a number of improvements across the key priorities within the ward.

In relation to Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS), 14 incidents were reported during 2016/17 year to date reporting period, compared to 23 during 2015-16 year to date reporting.

In response to a question raised, the Station Master advised that the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian 2014-2017 would be replaced with a new plan. The Committee noted Councillor McCarra's comment concerning the desire for local input into future plans and the Fire Master undertook to convey the comment back to the service.

The Committee was invited to note and provide comment on the Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley Multi-member Ward Performance Report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8. SERVICE UPDATE - NETS, LAND AND COUNTRYSIDE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services advising members of the recent activity of the NET's Land and Countryside Services teams for the period 1 November 2016 to 31 January 2017.

The report provided statistical information in relation to Grounds Maintenance, Garden Maintenance, Street Cleansing, Parks and Woodland, and Open Space and Cemeteries.

The Committee was informed that main works were complete at Meadow Crescent Park. Improvements included new paths, small football pitch, bins and seating. In addition there had been some tree planting. Outstanding works were currently being pursued with the contractor.

Members were asked to note the work carried out to date and future planned work as outlined in the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

9. REPORT ON PROGRESS OF REGENERATION PLANNING

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration informing the Committee of progress towards developing regeneration plans within the ward.

The report recalled that the Regeneration Framework, which had been 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. At present, this process had started in five of the eight regeneration areas, including Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley which covered the communities of Fauldhouse, Stoneyburn, Addiewell and Polbeth.

The report went on to provide details of meetings held in Addiewell, Stoneyburn, Fauldhouse and Polbeth. The key points highlighted in the report were:-

- The Addiewell group had met four times in the Pitstop and the core group consisted on representatives from the community council, gala committee, WLYAP, Addiewell and St Thomas' primary

schools, the Pitstop management committee and staff.

- The group in Stoneyburn had met on three occasions and was making good progress.
- In Fauldhouse, the regeneration group had been well attended but only one community member had attended and the rest were officers and other external agencies. A further meeting had been held at the end of January and was attended by nine residents who had all now joined the group.
- Attendance at the first meeting of the Polbeth steering group was low.

Finally, the Committee was informed that a further update would be brought to the next meeting of the Local Area Committee.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee note:-

1. That four local regeneration groups had been established; and
2. Community engagement activity would commence in February 2017.

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, Economic Development and Regeneration advising the Committee of the applications received from within the ward seeking funding from the West Lothian Villages Improvement Fund (WLVIF) in 2016/17.

The Committee was informed that four applications had been received from West Calder and Harburn CDT for this round of funding. These were summarised as follows:-

1. West Calder to Birchwood Right of Way - £9,000 – to open up the first section of an old right of way between West Calder and Harburn, specifically linking West Calder to the Harmand Birchwood.
2. West Calder Lighting - £8,480 – To improve the lighting at the Remembrance Garden and on Union Square.
3. West Calder Gateways - £33,000 – To allow the CDT to enhance and improve the four gateways into West Calder.
4. Heritage and Signage - £25,500 – to improve access and navigation around the village.

In addition, the West Calder Community Education Centre Management Committee had requested £12,000 towards a total project cost of £24,000 to enable them to refurbish all of the toilet facilities within the centre. The remaining 50% funding required would be contributed from the committee's own funds.

In addition to these five new projects, the Committee was asked to increase the grant allocation of £10,000 made to Breich Community Association in June 2016. The association required £26,800 to allow them to purchase and install additional equipment at the village play part. They had secured £10,000 from West Lothian Development Trust but were unsuccessful in their application to Banks Mining from the remaining £6,800. The Committee was asked to support this additional amount being awarded from the Village Improvement Fund.

Copies of the five application forms were attached as appendices to the report.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee:-

1. Note that five applications had been received for funding.
2. Note that the proposals met the eligibility criteria for supported projects;
3. Supports funding for the projects;
4. Increase funding to Breich Community Association; and
5. Agree that the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration should make an offer of funding as per the details set out in the report.

Decision

1. To note that five applications had been received for funding.
2. To note that the proposals met the eligibility criteria for supported projects;
3. To support funding for the projects;
4. To support the proposal to increase funding to Breich Community Association;
5. To agree that, as only two members were present, the applications be referred to the Council Executive with the recommendation that funding be approved.

11. WORKPLAN

A copy of the Workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

1. To note the Workplan.
2. To amend the Workplan to reflect (i) that the Lead Officer for WC&H CDT was Allan MacLaughlan; and (ii) that the project name was Polbeth and West Calder Community Garden.