

MINUTE of MEETING of the LIVINGSTON NORTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 16 MARCH 2017.

Present – Councillors Anne McMillan (Chair), Robert De Bold, Andrew Miller

Apologies – Councillor Angela Moohan.

In Attendance –

Jim Jack, Lead Officer for Livingston North LAC
Scott McKillop, Community Regeneration Team Leader
Sandy Ross, Housing, Construction and Building Services
Beverley Akinlami, CLD Youth Services Manager
Police Inspector Adam Smith, Police Scotland
Stuart Watson, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Brian Johnston, Livingston Village Community Council
Steve Egan, Eliburn Community Council

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. ORDER OF BUSINESS, INCLUDING NOTICE OF URGENT BUSINESS

As this was the final meeting in the term of Administration, Councillor Miller expressed thanks to Councillor Moohan for undertaking the role of Chair of the Livingston North Local Area Committee. Councillor McMillan also expressed her appreciation of the work undertaken by Councillor Moohan.

3. MINUTE

The Local Area Committee noted the minute of its meeting held on 15 December 2016.

4. LIVINGSTON NORTH MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE REPORT

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

Station Master Stuart Watson presented the report, highlighting an improvement in the number of accidental dwelling fires. During 2016-17

year to date reporting period SFRS had dealt with three accidental dwelling fires in comparison to 6 during 2015-16 year to date reporting period.

In relation to Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) incidents, it was noted that there were 35 incidents during 2016-17 year to date reporting period in comparison to 19 during 2015-16 year to date reporting period.

In response to a question raised, the Station Master confirmed that the majority of deliberate fires were related to wheelie bin fires.

The Committee was asked to note and provide comment on the Livingston North Multi-member ward performance report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. WARD 3, LIVINGSTON NORTH UPDATE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Police Inspector Adam Smith providing an update on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period up to 28 February 2017.

The report highlighted that there had been an increase in youth calls in December 2016.

Inspector Smith reported that work was ongoing by Community Officers, West Lothian Council SNT officers, Youth Justice workers and CAT team tackling youth disorder and antisocial behaviour in the Deans/Carmondean/Knightsridge areas. Letter drops had been carried out resulting in several prolific youth offenders identified, charged and reported to Children's Reporter. Two youths had subsequently been placed in a residential unit in Airdrie and follow up intervention work was continuing by all agencies.

Inspector Smith also provided details of intervention visits carried out with parents/youths residing in the Livingston North ward by the Community Officers following intelligence of planned fights involving groups of youths. He also informed the Committee of an attempted fire raising at the Ability Centre. The youths that had been involved had been charged and reported to the Children's Reporter with follow-up meetings planned with the partner agencies to identify the best course of action in terms of intervention work.

The report went on to provide details of road safety issues and issues relating to travellers.

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

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

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 property void and let performance for both mainstream and temporary tenancies.

The report also provided a table showing the level of rent arrears and number of tenants in arrears at end December 2016.

The report provided a table showing the number of units planned under the New Building Council Housing Programme.

In response to questions raised, Sandy Ross (Housing Manager) undertook to provide members of the Local Area Committee with response to the following questions:-

1. Was there a timescale, or planned programme that could be used to inform Deans South residents of disruption and/or disconnection of services by utility companies?
2. What was the delay regarding the 117 units planned for Deans South?
3. What was the current strategy concerning buying back of Council Houses (Mortgage to Rent Scheme)?

The Local Area Committee was asked to note Housing, Customer and Building Service activity as detailed in the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7. SERVICE UPDATE - OPERATIONAL SERVICES

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services appraising members of the Operational Services activities for Livingston North from 1 November 2016 to 31 January 2017.

The Committee was informed that all capital works were progressing as planned.

A number of questions were raised by Steve Egan (Elburn Community Council) and it was noted that these would be dealt with by the Lead Officer as undernoted:-

1. Can the area around Peel Primary School (on the hill from Aller Place to Lady Place) be prioritised appropriately in terms of winter maintenance/gritting as the path was well used by parents and children? The Lead Officer undertook to raise with the service.
2. Can a handrail be fitted on the hilly path from Eliburn to St John's Hospital? The Lead Officer undertook to raise with the service.
3. Can the open top bins at Eliburn Park be replaced with closed top bins? The Lead Officer undertook to raise with the service.
4. Can the youth shelter be removed from Peel Park? The Lead Officer provided a verbal response to the issue raised.
5. Can the speed bumps at Aller Place be examined as they appeared to be higher than those in other areas? The Lead Officer provided a verbal response and also undertook to raise with the service.

On behalf of Eliburn Community Council, Mr Egan recorded his appreciation of the work undertaken in the Eliburn area by the NETs and Land Services team.

The Committee was asked to:

1. Note the work carried out by the service within the local area.
2. Advise of any areas that required further information or investigation.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8. COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update on progress towards developing regeneration plans with the ward, and related activities.

The report recalled that the Committee had considered a report in September 2016 outlining the background to developing regeneration plans, including the processes, structures, and timescales involved.

The report went on to advise that the Livingston Central local action groups had taken the decision to meet at individual settlement level. The settlement groups (Knightsridge, Ladywell and Dedridge) had met a number of times and progress on the Knightsridge group was detailed within the report.

Since the December meeting of the LAC, the group had considered

previous community engagement work which had been undertaken locally, including consultation exercises from the Vennie and a Health Issues in the Community course which was based in Mosswood Community Centre.

The Committee was informed that officers were working on the basis that the first version of the Regeneration Plan would be in place for October 2017, as per Scottish Government requirements for Community Planning Partnerships to implement their locality plans. Therefore, they were keen to complete the community engagement and move onto the next stage of the process which was prioritising the issues and opportunities arising from the local engagement and the analysis of local statistics and asset mapping.

The report went on to provide details of the following activities within the ward:-

- Community Garden
- Bike Project
- Vennie Voice
- Woodland Trust
- Easter Programme
- Skate Park

Finally, it was noted that Livingston United Parish Churches had submitted a Stage 1 application to the council's Community Asset Transfer scheme with a view to acquiring Carmondean Community Centre (also known as Nether Bank Community Centre). Officers had had initial discussions with the organisations and were continuing to meet to look at establishing what the proposals would consist of before being fully considered by council.

It was recommended that the Local Area Committee note:-

- That a local regeneration group had been established in Knightsridge;
- That community engagement activity had commenced from February 2017;
- Update on the Vennie project's activity; and
- A Stage 1 Community Asset Transfer application had been received from Livingston United Parish Church in relation to Carmondean Community Centre.

In response to a request by Councillor Miler for an update on recent developments in Knightsridge (and in particular, issues around the planned demolition of the Harvester, closure of the Post Office and other units), it was agreed that the item be placed on the workplan and a report brought to the next meeting of the Local Area Committee. In addition, the Lead Officer would seek to provide LAC members with an interim update, as appropriate.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report.
2. To agree to add to the workplan a report covering the issues raised by Councillor Miller.

9. COMMUNITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT YOUTH SERVICES REPORT

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) providing an update on the progress made by Community Learning and Development Youth Services, and partners following a review of youth services in the ward.

The Committee was informed that the service had met with key partners involved in Livingston North Youth Providers Group including the Youth Action Project and Police, and had gathered information concerning youth disorder calls to the Community Safety Unit. A table within the report showed youth calls by ward over the six month period July to December 2016.

A further table showed the monthly breakdown of calls for the period July to December 2016. The main area for calls was Carmondean and, to a lesser extent, Deans and Eliburn. This showed the continuing issues in Cardmondean in particular, and showed a reduction in calls recently in Eliburn.

Also included in the report was:- (i) a table showing attendances at The Vennie by Club/Age Group and (ii) a table showing average attendances at Mosswood Community Centre by club/age group.

It was reported that the Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) had convened a meeting in December 2016 with representatives of Mosswood Community Centre Management Committee and the Vennie/Knightsridge Adventure Project Board to discuss joint working opportunities. Partners had agreed to make best use of their collective resources to meet the learning needs of children and young people. To this end a project was identified which would involve the Vennie running a youth club one night a week in Mosswood Community Centre. Council officers were supporting the Mosswood Community Centre Management Committee, who were experiencing a number of operational challenges and were facilitating further discussions with the Vennie to set up the youth project.

Finally, it was noted that CLD Youth Service continued to participate in the Livingston North Youth Providers Group and was contributing to the developments and planning of youth provision in the ward.

The Committee was asked to note the content of the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

9. WORKPLAN

A copy of the workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.