

MINUTE of MEETING of the LIVINGSTON SOUTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 23 NOVEMBER 2018.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), Peter Heggie and Moira Shemilt

Apologies – Councillor Peter Johnston

In attendance –

Jim Cameron, Lead Officer, West Lothian Council  
Michelle Kirkbridge, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council  
Andy Johnston, Service Manager, NETs, Land and Countryside Services, West Lothian Council  
Christopher Nelson, Senior Advisor, Advice Shop, West Lothian Council  
Sandy Ross, Area Housing Manager, West Lothian Council  
Kenny Stewart, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service  
Sergeant Iain Wells, Police Scotland  
Suzie Young, Head Teacher, Inveralmond Community High School  
Brian Johnstone, Chair of Livingston Village Community Council

## 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

## 2 DEPUTATION

The Committee had received a deputation request by Corey and Aimee-Lee McInrue in relation to the footpath at Adambrae Roundabout.

Corey and Aimee-Lee were pupils of St. Margaret's Academy and walked to school from Adambrae along with some other pupils. Their route included crossing Adambrae roundabout which was usually busy making it difficult to cross.

The Committee were asked to consider their request to extend the footpath at Adambrae roundabout to the underpass which would improve their walk to school. Having been previously advised that the work could not be undertaken due to budget constraints, the deputation also asked whether raising funds through crowd-funding would be an option for them to help fund the work.

The Chair thanked the deputation for attending the meeting and the Committee considered their request. It was suggested that a report should be brought forward which would address the merits and implications of extending the footpath in order that a decision could be taken, with the financial aspects also being considered at this later date.

### Decision

- 1) To agree to hear the deputation.

- 2) To request a report by Roads officers addressing the issues raised by the deputation on whether an extension to the footpath at Adambrae roundabout would be appropriate.

### 3 MINUTES

The Committee approved the minute of the meeting of the Livingston South Local Area Committee held on 7 September 2018 as a correct record. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

### 4 INVERALMOND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL - PRESENTATION BY SUZIE YOUNG, HEADTEACHER

The Headteacher of Inveralmond Community High School delivered a presentation to the Committee on the school and activities which had taken place over the past year. The school vision focussed on working together to improve attainment and increase the number of pupils moving on to positive destinations after school.

Information was provided on the attainment of pupils to demonstrate the improvement which had been made at the school. Attainment in S4 and S5 at SCQF levels 5 and 6 had outperformed the virtual comparator figures which were made up of virtual pupils with similar characteristics to those at Inveralmond CHS. It was highlighted that new learning initiatives for pupils in English and Mathematics classes had been developed and had been effective for improving engagement and attainment.

The breadth of awards offered also supported pupils in to positive destinations following school. More awards were being offered within the school but learning and development opportunities were also available for pupils out with the school environment.

The school priorities for the 2018-19 session were outlined within the School Improvement Plan which included a range of actions across five desired outcomes focussed on improving learning and teaching and, raising quality and attainment, and reaching positive destinations. Details were also given on the Pupil Equity Funding received to target closing the poverty related attainment gap and the ways this had been used.

The school had been working in partnership with other organisations and the local community on various projects. These included an art project to transform a local underpass and an intergenerational community drama project.

An update was given on awards the school had recently won at the Enterprising Maths National Final, F1 in Schools and the Stellar awards.

#### Decision

To note the update provided by Suzie Young, Headteacher and to commend the school on their hard work.

## 5 POLICE SCOTLAND UPDATE

An update report (copies of which had been circulated) on the policing activity within the Livingston South ward was presented by Sergeant Iain Wells.

It was noted that update reports would normally include information on the performance of Police Scotland within the ward however the Community Safety Unit currently did not have a performance analyst in the team and therefore it had not been possible to provide this. Members were directed to the link within the report which contained statistics for the West Lothian area.

Following the last meeting of the Committee, there had been an increase in reports of anti-social behaviour being caused by youths in the Dedridge area. There had been an increase in patrols in the area and officers had learned that many of those involved had travelled from other areas outwith the Livingston South ward. The Safer Neighbourhood Team and the West Lothian Youth Action Project had also been involved in addressing this issue. Street workers had been deployed to engage with these young people.

There had previously been a rise in anti-social behaviour around the Livingston Centre and Designer Outlet area which was reported to the Committee. Sergeant Wells updated the Committee that this had reduced significantly due to increased patrols and interventions which had been made.

An update was also provided on the activity undertaken to address speeding and improve road safety in the ward, as well as tackling substance misuse.

An incident had recently taken place in Alexander Drive which had attracted news coverage. Sergeant Wells assured the Committee that action had been taken against those involved and Police Scotland were working with housing associations and making follow-up visits to prevent a similar occurrence in future.

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

### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

## 6 LIVINGSTON SOUTH MULTI-MEMBER WARD PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Quarter 2 Ward Performance Report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (copies of which had been circulated) was presented to the Committee by Kenny Stewart.

The 2018/19 statistics included were presented in comparison to those for the same period of 2017/18. The number of accidental dwelling fires had remained level with the previous year with two instances. There had been 2 fire casualties and fatalities compared with zero during the same period of 2017/18, and the number of deliberate fires had decreased.

The report also highlighted that there had been a reduction in fires in non-domestic properties and RTC casualties and fatalities, and zero special services casualties (excluding RTCs).

However, there had been a considerable increase in the number of unwanted fire alarm signals. Kenny Stewart explained that this was partly due to a high number of false alarms from West Lothian Council buildings and Livingston Football Stadium. A strategy for reducing those involving Council properties had been developed which was to be put in place in January 2019.

There had also been a high number of false alarms triggered deliberately at schools in the ward. The Fire Service had been and would continue to engage with the school and pupils to reduce these going forward.

The Committee was invited to comment on the performance and recommended to note the content of the report.

### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

## 7 NETS, LAND & COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES UPDATE

A report by the Head of Operational Services had been submitted to provide an update to the Committee on the recent activity of the NETs, Land and Countryside Services teams for the period from 1 August to 31 October 2018.

In respect of grounds maintenance, grass cutting and herbicide application had been completed for the year and work had begun on winter hedge pruning with shrub bed maintenance due to commence shortly. It was highlighted that the most grounds maintenance enquiries the service received during this period were concerned with shrub beds overhanging on to paths and hedge cutting.

There had been an increase in the level of fly tipping in the area and there continued to be budget pressures involved with the removal. The number of fly tipping enquiries was significantly higher than other cleaner communities enquiries. Discussion took place around whether this was related to the alterations which had been made to Community Recycling Centres; however waste tended to be commercial which would not previously have been disposed of at CRCs. The Council were usually unable to take action against those involved due to the absence of identifiable material amongst the waste.

The Committee heard that an increase in the number of enquiries regarding Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) had been received. Trees covered by TPOs were protected in that it was an offence to carry out works on or to remove them. There were queries from the community about whether certain trees in the ward were covered by TPOs or if they could be removed.

The Council had been ordered to remove trees which had been identified by Forestry Commission Scotland as being infected by Larch dieback disease by 28 February 2019. A Tree Disease Action Plan was also being developed and would be completed by the end of the year.

The Committee was recommended to note the work carried out by the service and to advise of any areas for further information or investigation.

### Decision

- 1) To note the terms of the report.
- 2) To request a report by planning officers to a future meeting on the Tree Preservation Orders in place in the ward.

## 8 HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (copies of which had been circulated) providing an overview of the work undertaken in the ward during the period from 1 July to 30 September 2018.

Information was provided on the length of time mainstream and temporary Council-owned properties were empty before being re-let and outlined possible reasons for these delays. There were currently five property voids in the ward. Details were also given on the level of rent arrears owed to the Council. The Livingston South ward had a strong collection rate of 96.3%; however there had been an increase in rent arrears compared to 2017 which could be attributed to the introduction of Universal Credit in West Lothian in May 2018, other welfare reforms and the current economic climate.

An overview of the team's activity including information on the capital programme and new build housing progress was presented. Key points included updates on ongoing weekly tenant led inspection meetings, the establishment of the 'Al Nour' refugee support group, the development of new tenants groups in Kirkhill and Fauldhouse, and the continuing Housing Networks meetings.

The report also provided the Committee with details of the activities of the Safer Neighbourhood Team which involved the Council and a range of partner organisations from July to September.

The Committee was recommended to note the service activity in the ward detailed in the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

9 PENSIONERS' CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2018

The Committee considered seven applications which had been received by the Council from groups within the Livingston South ward to the Pensioners' Christmas Fund. These were set out in a report by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (copies of which had been circulated).

The Fund had been established to support community groups across West Lothian and £29,054 was available for allocation in 2018. The groups which had been supported and the amounts allocated to those across the Livingston South ward were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, while Appendix 2 included information on applications from both Livingston-wide and West Lothian-wide groups.

A full report on the final allocations made from the Fund in 2018 would be submitted to the Voluntary Organisations PDSP at a later date.

The Committee was recommended to note that seven groups within the Livingston South area had applied to the fund and had been supported.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

10 ADVICE SHOP SERVICE UPDATE

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Finance and Property Services (copies of which had been circulated) on the work undertaken by the Advice Shop Service during the period from April 2017 to March 2018.

The Advice Shop provided free, impartial and confidential advice to those in the area, focussing on alleviating poverty and promoting inclusion and equality through advice, assistance and advocacy.

The report included a profile report for the Livingston South ward at Appendix 1. The number of enquiries had increased by 24% compared to the 2016-17 period, totalling 4947 enquiries from 1487 individual customers during the year. This increase could be attributed to improved sessions taking place within Arrochar House and St. John's Hospital. The Advice Shop now had a permanent presence within the hospital which had assisted 783 patients during 2017/18.

Further details of the amounts of money the service had helped customers claim, save and manage, and the aims of the service for 2018/19 were highlighted.

The Committee was recommended to:

- 1) Note the Advice Shop provision in the ward; and
- 2) Note the impact this provision had in terms of supporting the outcomes of the Community Planning Partnership's Anti-Poverty Strategy 2018-23.

### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

## 11 REPORT ON PROGRESS OF REGENERATION PLANNING

Eight areas had been identified for regeneration based on the data zones within the bottom 20% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The Council was in the process of developing regeneration plans for these areas and work had begun in the Livingston Central which included the Ladywell and Dedridge areas of the Livingston South ward, and Knightsridge in the Livingston North ward. A report by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the progress which had been made to date was considered by the Committee.

Groups had been established in each individual area to design draft plans for regeneration. The Ladywell and Dedridge groups had begun identifying themes and actions from the information gathered during community consultation. An interactive map highlighting the assets, activities and comments from the consultation had been developed and would be presented at the next group meetings.

The report provided an update on the Ladywell and Dedridge groups' progress. Both areas had identified their key community priorities to be care and maintenance, feeling safe, play and recreation and traffic and parking. Members of the community continued to be actively engaged and involved with the process with regular meetings taking place and community engagement with various groups, individuals and partners ongoing.

A further update would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee was recommended to:

- 1) Note the progress of two local regeneration groups in developing a draft plan; and
- 2) Note that community engagement activity carried out was being analysed and would inform themes and actions.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

12      WORKPLAN

The Committee workplan was presented.

Decision

To note the workplan subject to the inclusion of the reports requested on the footpath at Adambrae roundabout and TPOs in the ward.