



WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE - BLACKBURN

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update members on regeneration activity within the Blackburn area of the ward.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that members note updates on:

1. Regeneration activity within Blackburn;
2. Blackburn's Future Plan and the Blackburn's Future Group;
3. the subgroups of the Blackburn's Future Plan; and
4. Blackburn's town centre funded projects

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs. Being honest, open and accountable. Providing equality of opportunities. Making best use of our resources. Working in partnership.
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	<p>Community regeneration reinforces the council's commitment to community planning at a local level.</p> <p>Local authorities have a statutory requirement for developing locality plans for targeted communities in their area. Regeneration Plans fit this requirement for West Lothian.</p> <p>The projects set out do not require a strategic environmental assessment. The projects to different degrees seek to address health and equality issues.</p>
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	Performance indicators relating to the activity within the plans are captured within the set of Regeneration key performance indicators.

V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We are better educated and have access to increased and better quality learning and employment opportunities. - We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities. - We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities. - We make the most efficient and effective use of resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.
VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	The activities set out are funded from existing budgets and relevant external sources.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	Annual updates on regeneration plans will be presented to the Community planning Partnership.
VIII	Other consultations	Blackburn's Future Group. Blackburn's Future Plan.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

A report was provided to the Local Area Committee in 2016 outlining the background to developing regeneration plans, including the processes, structures, and timescales involved. Thirteen regeneration areas have been identified, based on the data zones within the bottom 20% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Blackburn is one of these communities.

The Regeneration Plans are the local plans required by the Scottish Government as part of their Community Empowerment approach and reported through the Community Planning Partnership.

A regeneration plan has been developed for Blackburn after extensive work between Community Regeneration Officers (CROs) and the steering groups from the local area which consist of the various community group representatives and personnel from public services and voluntary agencies operating in those areas.

The first version of the Blackburn regeneration plan which has been named by the working group as 'Blackburn's Future Plan' has defined themes and priorities for the area and provides the context for the updates below.

D2 Blackburn Regeneration Activity - Blackburn's Future Plan

The Blackburn's Future Group (BFG) is continuing to meet with dates set for the full year. Updates from the subgroups that meet more frequently are presented at the BFG to enable to plan to be updated. There is a subgroup for each of the four themes that make up the Blackburn's Future Plan. These are:

- Poverty, Health and Wellbeing;
- Care, Maintenance and Feeling Safe;
- Health Facilities and Economic Growth; and Recreation, Learning; and
- Youth Provision.

Poverty, Health and Wellbeing

This subgroup are meeting fortnightly to work on a *Community Choices* pilot project that aims to enable the residents of Blackburn to have a direct say in how the £25,000 allocated budget will be spent. The application process opened on 17 February 2020 and will remain open for 4 weeks. Applications are welcomed from organisations and groups for projects to support one or more of the following criteria that link into the Blackburn's Future Plan, these are:

- mental health;
- children living in poverty; and
- healthy living.

Groups can submit bids of up to £5000 with the community voting on which projects that they want to see delivered in the area. The voting process will take place at an event to be held on 27 March 2020 from 3pm to 7pm. All applicants that meet the criteria will be invited to 'showcase' their project to the community in Blackburn Partnership Centre. The planning of the event is being carried out and discussed at the Poverty, Health and Wellbeing subgroup meetings. A webpage containing all information and links to the application form and guidance has been launched and contains details on who can apply and includes the full criteria.

Care, Maintenance and Feeling Safe

This subgroup has been predominantly concentrated on the Blackburn Bonfire Night Action Group (BBNAG) for the last few months. Work is ongoing with the evaluation for not only the event but the BBNAG and the impact this group had during the lead up to Bonfire Night, and on the night in question. The CRO and CAB development worker have carried out 2 evaluation sessions in the community speaking to members of the public about how safe they felt on the night and if they felt there was an improvement to anti-social behaviour from previous years. Along with these sessions, an online survey has been gathering local resident's views. All this data is to be collated and used along-side the information gathered from an evaluation event that is to be delivered using funding from the 'Knowledge is Power' Scottish Government fund that CAB were successful in securing. The planning for the community action led research event is being carried out at the next BBNAG meeting and will involve support from the Scottish Community Development Centre to look at specific questions to engage residents in 'live' qualitative research that will be presented in a report to Scottish Government in the summer.

The Twilight Basketball sessions that were developed at the BBNAG have gone from strength to strength. The sessions commenced on 11 October 2019 to address anti-social behaviour in the area with a focus on reducing this during the bonfire season. There have been a total of 69 young people, 36 male and 33 female engage with the sessions. The average weekly attendance at the club which is held on a Friday evening is 26. The participants have named themselves as the Blackburn Bulldogs and have chosen a strip which they will be wearing when playing in a National tournament on 28 March 2020. An evaluation has been carried out with both young people and their parents/guardians with 100% of parent/guardians stating that their young person enjoyed attending the club and 67.4% of parents/guardians stating that they have seen a positive difference in their young person's confidence.

Health Facilities and Economic Development

This subgroup is led by Blackburn Community Council with updates being provided

to the BFG meeting. This group has been supported by local members and MSPs. The last meeting was held on 13 January 2020 where the Mill Centre owners reported a changed plan to their development with a revised proposal to retain part of the Mill Centre including the units that house the chip shop and bookmakers with the old library and credit union unit being converted into retail space that can be used to house the butchers and post office. Social housing is proposed to be developed in the units that are to be demolished with additional housing being proposed on the old Community Centre land should this be sold to the developer by West Lothian Council. The subgroup have made great efforts to work in partnership with the owner of the Mill centre, the council and local community to achieve the aim of retaining the services that the community have identified as much needed assets for the area and will continue to provide updates to the BFG and the wider community.

A further action within the Blackburn's Future Plan that came from the consultation carried out within the community was the need for an additional pharmacist. This information was used to help strengthen the application for a new pharmacist in Blackburn which resulted in the application being successful. The new 'Blackburn Pharmacy' will be based within the Mill Centre and will provide additional services to the community. The pharmacist is also hoping to employ staff from the Blackburn area.

D3 Town Centre Capital Grant Fund 2019/20

In addition to the separate, standardised report provided to the Local Area Committee, some additional information regarding specific projects are below:

BLB01 - Blackburn Welcome Entrance Gateways

The Change in Blackburn group (CIB) who are supported by CAB submitted an application for Blackburn to have 'Welcome to' signs on all entrances into the village. This idea came from the group carrying out a Place Standard engagement activity with the CRO and the Community Development worker from CAB during the development of the Blackburn's Future Plan. Information from Roads and Transportation (R&T) was provided to the group regarding legal requirements for entrance gateway signs so that the group to be able to design a sign that could be used. The design work is currently being undertaken and will include an image of the new Miners Statue linking both projects together. The designs will be forwarded to R&T who will arrange for them to be made and installed.

BLB02- Inclusive Swing

An inclusive swing is to be installed in the Redhouse Place park through the application that was submitted from CAB and with support from the Open Space Officer for WLC. Details on timescales from the contractor are being sought and once these are in place the new swing will be installed within the timescales provided by the Scottish Government.

The three Town Centre Improvement projects link into themes within the Blackburn Future Plan; Poverty, Health and Wellbeing; Care, Maintenance and feeling safe and Recreation, Learning and Youth Provision. This ensures that the projects meet the needs of the community and have community backing identified from the engagement activities delivered during the development of the plan.

BLB03 - Blackburn Heritage Trail and Miners Statue

This projects splits into two separate elements and is being delivered by Blackburn

Community Council with support from the CRO. A heritage walkway will be developed to allow people to take a walk through the old mill that was situated where Mill Road is cited now. Etching posts are to be installed along the walk depicting an image relating to the area and an information board is to be installed in the wall at the entrance providing history of the area and the working mill. The Youth Action Project is carrying out brush cutting to enable Borders Signs to install the etching posts. It is aimed that this element of the project will be completed by March.

The second element of this project is the Miners statue that is to be erected at Blackburn Cross depicting the mining heritage of the area. The community council is working closely with an artist who has designed the miner that will be installed. Planning permission is to be applied for and once this in place, work to install the statue will begin.

E. CONCLUSION

The process for developing the regeneration plan for Blackburn has been successful, with the community naming the plan making it a true reflection of the community of Blackburn. The core BFG is meeting regular and is attended by representatives from the steering groups enabling updates and sharing of information to flow between all. The subgroups are going from strength to strength and as result momentum from the members is growing with new projects being discussed and progressed. As issues arise in the community they are included in the plan allowing it to be organic in its delivery. Further engagement will be carried out during the rest of the year to make sure the priorities identified are still relevant to the community.

All projects who received funding from the Town Centre Capital Fund are being supported by the CRO and link in with the priorities of the Blackburn's Future Plan. All of the projects are progressing well and will be delivered within the timescales set out by Scottish Government.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Blackburn's Future Plan 2017-2027

West Lothian Regeneration Framework 2014-2034

Blackburn Community Choices webpage:

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/49588/Blackburn-Community-Choices>

Appendices/Attachments: None.

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