



BATHGATE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE

REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform and update the Local Area Committee of regeneration activities within the Bathgate ward.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Local Area Committee members:

- note the report contents and activities within the ward; and
- advise of any areas that should require further investigation

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)	Economic development and community regeneration and partnership activity reinforces the Council's commitment to community planning at a local level.
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	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 budget and relevant external sources where applicable.
VII Consideration at PDSP	Annual updates on locality regeneration plans will be presented to the Community Planning Partnership.
VIII Other consultations	Bathgate regeneration partners and Community Planning Partnership Board.

D TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

A report was provided in late 2016 to the Local Area Committee outlining background to developing regeneration (locality) plans across West Lothian. There were thirteen regeneration areas identified utilising the data zones within the bottom 20% of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Bathgate is one of these communities.

It has been agreed that the regeneration plans will be the local plans required by the Scottish Government as part of their Community Empowerment approach and reported through the Community Planning Partnership.

The first version of the plan was presented to the Local Area Committee in June 2019, identifying the relative priorities and actions for the area. Subsequent meetings in June and August 2019 looked at further local issues. The plan is a 'live' document for review on an ongoing basis; thereby allowing for flexibility to respond to changing local issues and actions as they should become identified by partners.

D2 Regeneration Planning in Bathgate

The Regeneration Planning group is scheduled to meet again at the end of March 2020, at which time it is to be proposed to review the initial actions, refine these and include any new ones identified by the group and look at the structure, for example, using Bathgate Town Centre Management Group for town centre related matters.

Recent regeneration activity includes:

- Following the last Local Area Committee officers organised a walk around Bathgate (Central) on Friday 31 January 2020. This focused on two predominantly residential areas to the north of town centre. This included the town centre officer, LAC Lead officer, officers, partners and local members. This was followed by a round table discussion afterwards, which identified a number of potential short-term actions and queries to investigate which will be incorporated into the plan.
- Following the Local Area Committee in June 2019, partners and officers led by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service established a short term working group to review and identify areas for proactive education around fire safety and waste bin provision. This has led to positive lessons and good practice that will continue to be adopted across the community.
- Services and partners are working together to address identified community safety and anti-social behaviour issues within parts of the ward.
- Linked to above and addressing some of the anti-social behaviour issues, Transportation colleagues have undertaken an installation programme of

new/replacement bus shelters along Whitburn Road and in Wester Inch. This has also included the removal of the damaged and unused bus shelter that was located at the King Street car park.

- The Town Centre Officer is working with Police Scotland and Roads colleagues in reviewing, raising awareness and education on parking/traffic issues within the town centre. This will be further considered in March 2020 through Bathgate Town Centre Management Group.
- Bathgate Community Development Trust has now been established and duly incorporated with Companies House. One of the early actions will be to secure a potential base/location for the Trust, something that officers are assisting with.
- Support is being provided to the local steering group formed to organise a focused programme of commemorative activities for VE Day 75 in May 2020. The group is meeting fortnightly.
- Fairtrade Fortnight (24 February to 8 March 2020) offers the specific chance to raise awareness of Fairtrade locally in Bathgate. There is a formal display within Bathgate Partnership Centre during the fortnight, highlighting what small steps can be taken to help to make a difference. For example, asking local shops and restaurants/cafes to stock and use Fairtrade products; and to re-consider your weekly shopping list to include Fairtrade goods.
- The Boghall Tenants and Residents Association met twice in early 2020. Whilst small in number, the group has re-formed with office bearers in place. The focus/remit will be on matters of importance to Boghall and the recent meeting noted concerns about winter ready policy, waste bin arrangements and community policing. The town centre officer is supporting the group with these matters. The next meeting will be in early April 2020.
- Meeting arranged with Becky Plunkett (Open Space) and Carol Campbell (Central Scotland Green Network Trust) to support a funding application to Sport Scotland (March 2020) being prepared for Balbardie Park. This would include phased park improvements and a new bike pump track facility

D3 Town Centre Fund 2019/20

The Local Area Committee will be aware that the £1.826 million Town Centre Capital Fund was launched in June 2019 covering 23 towns and communities (with populations of over 1,000) across West Lothian. Bathgate as one of those towns was allocated a budget sum of £161,674 by Council Executive.

Since the last reporting to the Local Area Committee in November 2019, the town centre officer has continued to liaise with and support the Bathgate project applicants in delivery of their projects. Further detailed information is contained in the separate 'Town Centre Fund 2019/20' report.

D4 Bathgate Partnership Centre

At the time of writing this report, Bathgate Partnership Centre has welcomed 62,888 customers during October, November and December 2019, averaging nearly 20,963 customers per month. There were 1,287 CIS transactions in October, 1065 in November and 694 in December 2019. There were 281 new borrowers/members within Simpson Library during the same period.

1,804 users over 65's participated in structured programmes, ranging from arts and craft classes to exercise classes. 737 children (aged under 5) participated in structured programmes such as the playgroup, Jumping Jacks, childminders and activities within the Simpson Library. There was on average 60 group lets per week during this reporting period, but this tends to drop during the Christmas and New year period. Summer Period. Some groups only started to return from middle of January 2020.

Bathgate Partnership Centre Payments Office dealt with 8673 payment transactions during the three month reporting period (£840.126), with the Self Service Payments Kiosk dealing with 369 transactions in the same three month period.

The Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Centre continue to support members of the West Lothian community through their drop in surgeries within Simpson Library and their Counselling Sessions within Bathgate Partnership Centre.

Simpson Library within Bathgate Partnership Centre has also taken part in Book Bug Classes during the reporting period, with 365 attendees at the book bug sessions. The book bug sessions continue to be very popular with babies and toddlers. The library participated in other various activities such as the Halloween story time for jumping beans and playgroup; a treasure hunt and a film/movie, each of which were very popular with over 48 children in attendance. The playgroup and childminders also held their annual festive party in December 2019.

Bathgate Partnership Centre holds a dignity box and school clothing bank collection for customers to donate items and to help themselves to any required items. Food bank donations are also accepted at the Bathgate Partnership Centre.

D5 Bathgate Town Centre

Bathgate Town Centre continues to act as the community focal point and 'hub' for local employment, services, amenities and investment. Bathgate town centre is subject to a quarterly occupancy survey, as one measure of its relative vitality and viability. The January 2020 survey noted 92.1% occupancy (vacancy rate at 7.9%) though it should be noted this does not take account of properties subject to refurbishment at any time of survey. This remains an improvement from the recent peak vacancy rate of 9% in January 2018. To provide some context, the National Town Centre Vacancy survey reported by Springboard (latest available at January 2020) noted the UK average vacancy rate at 9.8%, and Scotland at 10.7%.

The Town Centre Officer has continued to liaise with and meet with colleagues from Enterprising Bathgate (funding) and North Lanarkshire Council (monitoring), in relation to the continuation of the established arrangement and resourcing of the public space CCTV system in Bathgate town centre. Initial analysis of the monitoring reporting that is provided (e.g. incident figures alone) highlight the clear benefits that this CCTV provision generates for the community, as well as the significant reduction in policing time and resource as a direct impact. The CCTV system contributes greatly to the overall sense of improving community safety and crime prevention within Bathgate. This was noted in particular during the discussions at the recent Bathgate Pubwatch meeting (early February 2020) attended by the town centre officer.

D6 Boghall Drop-In Centre

There has continued to be a busy programme of local groups, classes and activities during the winter period, as well as serving as a base for partnership agencies to work locally for the benefit of the Bathgate and Boghall community. In the period since the last report in November 2019, highlights include:

- 'Little Monsters' has evolved to open up their activity to anyone in West Lothian (not limited to Boghall) to attend, for parents with their child under age 5.
- A 'toddlers' tea party' has started every Thursday for nursery pupils, with an average attendance of 10 children to date.
- The pilot B-youth drop-in (Friday) continues to increase in attendance, and will now operate as a regular club with registration.

- Youth clubs (for primary school aged children) also continue to run on a weekly basis (Monday) split across two separate clubs and time slots. This provides for a fun and engaging service to the community.
- The Christmas Dinner (free, registration) for over 50's took place in early December 2019 with 67 people attending. A similar free/registration Easter dinner has been advertised for 9 April 2020.
- Continue to work with partners to target food poverty in the community through collection and distribution (free) of surplus food to those in need. Volunteers are creating balanced meals for people to take away with them.
- Application was developed and submitted by BDIC to Modernisation and Improvement Fund, to fund a co-ordinator to support above work.
- Homework club is now run over three days to ensure that academic standards and greater quality are promoted.
- BDIC are shortly to advertise for a drama coach to deliver the theatre club, which will be a drama club for local children.
- Council's Access 2 Employment service continues to operate a weekly work club/drop in on a Tuesday afternoon.

E. CONCLUSION

It is recommended that the Local Area Committee note the content of this report, that the regeneration planning process is ongoing and the associated ward activities being carried out within Bathgate.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

West Lothian Regeneration Framework 2014-2034

Appendices/Attachments: None

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