

MINUTE of MEETING of the ARMADALE AND BLACKRIDGE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE held within WEBEX VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 11 DECEMBER 2020.

Present – Councillors Andrew McGuire (Chair), Stuart Borrowman and Sarah King

In Attendance

Elaine Cook, Lead Officer

Michelle Kirkbright, Community Regeneration Officer

Sergeant Keith Jack, Police Scotland

Stuart McNiven, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

Lorraine Donnelly, Area Housing Manager, West Lothian Council

Christopher Nelson, Income Maximisation Manager, West Lothian Council

David Cullen, Open Space & Cemeteries Manager, West Lothian Council

Marsie Ewing, Torphichen Community Council

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST -

Agenda Item 13 (Town Centre Fund 2020-21) - Councillor Stuart Borrowman declared an interest in that he had recently attended a meeting of Blackridge Community Council at which he had provided procedural advice only on applications to the town centre fund; he had also offered similar advice to the Parish Church of which his wife was a member. He would participate in the item of business.

2. MINUTE

The committee approved the minute of its meeting held on 7 January 2020.

3. POLICE WARD REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Police Scotland providing an update on police activities in the ward for the period up to 28 October 2020.

The report covered a number of areas included violence, disorder and anti-social behaviour, making our roads safer and tackling substance misuse.

It was noted that the ward, like all other areas across West Lothian had seen a marked increase in anti-social behaviour much of which related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Police colleagues also continued to work with colleagues from Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and West Lothian Council in the run up to Halloween and Bonfire night to minimise the impact on local communities.

The committee were asked to note the content of the report

Decision

To note the content of the report

4. FIRE SERVICE WARD Q1 REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Stuart McNiven, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service providing an update on activity across the ward up to 30 June 2020.

Mr McNiven then provided a brief summary of the challenges that the service had faced during the Covid-19 pandemic and included staff absences impacting on services; the preparation for Bonfire night; reacting to unwanted fire alarm signals, particularly as a lot of buildings were left empty for longer periods than usual and the continuation of fire home safety visits to the more vulnerable members of our communities.

The committee were asked to note the content of the report.

Decision

To note the content of the report

5. FIRE SERVICE WARD Q2 REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Stuart McNiven, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service providing an update on activity across the ward up to 30 September 2020.

The committee were asked to note the content of the report.

Decision

To note the content of the report

6. HOUSING, CUSTOMER & 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 covered a number of themes including property void and let performance, area team's activity, new build council housing and the work of the safer neighbourhood teams.

Attached to the report as a series of appendices was information relating to rent collection for Q1 and Q2 of 2020-21

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

Decision

To note the content of the report

7. SERVICE UPDATE - NETS, LAND & COUNTRYSIDE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing details of recent activity of the Nets, Land and Countryside Services for the period 1 February to 31 October 2020.

It was noted that due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions all non-essential services were suspended during the national lockdown period from March to early August.

For Nets, Land and Countryside services this meant with the exception of the Cemeteries Service and the Nets teams that were classified as essential all other services were suspended from mid-March and reinstated on a phased basis during June, July and August.

The impact of the service suspension on each service area was outlined in the report.

It was recommended that committee: -

1. Note the work carried out to date and future planned work; and
2. Advise of any areas that require further investigation or inclusion in future work.

Decision

To note the content of the report

8. PENSIONERS GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND ALLOCATIONS 2020/2021

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update of the final allocations that were made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2020-21 to groups in the Armadale and Blackridge Ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

It was recommended that committee note: -

1. The impact of Covid-19 on the arrangements regarding the Pensioners Groups Christmas Fund in 2020-21;
2. The inclusion of a pre-prepared meal option; and
3. Two groups were supported through the Pensioners Groups Christmas Fund

Decision

To note the content of the report

9. WEST LoTHIAN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration informing the members of the work done to support communities across West Lothian and in the ward during the Covid-19 crises.

It was recommended that the committee: -

1. Notes the role and partnership work carried out between West Lothian Council and the third sector to support our communities through COVID-19;
2. Notes the funding directed to support the third sector in its response;
3. Notes the opportunities to build on this partnership working in the future; and
4. Notes the work to support local business and employment support.

Decision

To note the content of the report

10. TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT FUND 2019/20: UPDATE ON PROJECTS

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration which updated members on progress in delivering the Town Centre Capital Projects funded via the Scottish Government Fund agreed by committee on 1 October 2019.

It was recommended that the committee: -

1. Note that 8 applications were agreed within the ward;
2. Notes that officers were working with applicants to support the delivery of projects; and
3. That further progress updates would be brought to committee

Decision

To note the content of the report

11. TOWN CENTRE FUND 2020/21: PROPOSED FUNDING AWARDS

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration to consider applications to the Scottish Government Towns Centre Fund and to agree the allocation of funding for the settlements within the ward.

It was recommended that the committee: -

1. Notes that 7 applications have been received for projects within the ward;
2. Notes the recommendations provided by officers within each town within the ward;
3. Agrees to award funding as set out in the report;
4. Notes that use of the West Lothian Council Town Centre Improvement Fund will be considered for Armadale applications which are unsuccessful or which only receive part-funding for their project, and a report on this will be forthcoming to the next meeting of this Local Area Committee;
5. Notes that some of the funding costs remain as estimates and delegates the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration to finalise award amounts within the overall value of the funding available within the ward
6. Notes that as projects are implemented the detail and associated costs may change and so delegates the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration to agree such changes and to re-allocate any money that becomes available as a result to other projects in the ward, both so long as projects remain within the aims, purposes and overall intent of the original applications and approvals; and
7. Notes the terms and conditions associated to the awarding of grants as set out in the report

Decision

To approve the terms of the report

12. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2020/21

The committee considered a timetable of meetings for 2020-21.

Decision

To approve the timetable of meetings for 2020-21

13. WORKPLAN

The committee considered the workplan for the local are committee (copies of which had been circulated).

Decision

1. To note the content of the workplan; and
2. To agree the inclusion of regular updates to the committee in relation to progress on those projects funded through the town centre grant fund.