

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC



## **LIVINGSTON NORTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE**

### **COMMUNITY REGENERATION AND TOWN CENTRE FUND UPDATE**

#### **REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGENERATION**

##### **A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to update the Local Area Committee on regeneration activity to support communities across the ward and update the committee on progress in delivering the Town Centre Capital Projects for the ward agreed by the Council Executive on 22 October 2019 and 15 December 2020.

##### **B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Local Area Committee notes:

1. the support provided to residents across Livingston via an energy grants scheme which was provided by two local community organisations and supported by council services;
2. upcoming IT support which will be provided to some Knightsridge residents through the Connecting Scotland initiative;
3. details of a new Food Pantry within Deans which is being provided by the Livingston Islamic Centre & Mosque;
4. an update on funding provided by council to the Vennie and an update on the project;
5. ongoing support to Livingston United Football Club in their efforts of to achieve 'senior' club status and come a community club;
6. the updates for Town Centre Fund 2019/20 and 2020/21 projects for this ward; and
7. an update on progress towards Livingston North Partnership Centre.

##### **C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	To be assessed on an individual project basis but it is not anticipated that any proposals will require to be the subject of specific assessments.

<b>III</b>	<b>Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers</b>	The report sets out specific delegations to the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration.
<b>IV</b>	<b>Impact on performance and performance Indicators</b>	None.
<b>V</b>	<b>Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement</b>	Outcome 1 – We make West Lothian an attractive place to do business.  Outcome 10 – We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the services we need.  Outcome 12 – We value and enjoy our built environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.
<b>VI</b>	<b>Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	Across West Lothian, a total of £1.826 million was available through this Town Centre Fund for 2019/20 and a further £658,000 has been available for 2020/21.
<b>VII</b>	<b>Consideration at PDSP</b>	Not applicable.
<b>VIII</b>	<b>Other consultations</b>	Capital Asset Management Board

## **D. TERMS OF REPORT**

### **D1 Background**

The report updates the committee on the work of the Community Planning and Regeneration Team and its partners to support communities in Livingston North with a particular focus on Knightsridge, one of 13 areas covered by the local plans required by the Scottish Government as part of their Community Empowerment approach and reported through the Community Planning Partnership.

These areas were identified as priority areas due to being within the bottom 20% of data zones in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. The first version of the plan was presented to members in November 2018 following extensive community consultation and development and development by the Knightsridge Regeneration Group.

The report also updates on other activities that the Community Planning & Regeneration team is undertaking to support groups and communities within the ward. Much of the focus of the team over recent months has been regarding the implementation of the Town Centre Fund.

### **D2 Livingston United Parish Church (LUPC) and Carmondean Community Centre Support Fund**

As members may recall, at the outset of the pandemic, Livingston United Parish Church (LUPC) and Carmondean Community Centre provided £15,000 towards a support fund for residents in Livingston.

Of this amount, £6,750 was used to provide assistance to community groups and organisations across Livingston including Safe Families, The Vennie, Ladywell Neighbourhood Network, Home Start, Women's Aid, Rock Trust, Youth Action Project @ Riverside, Craigshill Good Neighbour Network, Inveralmond High School and Harrysmuir Primary School - School Bank.

The remainder of the fund was used to provide support to residents in Livingston who had been impacted by Covid-19. The Community Regeneration Officer had put LUPC in contact with the Advice Shop. It was advised and agreed that, in the context of the other funds and support provided during this time, this fund should focus on assisting residents with energy support. This was because it was anticipated fuel poverty would be a particular issue in the autumn and winter. It was agreed that the Advice Shop would provide a role in this through assisting with referrals to the fund.

The Advice Shop have reported that the fund has all now been utilised and that they were able to help 126 of their Livingston customers with the one-off grant. Most of these were people who had either disconnected or were at immediate risk of disconnection from supply due to having prepayment meters and having no funds to top up. This fund enabled an immediate payment into their bank account.

### **D3 Connecting Scotland – Knightsridge**

At least sixteen households in Knightsridge will benefit from free IT devices and free Wi-Fi for devices. These will be provided through Connecting Scotland. This is a Scottish Government initiative which is being managed by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO). The initiative provides either tablets or Chromebooks to people and/or 'Mi-Fi' devices which provided free Wi-Fi access for devices for 24 months. Given some people may not need both a device and Mi-Fi, this means potentially more households can benefit.

Almond Housing and Community Planning and Regeneration successfully applied to the 'families with children and/or care leavers' and 'older and/or disabled people' streams of this initiative, respectively. This was to provide devices and support to residents in need within the four regeneration areas of Livingston being Knightsridge, Ladywell, Dedridge and Craigshill. As a result, ten devices are being made available to families and six to older/disabled people in Knightsridge.

Given the links and relationships the Vennie has to residents within the area, including contacts via their long-standing youth provision as well as from providing the Food Outlet, they have agreed to distribute these. A young person from the Vennie has also volunteered to become a 'Digital Champion'. This will involve them undertaking training to enable to help recipients of the IT equipment to get these up and running and try to deal with any issues with them. Adult Learning will also look to provide any assistance to residents with any medium to longer term learning needs.

### **D4 Food Pantry in Deans**

Livingston Islamic Centre & Mosque has initiated a food pantry from within their building on Glen's Road in Deans for the local community. This began providing a service in late March. The pantry is open on a drop-in basis between 2-3pm on Sundays or via appointment if outside this time period.

Their stated objective to support the relief of poverty and economic disadvantage among persons who are in a condition of need, hardship or distress in particular

within Livingston, by providing such persons with non-perishable food goods which they could not otherwise afford through lack of means.

They are receiving support from West Lothian Foodbank and West Lothian Food Network who have assisted them in the logistics of the pantry as well as the supply of provisions. The Mosque has also been in contact with the Advice Shop, Community Planning and Regeneration and Social Policy and those services are looking to help promote awareness and encourage use of the pantry.

The pantry has advised that they are developing a website which will allow service users to book slots and also communicate in advance of any special requests.

## **D5 Vennie Update**

Further to the award of £31,850 from the council's Third Sector Community Support Fund 2021/22, the Vennie has received a further £10,000 from the council as part of the £285,000 of 'one-off' funding that the Council Executive approved on 9 February 2021. The purpose of this additional funding is to support the organisation's core costs and help them utilise a greater proportion of their initial grant to service/project delivery.

### Outreach Work

Youth workers have continued to undertake the outreach work during the recent Covid-19 restrictions in the Knightsridge, Carmondean, Deans and Eliburn areas.

There were 103 engagements (interactions with young people, mostly within group settings) with young people across the four sessions in March. This included 58 engagements in Knightsridge, 35 in Eliburn, 6 in Deans and 4 in Carmondean. This brings the total number of engagements with young people from its inception in July to the end of March to 836.

The main thematic issues which have arisen from these engagements with young people across these areas throughout this period are:

- alcohol/ drugs;
- mental health;
- education/ career support/ employment;
- impact of Covid-19 and encouragement of safety; and
- sexual health.

### Community Garden

Staff and volunteers from the project have recently been focussing on improving/ clearing the community garden. This has also involved attaching a roof to the wooden pergola which has been used as a meeting space for residents, particularly in the hours prior to the food outlet sessions opening.

There will also be an additional piece of inclusive play equipment added to the garden in the coming months, related to the Town Centre Fund project application which has been granted with the 2020/21 allocation of that fund for Knightsridge.

### Food Outlet

The food outlet is continuing to operate from the room that was traditionally the nursery room in Mosswood Community Centre twice a week.

During March 2021, including repeat visits, there were 390 customer visits by residents. In terms of the benefits to the wider households of the customers who attend in person, there was an (aggregated) total of 689 adults and 378 children who benefited during the month. Additionally, there 156 pensioners beneficiaries. A total of 274 volunteer hours were provided across the month to enable this.

Of these visits, just over a quarter have been from the two datazones in Knightsridge which are ranked in the bottom 20% across Scotland (*Graham Way - Nicolson Way* and *Davidson Way – Gordon Way* datazones).

Between July and the end of March there was an (aggregated) total of 6,295 adults and 5,192 children who benefited (including repeats). Additionally, there 1,325 pensioners beneficiaries. A total of 2,383 volunteer hours were provided across this time period.

#### **D6 Livingston United Football Club**

The Community Regeneration Officer (CRO) covering Livingston North is continuing to liaise with the manager of the club over the current efforts to develop the club and its facilities.

Active Schools & Community Sport has provided some advice to the club given there have been several requests from other junior level football clubs who are similarly looking to aspire to becoming senior team.

Whilst the service does not have any funds available to support clubs to upgrade or maintain facilities, they have advised that there may be funds available through sportscotland that would be worth the club exploring. Community Sport have said they may be able to provide assistance with any applications that the club submit.

The club has also been advised to register for the Scottish Football Association's (SFA) Quality Mark accreditation scheme in order to benefit from their support and advice, particularly given it is the SFA who set the regulatory standards for senior status.

Given the number of housing and other developments happening within the Deans vicinity, the CRO enquired with the council's Procurement service to see if there could were any community benefit clauses that could potentially be used to assist practical support to the club. The service has advised that due to the scale of the Deans South council housing development of 29 houses, the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) National Skills approach was used which concentrates on work placements and staff training.

However, similar to other project and organisations across West Lothian, if the club provide the Procurement service with some examples of where small-scale improvements could be made, they could potentially be added to future contracts where CITB is not appropriate.

#### **D7 Town Centre Fund 2019/20 & 2020/21 Project Updates**

The deadline for projects funded from both years allocations to have been commissioned has now passed. The remaining deadline is for all projects to be complete by 30 September 2021

Updates on some of the outstanding projects within the ward are as follows.

##### **D7.1 Carmondean**

CAR01/CAR20-01: Carmondean Community Council - Underpass and Bus Shelter Art project

A contractor has been appointed by Carmondean Community Council (CCC) and has started work on this project. The contractor is a community artist who is currently engaging with groups who have been identified by CCC and partners. This engagement work will take place over the next couple of months before themes and concepts are discussed with CCC before being taken forward to installation phase. The installations will be placed within the six bus stops in the Carmondean area and four underpasses.

Community Planning and Regeneration and Community Arts are both represented on a small project team that CCC are facilitating to help manage the project.

**D7.2 Eliburn**

ELI20-01: Carmondean Community Council – Improving Safety

Further engagement around the options for the course of the new path was undertaken. This followed further investigations carried out by officers in Roads & Transportation. However, there was still a consensus amongst stakeholders that the initially preferred option was still the preferred one despite the expected loss of two parking spaces from within the school grounds boundary.

The applicant, Eliburn Community Council, in association with Peel Primary Parent Teacher Association, have indicated that whilst they are happy for the project to proceed, they wish to pursue further safety measures for this crossing.

A contractor for these works was appointed at the end of March. A start date for these works has not yet been identified.

**D7.3 Livingston Village**

LIV20-02: Livingston Village Community Council - Livingston Village Hub Memorial

Though the village square is highly likely to be part of the Earl of Roseberry estate, they were unable to conclusively confirm this though stated they were happy for these works to take place.

The Community Council accepted a further condition of funding that they would be required to cover any costs to reinstate the area to its previous condition in the hypothetical scenario where a third party were to demonstrate ownership and insist on this.

However, the Community Council has reported that they have purchased the equipment specified in their application and begun making the improvements to the area. The sign has been repainted and much of the undergrowth on the main path has been removed and trimmed back which has exposed the original wall. The artist to lay the stones begins work in May. The Community Council have also purchased the plaque to commemorate it.

**D7.4 Deans**

MA001/ DEA20-01: Planning Services, WLC - Livingston Station Local Centre, Deans Livingston – public realm enhancement

Construction Services appointed a contractor at the end of March 2021 to undertake the local centre public realm improvement works in the Deans neighbourhood centre area.

Whilst a specification of works has been identified as part of this contract, due to the funding available this is subject to change which will allow for any elements of the work to be deleted and/or added following engagement with local members and the relevant neighbouring property owners such as the bowling club, mosque and church. Planning Services has advised that this will occur over the spring with the aim of getting works on site in summer / autumn 2021 to tie into the grant conditions. Three other neighbourhood centres in Livingston have similar public realm works to be undertaken as part of the wider contract.

#### **D7.5 Next steps**

Officers will continue to keep in contact with all organisations and service leads for the projects that are yet to be completed, to ensure that the projects are going to be delivered within the timescales outlined above.

#### **D.8 Livingston North Partnership Centre Update**

Primary Construction at Livingston North Partnership Centre has, as previously reported, been completed with only some minor works associated with the car park, landscaping, external cleaning and access installations to be completed. COVID related signage and installations have been completed and the majority of furniture has been delivered and installed.

As with other new partnership centres a soft opening period as part of the mobilisation process has been initiated. This commenced on Monday 26 April and has involved the relocation of the library from Carmondean Connected to provide a click and collect service, public access PCs being installed and general browsing by appointment being available.

This approach allows any initial operational issues to be identified and remediated together with the testing of services and installations. In the current circumstances it also enables COVID transmission mitigation arrangements to be implemented, all staff inductions to take place and users risk assessments to be fully developed and tested prior to the full operational availability of the building.

It is proposed that as restrictions ease the full mobilisation of the facility will occur which will include the reoccupation by the Ability Centre and other associated services such as the café and MacMillan support. A formal opening will occur once restrictions ease and the building is fully occupied.

#### **E. CONCLUSION**

Members are asked to note the above activities taking place across the ward and in particular the support to groups to help deliver the Town Centre Fund projects that have been granted funding within the ward.

#### **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

Council Executive, 11 June 2019

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=42684>

Council Executive, 22 October 2019: Town Centre Fund 2019/20: Town Centre

Fund Capital Grant 2019/20 - Livingston North Ward - Report by Lead Officer for Livingston North Local Area Committee

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=43976>

Council Executive report, 22 October 2020, Town Centre Fund - Capital Grant 2020/21

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=46496>

Council Executive, 15 December 2020: Town Centre Fund 2020/21: Proposed Funding Awards - report by Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration

<https://coins.westlothian.gov.uk/coins/submissiondocuments.asp?submissionid=47175>

Appendices/Attachments: None.

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