

MINUTE of MEETING of the EAST LIVINGSTON AND EAST CALDER LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE held within VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 9 SEPTEMBER 2021.

Present – Councillors Damian Doran-Timson, Frank Anderson, Carl John and Tom Ullathorne

In Attendance

David Maule, Lead Officer, West Lothian Council

Dougie Grierson, Regeneration and Employability Team Leader West Lothian Council

Andy Johnston, Operational Services, West Lothian Council

Paul Kettrick, Property Services, West Lothian Council

Phyllis McFadyen, Housing Customer and Building Services, West Lothian Council

Jonathan Bertram, Almond Housing Association

Barbara Boertien, Almond Housing Association

Jane Deary, Spark

James Robertson, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

Sergeant Iain Wells, Police Scotland

Eleanor Blair, Mid Calder Community Council

Chris Davidson, East Calder & District Community Council

John Sives, Kirknewton Community Council

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 7 (Presentation by Spark) - Councillor Frank Anderson declared an interest as Chair of the Craigshill Good Neighbour Network. He would participate in the item of business.

Chris Davidson (Community Council Representative) – declared an interest as a member of the East Calder Development Trust; and

Councillor Carl John – declared a non-financial interest as a member of the East Calder Development Trust.

2. MINUTE

The committee confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 3 June 2021.

3. POLICE WARD UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Police Scotland providing an update on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period up to 30 June 2021

Sergeant Wells also took the opportunity to remind local ward members of the importance of community-led intelligence which helped Police Scotland build up a picture of what was happening in local communities.

It was recommended that the committee note the content of the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4. FIRE UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing an update on the activity within the ward for the period up to 30 June 2021.

In relation to a question raised with regards to new legislation on the fitting of smoke alarms in all domestic homes from February 2022 onwards, the Fire Officer undertook to provide local ward members with a link to the Scottish Government website that provided a range of useful information and which could be shared with constituents.

It was recommended that members note and provide comment on the report.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report and
2. To note that James Robertson, Scottish Fire and Rescue would provide local ward members with information on what was required in accordance with new legislation on the fitting of smoke alarms in domestic homes from February 2022 onwards.

5. SPARKS - PRESENTATION BY JANE DEARY

The committee heard a presentation by Jane Deary on behalf of Spark which was the new name for the Craigshill Good Neighbour Network.

Jane proceeded to provide an overview of the activities the group was involved in to support the community particularly during the pandemic. Whilst the focus of the group's activity was mainly in the Craigshill and south Howden area people accessed their services from all over West Lothian and included referrals from the council's Advice Shop, Age Scotland and Wellbeing Scotland.

The aim of the group was to help people build their support networks and access employment and/or education and to experience good health and well-being in the community.

During the pandemic focus was on their 200 members and included the delivery of activity packs which were tailored to each of their members and included items such as toiletries, pet food; and household items.

Through their Facebook page the group were able to connect with over 1300 people and used this medium to conduct quizzes, online games, and a virtual theatre show. This was to keep people entertained and

connected during what was a very difficult time for many suffering from social-isolation.

Jane continued by advising that now Covid-19 restrictions were easing the group were now able to start hosting groups and events once again in person and it was becoming evident that mental health remained an ongoing challenge.

Jane concluded her presentation by advising committee that the group would be holding an open event on 30 September to which all committee members were invited. This would include a re-launch of their new brand/name and to celebrate the receiving of the Diversity Scotland Charter Mark, the first group to do so in Scotland.

The Chair thanked Jane for the very informative presentation and invited members to ask questions on the work of the group.

Decision

1. To note the content of the presentation by Jane Deary on behalf of Spark; and
2. To note the event that would be taking place on 30 September 2021 to re-launch the group and celebrate the awarding of the Diversity Scotland Charter Mark.

6. ALMOND HOUSING UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Almond Housing Association providing an update on housing and community activity in the Craigshill area, including maintenance works and a number of initiatives to support tenants.

The committee were also advised of the “Growing Together” project operating in the Craigshill area and which had been conducted in conjunction with the Youth Action Project. Further details on the project including a link to short You Tube video were contained in the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7. HOUSING WARD UPDATE

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 Armadale & Blackridge ward.

In presenting the report the Housing Manager highlighted that in the Financial Summary section of the report there were some errors which would be corrected and a revised copy sent to members.

In addition, the report now included further detail relating to the work of the Safer Neighbourhood Team and committee was asked if they found the additional information helpful and to advise of anything else that could be included in future reports.

It was recommended that the committee note Housing, Customer and Building Service activity as detailed in the ward report for the period Quarter 1 – 1 April to 30 June 2021.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report;
2. To agree that the inclusion of additional information relating to the work of the Safer Neighbourhood Team was welcome;
3. To ask if information relating to the different stages that each of the cases that the Safer Neighbourhood Team were dealing with could be included in future reports; and
4. To note that the information contained in the section of the report on “Financial Summary” was inaccurate and that revised information would be forwarded to ward members.

8. SERVICE UPDATE - NETS, LAND AND COUNTRYSIDE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services advising members of the recent activity of the NETs, Land & Countryside Services teams for the period 1 April to 30 June 2021

Committee were also advised that the service had secured an additional one-off grant funding of £165,000 which would fund two Nets teams to deal with the removal of fly tipping and the removal of the litter collected by the volunteer litter pickers. The service had also appointed a Strategy Officer with one of their early tasks being to look at a Litter Prevention Action Plan. And finally, committee were advised that one-off grant funding of £150,000 had also been secured for the funding of new litter bins including Bellybins which contained compacting abilities and the locations of which would be subject to community consultation.

In relation to fly-tipping committee were advised that the matter of fly-tipping on private land was an issue that would be looked into by the new Strategy Officer and that the council was keen to work with responsible land owners.

It was recommended that the committee:

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

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

9. TOWN CENTRE FUND UPDATE 2019/20 AND 2020/21

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update on progress in delivering the Town Centre Capital Projects agreed by the committee on 7 October 2019 for the 2019/20 Fund and on 23 December 2020 for the 2020/21 Fund.

It is recommended that the local area committee notes the updates for Town Centre Fund 2019/20 and 2020/21 projects for this ward and notes that the Scottish Government had been approached with regards to the pending deadline of the end of September for projects to be complete.

Decision

To note the content of the report

10. REPORT ON PROGRESS OF REGENERATION PLANNING

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration informing the committee of progress on regeneration planning within the East Livingston and East Calder ward.

In presenting the report the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration noted that there were some formatting issues with the report and as a result some information was absent. Committee were advised that the report should have advised that in relation to the business gateway update there were 5 new businesses started and 23 existing businesses supported within the ward in the first Quarter of current financial year.

It was recommended that the local area committee notes :-

1. The progress and developing actions and activity of the local regeneration plan; and
2. Notes the draft bins audit.

Decision

To note the content of the report

11. GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated)

by the Head of Finance and Property Services providing the local area committee with an update on general services investment in the ward during 2020/21 and planned investment for the seven-year period 2021/22 to 2027/28.

It is recommended that the local area committee notes:

1. The progress made in delivering the approved general services capital programme within the East Livingston and East Calder ward in 2020/21;
2. The approved capital projects planned for the ward in 2021/22 to 2027/28;
3. That detailed allocations of block budgets for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28 to specific programmes attributable to specific wards will not be undertaken until 2022;
4. Progress in delivery of the 2021/22 programme will be reported to Council Executive following detailed budget monitoring exercises during the course of the year; and
5. An updated capital investment programme will be presented to Council for approval in February 2022.

Decision

To note the content of the report

12. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

1. To note the workplan; and
2. To ask the Lead Officer to Officer to ascertain if a report would be coming back to the local area committee in terms of the artwork proposed for the cemetery