

MINUTE of MEETING of the VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 23 MAY 2019.

Present – Councillors Kirsteen Sullivan (Chair), Andrew McGuire, Bruce Fairbairn, Chris Horne, Cathy Muldoon (substituting for David Dodds) and George Paul (substituting for Tom Conn)

Apologies – Councillors Tom Conn, David Dodds and David Tait

In Attendance – Ian Buchanan (Senior People's Forum Representative), Alan McCloskey (Voluntary Sector Gateway), and Raymond Branton (Third Sector Strategy Group Representative)

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed Mr Alan McCloskey Chief Executive, Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian, to his first meeting of the Panel. The Chair also welcomed Raymond Branton, Chair of the Third Sector Strategy Group, who was attending the meeting in support of Mr Alan McCloskey.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 9 (Additional Representation) – Ian Buchanan (Senior People's Forum Representative) declared an interest in that he was also a member of the Joint Forum of Community Councils, who were referenced in the report.

3. MINUTE

The Panel approved the Minute of its meeting held on 21 March 2019. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

4. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GATEWAY WEST LOTHIAN

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update on the current activities being undertaken by the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian.

Mr Alan McCloskey, Chief Executive, Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian briefed the Panel on a number of work streams that were currently being undertaken by the Gateway including engagement with key partners and stakeholders, meeting with council officials to develop stronger working relationships and the work of the Third Sector Strategy Group who had recently met with council officials to review budget decision-making processes going forward.

Mr McCloskey continued to advise the Panel of work streams going

forward which included a networking and development event on 25 June 2019 to showcase the work of the Voluntary Sector Gateway and to find out how they could best meet the needs of the sector moving forward. Topics for discussion at the event would be as follows :-

- The new Customer Relationship Management Tool and Locator Tool;
- A relaunched website
- A new funding tool
- The work of the third Sector Strategy Group; and
- Engagement with the third sector

The Panel were also advised that the next meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Board would have as its theme “Volunteering” at which the Voluntary Sector Gateway would be presenting a report and would include an update on the impact of the Scottish Government’s new Volunteering Framework.

Mr McCloskey concluded the report by explaining that the Gateway were also revising their current workplan so that it aligned to the Scottish Government’s new Reporting Framework, with the main changes being a shift from outputs to short, medium and long term outcomes, strategic outcomes and using Evaluation Support Scotland to embed quality assurance.

The Panel was asked to note the positive outcomes in regard to the work being undertaken by the Voluntary Sector Gateway in supporting and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups in West Lothian.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To welcome the continued partnership working between the council and the Gateway.

5. AN ENTERPRISING THIRD SECTOR

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update on the current activities being undertaken to support a more enterprising third sector in West Lothian.

The report recalled that West Lothian Council was committed to supporting and developing a more enterprising third sector in West Lothian and that progress continued to be made in developing and moving forward the four thematic outcomes identified in the council’s approved “*Innovation, Potential and Fresh Thinking : A Framework to Support and Develop More Enterprising Third Sector Organisations.*”

A report by WLSN (West Lothian Social Enterprise Network), a copy of

which was attached to the report at Appendix 1, summarised the activities undertaken since the previous meeting of the panel. This included details of those organisations helped by WLSN, the funding agreement with the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian and work to try and plug the gap created by the removal of the Enterprising Third Sector Support Programme and the Scottish Government support programme Just Enterprise, both of which ended on 31 March 2019.

The report also provided an update on a couple of organisations recently supported by WLSN; these being 1st Step Development (bike refurbishment programme) and Kidzeco who had expanded into a second store in Livingston.

The Panel was asked to note the positive outcomes in regard to the work undertaken by West Lothian Social Enterprise Network in supporting enterprising third sector organisations.

Decision

To note the update in relation to WLSN

6. WEST LOTHIAN COMMUNITY CHOICES

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration explaining the approach that would be taken to develop the community choices pilot as agreed by Council Executive in October 2018.

The Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration explained that Community Choices was the name given to participatory budgeting (PB) in Scotland and was a democratic process which empowered communities to have more say on how resources in their area were used. West Lothian Council had piloted Community Choices on a small scale through the “Let’s Get it Right for Autism” project back in 2017.

Council Executive, in October 2018, agreed that £75,000 would be allocated through a Community Choice process to fund two streams of targeted activity; one which aligned to health and wellbeing outcomes identified through the regeneration planning process; and the other which aligned to positively impacting individuals, groups and/or communities with protected characteristics or experiencing socio-economic inequalities.

To develop the options for Community Choices a working group has been established. The group, consisting of Council Officers and third sector organisations identified through the Third Sector Strategy Group, would meet in May and June to consider the approach and make recommendations. These recommendations would be brought back to the Panel in September for consideration and comment. It was hoped that the pilot could then be launched soon thereafter with the process being completed in the current financial year.

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

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

7. GALA COMMITTEE BUDGET ALLOCATIONS 2019-20

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising of the allocations made from the Gala Committee Budget 2019/20 to gala committees and other organisations in West Lothian.

The council had supported West Lothian's local galas over a number of years by providing a grant towards running costs. In 2019/20 the total amount of £46,721.97 had been made available.

Thirty four application forms were issued to gala committees and other organisations traditionally supported by the fund and one new gala committee, Knightsridge Gala Committee. Thirty applications were returned with all having been supported, with further details contained in Appendix 1 attached to the report. Of the five organisations that did not apply this was because they either no longer existed or had decided not to hold a gala in 2019; further details of these organisations was contained in Appendix 2 attached to the report.

In previous years once gala grants had been allocated the budget allowed for any remaining balance to cover a small events grant of £250 that community groups could apply for to help support small local community events. As all the available funding had been allocated to cover the Gala Committees and other organisations there was no small events fund available in 2019/20.

During 2019/20 officers would review the scheme to identify improvements that could be introduced in 2020/21.

The Panel was asked to note that :-

1. That 30 gala committees had been supported from the budget in 2019/20;
2. That the budget was fully allocated and as a result no small events funding would be available in 2019/20; and
3. That a review and update of the process would be carried out prior to 2020/21.

Decision

To note the contents of the report

8. ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATION

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration asking the Panel to consider if they wanted additional representation at future panel meetings and if so which organisations should be invited to send representatives, in what capacity and the regularity of their attendance.

The membership of the Voluntary Organisations Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel was set out in the council's Standing Orders (Scheme of Administration). At the moment of those nominated organisations who were entitled to send a representation only the Senior People's Forum and third sector interface, the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian, attended the meetings on a regular basis.

The question of what other organisations could be invited to send representatives to panel meetings had previously been raised by panel members and the report was asking members how they wished to proceed on the matter.

The report provided a couple of options to the panel including a standing invitation by a nominated representative of an external organisation or an ad-hoc invitation to attend for a specific meeting or for a specific item of business.

The Panel discussed the various options available to them and the majority of members wished to keep attendance on an ad-hoc basis which would provide flexibility in the system. Also members did not wish to make attendance at meetings a requirement as this could place too much of a burden on those organisations reliant on volunteers.

It was noted that there were a number of organisations in the community who could benefit from participating in panel meetings and who could also bring their knowledge and experience to the table and it was the wish of the Panel to ask officers to approach some of these organisations, namely Community Development Trusts and the Management Committee Forum to ascertain if they wished to attend future meetings, in what capacity and how frequent they would like to attend.

If representatives of either Community Development Trusts or the Management Committee Forum wished to attend panel meetings their attendance would be reviewed at least once a year thereafter.

Decision

1. To agree that officers approach representatives from the Community Development Trust in West Lothian as to whether they would like to send along a representative to future meetings of the panel on an ad-hoc basis;
2. To agree that officers also approach the Management Committee Forum to ascertain if they too wished to attend meetings of the panel on an ad-hoc basis; and
3. To agree that officers report back to the Panel on the outcome their

discussions.