

MINUTE of MEETING of the LIVINGSTON SOUTH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 24 MAY 2019.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), Peter Heggie and Moira Shemilt

Apologies – Councillor Peter Johnston

In attendance –

James Cameron, Lead Officer, West Lothian Council
Lesley Keirnan, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council
David Lees, NETs, Land and Countryside Services, West Lothian Council
Sandy Ross, Housing Manager, West Lothian Council
Gordon Brown, Senior Engineer, West Lothian Council
Lee Clark, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
PC Alan McMahon, Police Scotland
Brian Johnston, Chair of Livingston Village Community Council

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2 MINUTES

The Committee approved the minute of its meeting held on Friday 15 February 2019 as a correct record. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

The Chair advised that in relation to item 4 of the minute (page 48), three members of the Committee had participated in a site visit to Adambrae Roundabout. While the concerns of the pupils had been taken into consideration, the members noted that there were opportunities for the small number of pupils using this route to cross at existing islands. Therefore, the Committee agreed that the request for improvements to be made would not be taken forward at this time.

The Committee also noted that in relation to item 11 (page 53) the Dedridge Steering Group and the Ladywell Steering Group had been invited to attend future meetings.

3 POLICE WARD REPORT

PC Alan McMahon presented a report (copies of which had been circulated) on the activities of the Community Policing Team in the Livingston South area.

It was advised that a partnership analyst had not yet been appointed meaning there were no local statistics available. Members were directed to a link within the report which provided statistics compiled by Police Scotland nationally.

An update was provided on the antisocial behaviour in the ward and the efforts being made to deter this. Officers had noted an increase in thefts of wheelie bins which were being set on fire by young people particularly near wooded areas. Work was being done by the Police in partnership with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Council's Education Services, and the Youth Action Project to reduce these incidents and identify those responsible.

Following discussion which took place at the Committee's last meeting, PC McMahon advised that inconsiderate parking continued to be an issue. It was noted that this was often non-criminal and could be time consuming for the police and other agencies. Members raised the issue of parking near to schools and requested that Education Services communicate with schools to remind parents to park considerately.

In terms of parking, an update was provided following discussion at the Committee's last meeting regarding parking during Livingston Football Club home matches. There had been one large match since then and additional resources were built into the operational plan for the day which had a positive impact. This would continue during the next football season.

Members were informed that PC John McLean had been injured while on duty responding to a complaint from a resident about an off-road motorcycle being driven at high speeds on footpaths. The Committee wished to write to him to wish him well in his recovery.

The Committee was recommended to note the report.

Decision

- 1) To note the terms of the report.
- 2) To request that education services contact Head Teachers of all schools asking them to remind parents of considerate parking and dropping-off near schools.
- 3) To write to PC John McLean wishing him well in his recovery.

4

FIRE REPORT

The Quarter 4 Ward Performance Report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (copies of which had been circulated) was presented to the Committee by Lee Clark.

The 2018/19 statistics were presented in comparison to those for the same period of 2017/18. The data showed that the number of accidental

dwelling fires had reduced, fire casualties and fatalities had remained at zero, and the number of deliberate fires had increased from 10 to 25.

The report also highlighted an increase in fires in non-domestic properties and unwanted fire alarms and there had been one RTC casualty compared to zero casualties and fatalities during the same period of 2017/18. The number of special services casualties (excluding RTCs) had reduced from two to zero.

The Committee were advised that deliberate fires caused by people setting wheelie bins alight were a priority for the service due to the increase in the number of incidents. SFRS had been working in partnership to address this and a press release was planned to raise awareness among residents and offering advice. An action plan had been developed to reduce incidents and identify those responsible.

It was also highlighted that of the 25 deliberate fires, five of these had since been determined to have been accidental. Engagement was taking place with local businesses to reduce the number of unwanted fire alarms.

The service was also assisting with the roll out of CPR training taking place at The James Young High School in partnership with the British Heart Foundation.

The Committee was invited to note and comment on the performance report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5 CLARIFICATION ON ENFORCEMENT OF DISABLED PERSONS' PARKING BAYS

A report by the Head of Operational Services (copies of which had been circulated) provided clarity on the enforcement of disabled parking bays in West Lothian.

The report had been submitted in response to a request made at a previous meeting following discussion regarding the enforcement action which could be taken in relation to disabled parking bays.

It was highlighted that the Council's policy (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) was based on the Disabled Persons' Parking Places (Scotland) Act 2009 which introduced a duty on local authorities to provide designated on-street parking spaces at disabled persons' homes. The policy was reviewed by the Council Executive in June 2018 and it was noted that there was no longer a requirement to install disabled bay parking signage. This was in line with the Traffic Signs and General Directions 2016 and caused some confusion over which disabled parking bays were legally enforceable.

A consolidation order had been compiled (attached at Appendix 2 to the

report) which included new legally enforceable disabled bays and removed redundant bays. While the Council had no responsibility for enforcement, the consolidation order was forwarded to Police Scotland to disseminate to appropriate officers for enforcement.

The consolidation order had been published on the Council's website to ensure it was easily accessible to the public and police and to remove any confusion over whether specific bays were enforceable. This would be updated to reflect any future amendments to the order.

The Committee welcomed the publication of the consolidation order on the Council's website and suggested that the information in the report be considered by other Local Area Committees as it was relevant to all of West Lothian.

The Committee was recommended to note the report and that the most recent consolidation order for disabled parking bays had been published on the Council's website and would be updated annually.

Decision

- 1) To note the terms of the report.
- 2) To suggest that other Local Area Committees consider the information included in the report as it was relevant to the whole West Lothian area.

6 SERVICE UPDATE - NETS, LAND AND COUNTRYSIDE

A report by the Head of Operational Services (copies of which had been circulated) provided an update on the recent activity of the NETs, Land and Countryside Services teams for the period from 1 February 2019 to 30 April 2019.

The report noted that grass cutting and weed management operations had commenced and the first cutting had been completed on schedule. A number of areas had been identified for reduced mowing as part of the changes to service standards. The Neighbourhood Environment Teams were also working to remove fly tipping which had been the subject of a number of enquiries. The Garden Maintenance Scheme had also begun on 8 April and the first cycle had been completed on schedule.

In terms of Cleaner Communities, officers were continuing to respond to enquiries and were working on removing litter, fly-tipping and debris as part of their routine works. The report advised that two new teams had been established to focus on enquiries allowing the street cleansing team to concentrate on routine works.

An update was provided on the Environmental Community Action and its activities. As the team had reduced to four staff, its work would focus on three priorities of education, abandoned vehicles and fly tipping. The service was also working with various partners and the community to encourage cleaner communities. Invitations had been issued to a number

of groups and schools to register for the National Spring Clean 2019.

Information was also given on parks and woodland activities, including an update on tree diseases which had been identified, and the proposal to develop a Long Term Forest Plan.

During discussion, members queried the nature of fly tipping incidents and were advised that the majority was of a commercial nature and left in more rural areas. The Council was working to raise awareness and improve the speed with which waste was removed to deter future incidents. The Committee also heard that improved data recording meant that a clearer picture of the level and location of fly tipping would be available in future.

With regard to waste, comments were made in relation to the reduced hours of community recycling centres. A request was then made for officers to look into shopping trolleys which had been left in the Dedridge Pond.

Decision

- 1) To note the terms of the report.
- 2) To request that trolleys which had been dumped in Dedridge Pond were removed.

7 HOUSING REPORT

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (copies of which had been circulated) providing an overview of the work undertaken in the ward during the period from 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2019.

Information was provided on the length of time mainstream and temporary Council-owned properties were empty before being re-let and outlined possible reasons for these delays. There had been 23 mainstream and 4 temporary tenancies re-let within the ward during the reporting period.

Details were also given on the level of rent arrears owed to the Council. The Livingston South ward had a strong collection rate of 98.2%; however there had been an increase in rent arrears compared to last year which could be attributed to the introduction of Universal Credit in West Lothian in May 2018, other welfare reforms and the current economic climate.

An overview of the team's activity including information on the capital programme and new build housing progress was presented, followed by information on tenant participation activities.

An update was presented on the Safer Neighbourhood Team, in particular the work being undertaken to address and reduce the number of wheelie bin fires which had been taking place. A joint press release was due to be issued on behalf of the Council, Fire and Rescue Service and Police to inform residents on what could be done to help and to raise the

community's awareness of the issue. Officers advised that this was a significant drain on the council and partners' resources. Members requested information on the ways this would be communicated in order that it reached as many people as possible.

Decision

- 1) To note the terms of the report.
- 2) To request information on the channels to be used to circulate the planned press release regarding bin fires.

8 REPORT ON PROGRESS OF REGENERATION PLANNING

A report by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the progress which had been made to date towards regeneration planning and other associated activities was considered by the Committee.

Regeneration plans had been developed for the Ladywell and Dedridge areas of the ward and these were now live working documents. The plans were divided into two sections detailing the community priorities and the overarching Regeneration Group priorities. These reflected data collected from various sources and would be reviewed as social and economic factors changed and new issues were identified.

The report went on to provide information on the activities taking place in the Ladywell and Dedridge areas. These included an initial session at the new 'Kidz N Kin' community hub which looked at the key challenges within the communities. This session identified the need for more learning activity within the pre-birth to post-natal stages. The regeneration groups were also working closely with the anti-poverty strategy group on the challenges of reaching the 'working poor' group.

A bins audit was being undertaken to maximise the community's use of public bins. This included officers engaging with residents in the community and mapping the bins in the area. The abandoned trolley reporting service had been made more visible on the council's website and a litter pick had been carried out by volunteers in Dedridge.

The Committee welcomed the work being done to progress regeneration planning in the ward.

The Committee was recommended to note the progress and priorities of the two local regeneration groups and the regeneration plan progress and developing actions.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

9 WORKPLAN

The Committee considered the workplan for its future meetings.

Decision

To note the workplan.