

MINUTE of MEETING of the BROXBURN, UPHALL AND WINCHBURGH LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE held within UPHALL COMMUNITY CENTRE, UPHALL, on 4 OCTOBER 2019.

Present – Councillors Angela Doran (Chair), Diane Calder, Janet Campbell and Chris Horne

In attendance –

Craig McCorriston, Lead Officer, West Lothian Council
Irene Bishop (Uphall Community Council)
Douglas Grierson, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council
Paul Kettrick, Corporate Estates Manager, West Lothian Council
Nick Knox (Winchburgh Community Council)
Stewart McFadyen, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Phyllis McFadyen, Area Housing Manager, West Lothian Council
Keith McLeod (Broxburn Community Council)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Keith McLeod, Irene Bishop, Pippa Plevin and Nick Knox declared interests in agenda item 9 (Town Centre Fund 2019/20: Proposed Funding Awards) as they had been involved in making applications to the Town Centre Fund and did not participate in the consideration of the item.

2 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair informed the Committee that a deputation request had been received from Broxburn United Sports Club in relation to agenda item 9 (Town Centre Fund 2019/20: Proposed Funding Awards).

Motion

To not hear the deputation in the interests of fairness in considering all applications.

- Moved by Councillor Angela Doran and seconded by Councillor Chris Horne

Amendment

To hear the deputation.

- Moved by Councillor Janet Campbell and seconded by Councillor Diane Calder

Following a vote in which the motion and amendment received 2 votes each, the Chair used her casting vote in favour of the motion and it was agreed accordingly.

Decision

To not hear the deputation request.

3 MINUTES

The Committee approved the minute of its meeting held on 30 August 2019 as a correct record. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

4 HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services (copies of which had been circulated) on the service activities in the ward.

The report provided an overview of the activities of Housing, Customer and Building Services, specific to the Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh ward for the period 1 April to 30 June 2019. It included details of the property void and let performance for both mainstream and temporary properties for the reporting period, confirming that there were 18 policy voids in the ward for this period. The length and reasons for these voids were provided.

The report also provided details on the rent arrears for the ward which were £289,062. This was an increase of £109,088 on the previous year's position. The Committee noted that the overall increased arrears in comparison to last year were as a result of Full Service Universal Credit being introduced in West Lothian from May 2018, along with other Welfare Benefit reforms and the current economic climate.

Details of the capital programme and new build council housing were provided in addition to information relating to local capital upgrades, tenant participation and safer neighbourhood council officer ward information.

Following the presentation of the report, members thanked officers for the recent works at Almondell Road as a number of members of the public had mentioned that they were pleased.

During discussion a number of points were raised including the work being done to engage with tenants to assist with rent payments and prevent them building up arrears as a result of Universal Credit. Information was also requested on the number of policy voids and the reasons behind these. The Area Housing Manager undertook to include more information on this in future reports, particularly those in the 13-16 weeks category. Some of the numbers could be attributed to the number of new builds in the area and the resultant lets.

The Committee was recommended to note the Housing, Customer and Building Services activity as detailed in the report for the period 1 April to 30 June 2019.

Decision

- 1) To note the terms of the report.
- 2) To request that future reports included more information on the reasons for policy voids.

5 FIRE SERVICE WARD REPORT

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing an update on the activity within the ward for the period up to 30 June 2019.

Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was a series of graphs showing details of accidental fire dwellings, fire casualties and fatalities, deliberate fires, fires in non-domestic properties, special services casualties (excluding road traffic collisions), unwanted fire alarm signals and road traffic casualties and fatalities from for the period, in comparison to the same period of 2018/19.

Following the presentation of the report, members discussed a number of points. Concerns were expressed regarding the number of deliberate fires and whether this could be attributed to an increase in flytipping. The Committee heard that flytipping was one of the causes of this but not the only cause and discussion took place regarding whether this was related to recent alterations to waste service provision.

Irene Bishop, Uphall Community Council advised that the Community Council was about to issue its next newsletter and would be happy to include information about flytipping and the risk of deliberate fires.

The process for the service carrying out home fire safety visits and the partnership working involved in this was also discussed. It was advised that those at high risk were visited as a priority to ensure safety.

In terms of unwanted fire alarms, members were advised that guidance on alarms was issued by the government and the Fire and Rescue Service did not have any enforcement powers in this area.

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

Decision

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To note the offer from Uphall Community Council to include information on flytipping and deliberate fires in their upcoming newsletter.

6 SERVICE UPDATE - NETS, LAND AND COUNTRYSIDE

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services advising of the activity of the NETs, Land and Countryside activities in the ward for the period 1 to 30 August 2019.

The report provided a summary of works carried out and enquiries received in relation to Grounds Maintenance, Garden Maintenance, Cleaner Communities (including Enforcement Community Action), Parks & Woodland and Open Space & Cemeteries. The Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advised that as there was no one present from the service, any questions members had would be passed on to be answered following the meeting.

Members asked a number of questions in relation to the accuracy of the figures included in the report as they had concerns that the service was not performing well given the budget reductions and subsequent decrease in staff numbers. It was advised that savings measures were consulted on as part of the budget setting and the Transforming Your Council processes. Information was requested confirming the accuracy of the figures for complaints and enquiries noted in the report and advising of the source of these figures.

In relation to grass cutting, the Committee noted that the Council owned one Profihopper grass cutting machine which collected grass as it cut and were supportive of the use of this in the ward. Members asked whether it would be possible to purchase another Profihopper for use in the Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh ward.

It was recommended that the Committee noted the work carried out to date and future planned work and advised of any areas requiring further investigation.

Decision

- 1) To note the terms of the report.
- 2) To request confirmation of the accuracy of the number of complaints noted in the report.
- 3) To request information on the source of the figures for complaints and enquiries.
- 4) To note the support of members for the use of a Profihopper in the ward and request whether it was possible to purchase another one.

7 GENERAL SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee considered a report on by the Head of Finance and Property Services (copies of which had been circulated) on the General Services Capital Programme.

As part of the ten year capital programme, it had been agreed that officers would report annually to local area committees on the progress on the investment in each ward. The report provided an update on the capital investment in the Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh ward during 2018/19 and planned investment for the period 2019/20 to 2027/28. Details of the projects included were attached to the report at appendices 1 and 2.

The ten year plan was approved in 2018 an updated version was approved in June 2019. For 2018/19, £28.702 million had been invested in the ward against a budget of £29.410 million. Details of the investment in each asset category were noted in the report.

The report set out the key elements of the investment in the ward during 2018/19, which included property, roads and related assets and open space. For 2019/20 to 2027/28, an investment of £83.653 million had been identified for the ward and information was provided on each asset category.

Further reports would be submitted to the Committee for consideration each year and the progress would continue to be monitored by the Council Executive at months 4, 6 and 9 in each year.

Following the presentation of the report, members asked for the reasons for carrying out patching works on some of the roads rather than full resurfacing. The Corporate Estates Manager undertook to provide a response following the meeting from the relevant officers.

Discussion took place in relation to the source of the funding being spent in the ward, such as grants, loans, Council budgets and other funding. It was advised that the Council received funding for projects from a number of sources and that this was generally received on a Council-wide basis rather than for particular wards. When asked for information on the funding sources for each project, members were advised that it would be difficult to provide due to this but requested that further information on the source of funding was included in future reports.

It was also noted that discussions were ongoing regarding the City Region Deal and the projects which would be funded as part of that, particularly in the Winchburgh area. There was limited information at this stage but the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration undertook to present a further report on these once details were known.

The Committee was recommended to note:

1. The progress made in delivering the approved general services capital programme within the Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh ward in 2018/19;
2. The approved capital projects planned for the ward in 2019/20 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

would be undertaken in 2022;

4. Progress in delivery of the 2019/20 programme would be reported to Council Executive following detailed budget monitoring exercises during the course of the year; and
5. An updated capital investment programme would be presented to Council for approval in February 2020.

Decision

- 1) To note the terms of the report.
- 2) To request information on the reasons for carrying out patching works on the A89, B9080, U17 and U26 rather than resurfacing.
- 3) To request that future reports include additional information on the source of funding for the projects.
- 4) To request a further report on the projects planned to be undertaken in the ward as part of the City Region Deal once details were known.

8 TOWN CENTRE FUND 2019/20: PROPOSED FUNDING AWARDS

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

The report noted that in February 2019, the Scottish Government had announced a new Town Centre Fund of £50 million, aimed at addressing the core themes of the Scottish Government's Town Centre Action Plan 2013 and the Town Centre First Principle.

Council Executive had agreed on 11 June 2019 that the funding should be allocated to all 23 communities with populations over 1,000 through a grant application process. Within the Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh ward, three towns were eligible for the funding. 14 applications had been received for projects in the ward which were attached to the report at Appendices 2 to 4. All applications had been reviewed by officers through the Capital Asset Management Board and recommendations and advice were set out in Appendix 1.

It was recommended that the committee:

1. note that 14 applications had been received for projects within the ward;
2. note the recommendations provided by officers within each town within the ward;
3. agree to award funding as set out in the report;

4. note that if the officer recommendation on funding was accepted there would be an unallocated sum of £24,659;
5. agree on the distribution of the unallocated sum which could be used for submitted projects in any settlement in the ward;
6. note that any unallocated sums would be available for distribution to projects elsewhere in West Lothian and that it would be for Council Executive to decide on the distribution of unallocated funds;
7. note that some of the funding costs remained as estimates and delegate the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration to finalise award amounts within the overall value of the funding available within the ward; and
8. note the terms and conditions associated to the awarding of grants as set out in the report.

Councillor Diane Calder left the meeting prior to the decision being made.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report and allocate funding as follows:

BR001 – New Planting Schemes for Benefit of Broxburn and District

To allocate £36,656 subject to confirmation of the future maintenance capability by the applicant.

BR002 – Leaflet Racks

To not support the application.

Councillor Angela Doran having moved an alternative position which did not receive a seconder had her dissent to the decision recorded.

BR003 – Extension to lounge and bar area

To not support the application.

BR004 – Range Improvements

To allocate £1812.

BR005 – 3G Pitch Replacement

To allocate £30,000.

BR006 – Port Buchan

To allocate £20,000.

UPH01 – Range Improvements

To allocate £9168.

UPH02 – Designating Council Owned Land as a Local Park

To allocate £42,298.50.

UPH03 – New Planting Schemes for Benefit of Uphall and District

To allocate £23,089.50 subject to confirmation of the future maintenance capability by the applicant.

UPH04 – 3G Pitch Replacement

To allocate £20,000.

WIN01 – Village Web Portal

To allocate £10,000.

WIN02 – Grass Cutting

To allocate £6250 subject to discussions with the Neighbourhood Environment Team regarding the details of the application.

WIN03 – Extra Open Air Seating

To allocate £6000.

WIN04 – New Village Entrance Signs

To allocate £15,000 subject to confirmation that the project was not being funded from an alternative source, otherwise £15,000 would be allocated to BR005 – 3G Pitch Replacement.

9

WORKPLAN

The Committee considered the workplan for its future meetings.

Decision

To note the workplan.