

MINUTE of MEETING of the WHITBURN AND BLACKBURN LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE held within WHITBURN COMMUNITY CENTRE, MANSE ROAD, WHITBURN, on 2 MARCH 2020.

Present – Councillors George Paul (Chair) and Kirsteen Sullivan

Apologies – Councillor Bruce Fairbairn

Absent – Councillor Jim Dickson

In Attendance –

Ann Marie Carr, Lead Officer, West Lothian Council  
Scott McKillop, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council  
Michelle Kirkbright, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council  
Gordon McGuire, Station Manager, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service  
PC Phil Wilkin, Police Scotland  
Gary Stoddart, Housing Manager, West Lothian Council  
David Cullen, Open Space and Cemeteries Manager, West Lothian Council  
Laura Wilson, Adult Learning Manager, West Lothian Council  
Peter Kain, Greenrigg Community Council  
Ian Tennant, Whitburn Community Council

1. DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Clerk advised that in terms of the council's Scheme of Administration, the meeting was inquorate. Nevertheless, the meeting could proceed with only two ward members present but any resolutions would require to be reported to the Council Executive for ratification.

The Chair agreed to vary the order of business and hear the Whitburn Community Learning Presentation immediately following approval of the minute.

3. MINUTE

The Committee approved the draft Minute of its meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

4. WHITBURN COMMUNITY LEARNING PROGRAMME - PRESENTATION

Laura Wilson, Adult Learning Manager, provided the committee with a very informative presentation on the partnership work with West Lothian College which had allowed free community-based college programmes for

adults in various local communities across West Lothian. The presentation set out the aims and objectives of the programme and its structure and processes.

Laura's presentation then demonstrated the progress of the programme and gave specific details on the levels of participation from participants within the ward before setting out the planned improvements for the future.

The presentation then moved on to provide information on the community schools leisure programme and of the plans to expand the programme in 2020.

On behalf of the committee, the chair thanked Laura for the interesting presentation.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the informative presentation.

### 5. POLICE WARD REPORT

The Committee considered a report by PC Carol-Ann Wilson (copies of which had been circulated) which provided an update on performance, activities and issues across the ward for the period October to December 2019.

PC Phil Wilkin provided members with an overview of some of the main activities that had taken place in the ward during the reporting period, particularly in the lead up to bonfire night and during the festive period.

The Committee was invited to note the report.

On behalf of the committee, the Chair expressed his continued disappointment at the lack of meaningful ward statistics within Police Scotland's reports presented to committee. The Lead Officer undertook to further engage with Chief Inspector Alun Williams on the lack of ward-based statistics.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

### 6. FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE WARD REPORT

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) providing an update on the activity within the Whitburn & Blackburn Multi-Member Ward for the period up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 which was accompanied by an appendix containing tables that set out the number of recorded incidents in the ward against Scotland and West Lothian wide figures.

The Committee was asked to note the contents of the report.

On behalf of the committee, the Chair requested that comparator figures against other wards within the area should be incorporated into future committee reports.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

### 7. COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE - BLACKBURN

The committee considered a report by the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on regeneration activity within the Blackburn area of the ward.

The report contained full information on the Blackburn Future's Group, the work of the sub-groups that made up Blackburn's Future Plan and updates on the Town Centre Capital grants awarded for projects in Blackburn.

It was recommended that the committee notes:-

- a. Regeneration activity within Blackburn;
- b. Blackburn's Future Plan and the Blackburn Future's Group;
- c. The Sub-Groups of the Blackburn's Future Plan; and
- d. Blackburn's town centre funded projects.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

### 8. COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE - WHITBURN

The committee considered a report by the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on regeneration activity within the Whitburn area of the ward.

The report advised of plans to refresh the Regeneration Plan and provided an update on the following groups and initiatives - Whitburn Services Meeting; Whitburn Community Learning Group; Whitburn Community Fridge; Whitburn Community Garden; Summer Lunch Club; and Whitburn Town Centre. It concluded with an update on Whitburn Partnership Centre.

It was recommended that the committee notes:-

- a. Updates on regeneration activity within the ward;
- b. Updates on Whitburn town centre related matters; and
- c. An update on the progress of developing Whitburn Partnership Centre.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

### 9. TOWN CENTRE FUND 2019/20

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration providing an update on progress in delivering the Town Centre Capital Projects approved by the committee on 3 October 2019.

The report recalled the council's approach to allocating the Town Centre Funding and an appendix provided an update on delivery of the projects. The Community Regeneration Officer advising that the Scottish Government had extended the expenditure deadline for all projects to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and the completion deadline for all projects to September 2021.

It was recommended that the committee:-

- I. Notes that 21 projects within the ward were being funded;
- II. Notes that officers were working with applicants to agree the final details to support the delivery of the projects;
- III. That the Scottish Government had advised local authorities that they were extending the expenditure deadline for all projects to 31 March 2021 and the completion deadline for all projects to 30 September 2021; and
- IV. That further progress updates would be brought to the committee.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

### 10. HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES 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 Whitburn and Blackburn ward for the period 1 October – 31 December 2019.

The Committee discussed the impact the increasing number of recipients

on Universal Credit was having on rent arrears across the ward. Members noted that whilst mainstream arrears were decreasing, the level of arrears for Universal Credit claimants was increasing. The Housing Manager endeavoured to provide ward members with a full breakdown on the spread of Universal Credit claimants within the ward broken down by town/village.

The committee was invited to note the service activity as details in the ward report for the period 1 October 2019 – 31 December 2019.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

11. SERVICE UPDATE - NETS, LAND & 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 NET's, Land and Countryside teams for the period 1 November 2019 to 31 January 2020.

It was recommended that the Committee:

1. Notes the work carried out by the service within the local area; and
2. Advise of any areas that required further information or investigation.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

12. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2020-2021

The Committee noted the proposed timetable of meetings for the period September 2020 to June 2021 (copies of which had been circulated).

Decision

To endorse the proposed timetable of meetings which would be presented to Council Executive for approval as part of the council's calendar of meetings 2020-2021.

13. WORKPLAN

A copy of the Workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the Workplan.

