

MINUTE of MEETING of the VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within WEBEX VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 24 SEPTEMBER 2020.

Present – Councillors Kirsteen Sullivan (Chair), Andrew McGuire, Tom Conn, David Dodds, Bruce Fairbairn, Tom Kerr (substituting for Councillor Chris Horne) and Moira Shemilt

Apologies – Councillor Chris Horne

In attendance – Craig McCorriston (Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration), Raymond Branton (Third Sector Strategy Group Representative), Diane Cameron (West Lothian Social Enterprise Network), Douglas Grierson (Regeneration and Employability Team Leader), Alan McCloskey (Voluntary Sector Gateway), Alice Mitchell (Economic Development Manager), Kathleen Neilly (West Lothian Foodbank), Elaine Nisbet (Anti-Poverty Manager) and Martin Thomson (Business Growth Adviser)

## 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Councillor David Dodds declared an interest in that he had been a council-appointed member of Fauldhouse and Breich Valley Steering Group; he would take part in all items of business.
- Councillor Tom Kerr declared an interest in that during the Covid-19 pandemic he had been a member of a volunteer organisation; as he was no longer a member of that organisation, he would take part in all items of business.
- Councillor Moira Shemilt declared an interest in that she was a member of the Board of Trustees for the School Bank West Lothian; she would take part in all items of business.
- Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan declared an interest in that she had provided help to some voluntary organisations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Agenda item 10 - Third Sector Partnership and Voluntary Organisations Budget 2021/22

- Councillor Tom Conn declared an interest in that he was a council-appointed member of the Linlithgow Heritage Trust; he would take part in the item of business.
- Councillor Andrew McGuire declared an interest in that he had been a driver with Food Train West Lothian until recently; he would take part in the item of business.

## 2 MINUTE

The Panel approved the minute of its meeting held on 19 March 2020 as a correct record. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3 REPORT ON WEST Lothian Voluntary Organisation Modernisation and Improvement Programme

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 allocation of the £200,000 West Lothian Voluntary Organisation Modernisation and Improvement Programme funding which was available in 2019/20 and providing an update on the £150,000 available in 2020/21.

Clarifications regarding the funding allocation process were provided during discussion and it was suggested that promotion of funding available to voluntary organisations be maximised through council and other appropriate channels.

It was recommended that the panel:

1. Note that £173,590 had been allocated to 20 organisations;
2. Note that a balance of £26,410 remained uncommitted and had been carried forward into 2020/21;
3. Note the effect of COVID-19 on the decisions made; and
4. Note a total of £176,410 available for 2020/21 remained unallocated and was currently being retained as a contingency in case further COVID-19 support was needed.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4 WEST Lothian Response to COVID-19

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration informing members of the work done to support communities across West Lothian during the COVID-19 crisis.

During discussion, clarifications were provided on the operation of the Foodbank during the COVID-19 crisis as well as on the food and hardship funding allocation.

It is recommended that the panel:

1. Note the role and partnership work carried out between West Lothian Council and the Third Sector to support communities through COVID-19;

2. Note the funding directed to support the Third Sector in its response; and
3. Note the opportunities to build on this partnership working in the future.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

### 5 WEST LOTHIAN FOOD NETWORK VIDEO

A video was shown providing information on the West Lothian Food Network.

Discussion focused on the operation of the Foodbank as well as logistics and difficulties the Food Network faced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Decision

To note the video presentation.

### 6 VOLUNTARY SECTOR GATEWAY WEST LOTHIAN UPDATE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration updating members on the current activities being undertaken by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian in providing an effective single point of access for support and advice and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups within West Lothian.

Discussion focused on remote and blended working and maximising volunteer recruitment.

It was recommended that the panel note the positive outcomes in regard to the work undertaken by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian in supporting and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups within West Lothian.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

### 7 WEST LOTHIAN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK UPDATE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration updating members on the current activities being undertaken by West Lothian Social Enterprise Network (WLSN) in providing an effective single point of access for support and advice and representing the interests of social

enterprises within West Lothian.

It was recommended that the panel note the positive outcomes in regard to the work undertaken by West Lothian Social Enterprise Network in supporting and representing the interests of the social enterprise sector within West Lothian.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

### 8 THIRD SECTOR PARTNERSHIP AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS BUDGET 2021/22

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration informing members of the ongoing discussion with Third Sector representatives in West Lothian and inviting them to consider the arrangements for the disbursement of the Voluntary Sector budget in 2021/22. These arrangements would have to be reported for approval to Council Executive.

Discussion focused on communicating and maximising funding opportunities and allocation for voluntary organisations. The council would also continue to engage with and support the Voluntary Sector in other ways.

It was recommended that panel consider the following recommendations, which were intended to be reported to Council Executive together with any comments arising from discussion at PDSP:

1. Note the role and work of the Third Sector Working Group as detailed in the report;
2. Agree the proposed changes of the revenue budget to allow for an interim extension of the grants to the organisations listed in Section D.5.1;
3. Agree that the Twinning Grants would not be allocated in 2021/22, allowing for the roll over to the grants awarded in 2020/21; and
4. Agree the process outlined in Section D.5.2 for the allocation of the remaining £400,000 through an application approach focusing on supporting communities through the on-going challenges from COVID-19.

#### Decision

1. To note the terms of the report.
2. To agree the recommendation that would be presented to a future meeting of Council Executive for approval.

9      WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.