

MINUTE of MEETING of the ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within MS TEAMS VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 17 NOVEMBER 2021.

Present – Councillors Tom Conn (Chair), Cathy Muldoon, Alison Adamson, Diane Calder, Chris Horne, Andrew McGuire, George Paul and Andrew McGuire

Apologies – Maureen Finlay (Senior People's Forum Representative)

In attendance – Pippa Plevin (WL Joint Forum of Community Councils Representative)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 8 - Litter Picking Volunteers

Councillor Andrew McGuire declared an interest in that he was involved with litter-picking volunteer groups.

2 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair advised that an appendix to the report under agenda item 7 had been missing from the original agenda and had been circulated to members separately; also, missing pages 3–5 of the report under agenda item 9 had been circulated to members.

3 MINUTES

- a The panel approved the minute of its meeting held on 14 September 2021 as a correct record.
- b The panel approved the minute of its meeting held on 18 October 2021 as a correct record.

4 BROXBURN PROPERTY FLOOD RESILIENCE SCHEME

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services updating on the progress being made to deliver the council's Property Flood Resilience scheme for up to 15 properties in New Holygate and Parkwood Gardens, Broxburn.

It was recommended that the panel note the content of the report and the proposals for implementing the Broxburn Property Flood Resilience scheme.

During discussion, members requested more information on the uptake of the scheme as well as the consequences of non-uptake and it was agreed that an update would be provided to a future panel meeting.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To provide a further report on the uptake of the flooding scheme to a future panel meeting.

5 ASH DIEBACK

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services updating on the impact and costs associated with the management of Ash Dieback in West Lothian.

It was recommended that the panel:

1. note the environmental impact that Ash Dieback would have across West Lothian;
2. note the significant future costs for the council to remove or make safe dead or failing Ash trees;
3. note that the council was required to act through the implementation of an Ash Dieback Action Plan;
4. advise officers of any further actions required to mitigate the impact of Ash Dieback across West Lothian; and
5. note that the panel would be provided with a further update on the finalised Ash Dieback Action Plan, in February 2022.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

6 MAINTENANCE OF OPEN SPACES, TREES AND SHELTERBELTS IN DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing an update on the maintenance of open spaces and shelterbelt trees in Springfield, Linlithgow; including providing an update on the areas the council maintained that may not be owned by the council or where the maintenance responsibility had not been transferred or taken over by the council.

It was recommended that the panel note:

1. the current maintenance information for Springfield, Linlithgow and the current maintenance arrangements provided by the council;
2. the findings from the Springfield review along with the future

considerations for the ongoing maintenance of Springfield, Linlithgow; and

3. officer recommendations that there were no changes to current service standards and that the current maintenance arrangements were continued for open spaces, trees and shelterbelts in development areas; and that officers sought to conclude the transfer of maintenance responsibilities for development areas where formal documentation did not exist.

During discussion, members requested more information and made comments on the difference between open space and tree shelter belt, maintenance obligations of council and residents, and tree management safety. It was agreed that an updated report would be presented to a future panel meeting.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. A further report to be presented to a future panel meeting on progress of discussions with developers across West Lothian, and considering the comments made at the meeting.

7 LITTER PICKING VOLUNTEERS

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services inviting members to recognise efforts made by local litter picking volunteer groups in keeping West Lothian looking at its best and to thank the volunteers for their continued hard work. The panel's attention was also drawn to diplomatic and logistical efforts as well as the financial contribution made by the service to facilitate the work of the volunteer groups and members were asked to acknowledge the operational challenges such active litter picking groups brought.

It was recommended that the panel note the report and the efforts of West Lothian Litter Pickers in keeping West Lothian Tidy.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To note the panel's thanks and appreciation to litter picking volunteers.

8 LIVINGSTON SKATEPARK

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing an update on the Livingston Skate Park.

It was recommended that the panel note the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

9 WEST LOTHIAN COMMUNITY CHOICES – UPDATE ON GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONSULTATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services updating on the approach for the delivery of Community Choices for Grounds Maintenance and providing an update on the results from the consultation on Grounds Maintenance activities.

It was recommended that the panel note the:

1. Community Choices approach for Grounds Maintenance;
2. findings from the consultation for Grounds Maintenance;
3. officer recommendations that the council continue with its current priorities and service standards for Grounds Maintenance activities, and
4. officer recommendations that officers develop options based on the three key themes identified from participants feedback for consultation with communities in Summer/Autumn 2022.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

10 FOOD FOR LIFE UPDATE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing an update on the Food For life initiative.

It was recommended that the panel note:

1. the council had retained Food for Life Served Here Bronze accreditation in its primary schools; and
2. requests that officers provide the panel with a further update on the Bathgate Academy pilot at the end of the current school term.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

11 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services reporting the current levels of performance for all indicators which were the responsibility of the Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

It was recommended that the panel note the performance information and determine if further action or enquiry was necessary for any of the indicators mentioned within the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

12 THE LICENSING OF ACTIVITIES INVOLVING ANIMALS REGULATIONS

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration making members aware of new regulations which required the licensing of various activities involving animals and the need to update and approve council policies, procedures and fees covering the activities.

It was recommended that the panel note and consider the following recommendation which was intended to be submitted to Council Executive:

1. note the content of the report; and
2. approve the policies, procedures and fees for implementation of the regulations set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

Decision

1. To note the content of the report; and
2. To agree that the report and its recommendations be forwarded to the next appropriate Council Executive for approval.

13 SPACES FOR PEOPLE - ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMUNITIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services informing of the Spaces for People (SfP) engagement plan which was instructed by Council on 28 September 2021.

It was recommended that the panel note:

1. the content of the report;

2. the scope timeline, engagement methodology and question set as detailed in the report;
3. that a full report on the engagement would be reported to a meeting of West Lothian Council in March 2022;
4. that the temporary 20mph and 40mph speed limits measures were to be extended as detailed in the report but would revert back to the permanent (pre-Covid-19) speed limits by mid-July 2022;
5. that the temporary parking restrictions on the Loanings, Linlithgow had been extended and would expire in 26 April 2022, and;
6. that the Spaces for People cycle lanes in Blackridge, Broxburn and Linlithgow would remain for the time being and monitored during Spring 2022.

Members were assured that disabilities groups would be consulted regarding cycle lane usage.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that guidance should be sought from the Governance Manager prior to any amendments made to the questionnaire as a council decision had already been made on the presentation of the questionnaire.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To seek legal advice prior to any amendments to the questionnaire.

14 WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.