

MINUTE of MEETING of the COMMUNITY SAFETY BOARD held within MSTEAMS VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 5 APRIL 2022.

Present – Councillors Kirsteen Sullivan (Chair), Charles Kennedy, Andrew McGuire; Graham Hope (Chief Executive, West Lothian Council), Graeme Struthers (Depute Chief Executive, West Lothian Council), Julie Whitelaw (Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services, West Lothian Council), Yvonne Beresford (West Lothian Council), Chief Inspector Alun Williams (Police Scotland)

Apologies – Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. SAFETY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN PUBLIC SPACES AND PLACES

The Board considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services presenting the draft Safety of Women and Girls in Public Spaces and Places action plan.

The work undertaken with Police Scotland to support information awareness raising regarding cybercrimes/gender-based bullying was noted and the Board highlighted that information specifically for parents would be beneficial in this respect.

The report detailed that visual audits would be undertaken to identify locations which would benefit from additional street lighting and the cutting back or pruning of shrubbery. It was queried whether these audits would be undertaken in conjunction with the ecology team and also whether it was possible to prioritise areas if the shrubbery was on land privately owned. It was confirmed that officers undertaking the audits would link in with the ecology teams. Officers also explained that a sub-group, set up to identify and prioritise projects whilst focussing on the safety of women and girls, would be able to consider any actions necessary, including potential enforcement action, if some of those priority areas identified involved private land.

In response to a query regarding whether any Community Safety partners had also agreed funding to support delivery of initiatives, Police Scotland advised it was considered most of the partners were making a contribution. However, their contribution was in terms of personnel and staff hours although they would query whether a financial contribution from Police Scotland would be possible and advise members accordingly.

It was recommended that the Board approve the draft action plan which had been developed to address key findings in the public consultation on safety of women and girls in public spaces and places and to agree that it should be included in the draft of the new Community Safety Plan, which would be presented to the Board in August 2022.

Decision

1. To approve the contents of the report;
2. To agree that the draft Safety of Women and Girls in Public Spaces and Places action plan was included in the draft of the new Community Safety Plan;
3. To request that information for parents was considered in relation to "'Societal/Behavioural Change" and those categories detailed under the work with Police Scotland "supporting information awareness raising re cybercrimes/gender-based bullying";
4. To note officers undertook to link in with the ecology team with regards to overhanging shrubbery and trees and the environmental visual audit;
5. To note the subgroup set up to identify projects could consider prioritising any areas of concern with regards to lighting and privately owned overhanging shrubbery; and
6. To note Police Scotland undertook to clarify if funding could be available out with their contribution of personnel/staff hours.