

MINUTE of MEETING of the ECONOMY, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND WEALTH BUILDING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 8 NOVEMBER 2022.

Present – Councillors Kirsteen Sullivan (Chair), Stuart Borrowman, Tom Conn (substituting for Councillor Tony Pearson), Peter Heggie, Andrew Miller, Cathy Muldoon, Peter Heggie and Cathy Muldoon

Apologies – Councillors Tony Pearson and Sally Pattle

In Attendance – Alan McCloskey (West Lothian Voluntary Sector Gateway Representative) and Donald Stavert (Joint Forum of Community Councils Representative)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 5 – Visit West Lothian

Councillor Andrew Miller stated a connection to the Almond Valley Heritage Trust. He would participate in the item of business.

Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan stated a connection as the council appointee to Visit West Lothian. She would participate in the item of business.

Agenda Item 10 – Voluntary and Third Sector Funding 2023/24

Councillor Andrew Miller stated a connection to Firefly Arts and the Knightsridge Adventure Project. He would participate in the item of business.

2 MINUTES

The panel approved the minute of its meeting held on 13 September 2022. The Chair thereafter signed the minute.

3 VISIT WEST LOTHIAN

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) and video presentation by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update the on the work by Economic Development associated with Visit West Lothian and advise of future plans.

It was recommended that the panel note the progress made on assisting West Lothian tourism focused businesses and the call for a twelve-monthly update to the panel.

Decision

To note the terms of the report and presentation.

4 STRATEGIC REVIEW OF TOWN CENTRES

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 proposed work by the Economic Development service associated with town centres, town centre management groups and local partnerships.

It was recommended that the panel:

1. Note the content of the report;
2. Note that town centre managers would carry out a review exercise between November 2022 and February 2023 to assess the current economic landscape of town centres;
3. Consider any potential changes to town centre management groups; and
4. Note that a further report would be brought back to this PDSP in Spring 2023.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5 REVIEW OF THE PLANNING ENFORCEMENT CHARTER

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising members of the proposed revisions to the Planning Enforcement Charter, which set out the duties and responsibilities of the planning enforcement service within the Development Management section of Planning Services.

It was recommended that the panel note the following recommendations, which were intended to be submitted to Council Executive for approval after a consultation exercise had been undertaken:

1. Note the comments received on the reviewed Enforcement Charter following consultation;
2. Agree the responses to the comments received during consultation on the reviewed Enforcement Charter;
3. Approve the content of the reviewed Enforcement Charter; and
4. Note that enforcement was a discretionary power and that formal enforcement action should be seen as a last resort in terms of dealing with unauthorised development and activities.

Decision

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

6 COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING UPDATE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Planning and Economic Development) providing an update on the development of a Community Wealth Building approach within West Lothian.

It was recommended that the panel:

1. Note the action plan contained in appendix one of the report, including the planned tasks, responsible officers and timescales for delivery;
2. Note the actions to be undertaken in the next six months; and
3. Note the next steps, outlined in section D4 of the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7 THIRD SECTOR AND WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Planning and Economic Development) presenting the Annual Report produced with the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian. The report gave an overview of the partnership working including funding, planning groups and other support during the financial year 2021/22 and some information of funding committed in the first part of 2022/23.

It was recommended that the panel:

1. Consider and note the contents of the report; and
2. Note the activity undertaken by the Third Sector and West Lothian Council in partnership.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8 VOLUNTARY AND THIRD SECTOR FUNDING 2023/24

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Planning and Economic Development) providing a background to the Third Sector funding processes to date and seeking comments on the proposals to modify the process for 2023/24 and future years.

It was recommended that the panel:

1. Consider and provide comment on the provision of an additional three months funding for organisations funded on 2022/23 to take them to the end of June 2023; and
2. Consider and provide comment on the process to be taken forward in 2023/34 and future years, which would be presented to Council Executive for approval.

Decision

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

9 VOLUNTARY SECTOR GATEWAY WEST LOTHIAN UPDATE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive (Education, Planning and Economic Development) providing an update on key issues affecting the Third Sector in West Lothian and the work 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.

It was recommended that the panel consider and note the overview provided by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian in Appendix 1 of the report and their work in supporting and representing the interests of voluntary and community groups within West Lothian.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

10 WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.

