

MINUTE of MEETING of the LINLITHGOW LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST Lothian Council held within RETIRAL ROOM, COUNTY BUILDINGS, on 19 FEBRUARY 2013.

Present – Councillors Tom Conn (Chair), Martyn Day and Tom Kerr.

In Attendance –

Dougie Grierson, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council
Inspector Jocelyn O'Connor, Lothian and Borders Police
Andrew Blake, Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager, West Lothian Council
Hannah Cairns, Events Co-ordinator, West Lothian Council
Thirza Hockaday, Venue Co-ordinator, West Lothian Council

1. MINUTE

The committee confirmed the Minute of its Meeting held on 4th December 2012. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

2. POLICE WARD REPORT

The committee considered a report by Inspector Whiteside (copies of which had been circulated) which summarised police activity in the ward for the period to January 2013.

Inspector Jocelyn O'Connor, who was present at the meeting, advised members that she had been appointed as the Community Inspector for the ward following Inspector Whiteside's transfer to the Police College. She confirmed that Caroline McKay had been appointed as the Community Sergeant for the ward.

The report provided information on national police priorities, West Lothian priorities and the ward specific community engagement priorities for the ward. It outlined performance and solvency rates in the ward for the period to January 2013, along with comparator figures for the previous year.

The report concluded with information on issues of note and forthcoming events.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

3. UPDATE ON EXPERIMENTAL WAITING RESTRICTIONS (WITH RESIDENTS PERMIT SCHEME) ON CLARENDON ROAD AND CLARENDON CRESCENT (PTO-12-04), LINLITHGOW

The committee considered a report by the Lead Officer (which had been circulated) providing an update on the progress of the experimental traffic

regulation order (with residents permit scheme) that had commenced on Clarendon Road and Clarendon Crescent, Linlithgow.

Provided as an appendix to the report for information, was a copy of an update report that had been considered by the Environmental Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 31st January 2013. Members noted that the PDSP had concluded that the scheme had been a success to date given the limited number of enquiries, the number of permits sold and the penalty tickets that had been issued.

Members noted that a second quarterly update would be presented to the PDSP in March 2013. Officers would undertake a consultation exercise to seek the views of residents in April/May 2013 and would report their findings to the PDSP within the 12 months originally proposed. Reports would also be submitted to the local area committee for information.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4. RELOCATION OF EXISTING AIR QUALITY MONITORING STATION TO 19-21 HIGH STREET

The committee considered a report by the Head of Planning and Economic Development (which had been circulated) advising of the proposal to relocate the Air Quality Monitoring Station from 212 High Street to 19-21 High Street where the air quality was considered to be poorer.

The report recalled the legislative background that required local authorities to assess compliance of air quality within their areas and explained that the Local Air Quality Framework required regular reviews of air quality. As a result of monitoring, Linlithgow High Street had been identified as having potential air pollution problems associated with road traffic. The outcome of a Detailed Assessment of the High Street undertaken in 2011 had led to the High street almost being declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) but that following further monitoring pollution level results had not been sufficient to warrant progress of an AQMA.

The Detailed Assessment had highlighted that pollution levels were likely to be worse in those areas which exhibited canyon effects where roads were narrow and buildings relatively tall. It also identified that the monitoring unit should be located in the area where predicted particulate pollution levels were anticipated to be above the statutory Air Quality Objectives. In addition, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency had recommended that the council should monitor for nitrogen dioxide within the worst affected areas.

It was proposed that the existing air quality monitoring station would be removed and a new, slightly smaller station would be installed at 19-21 High Street, Linlithgow. A list of the constraints which had led to the site

being identified as suitable was provided in the report. A planning application for the new site had been submitted.

It was proposed that the unit would be dark green although other colours could be accommodated. The unit could be vinylled with artwork or local information, including the Linlithgow App with direct links to live air quality information.

In response to comments, the Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager undertook to ascertain whether the unit could be painted stone coloured so that it was less obtrusive and whether the area outside the old post office or the loanings near to the delicatessen would be suitable venues to site the unit.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. CHANEL METIERS D'ART FASHION SHOW LINLITHGOW PALACE

The committee considered a report by the Head of Operational Services (which had been circulated) advising of the impact and legacy of the Chanel fashion show that had taken place at Linlithgow Palace on 4th December 2012.

The report described the background and the planning of the event which had been co-ordinated by an Events Planning and Operations Group which had met regularly in the weeks before the event. A Joint Agency Communication Centre had also been established for the duration of the event at the Police Headquarters, Fettes.

Members noted information on the operations of the event including building temporary structures, road closures, etc. They also noted the communication and media response leading up to, and following, the event. Visit West Lothian would calculate the approximate equivalent media coverage of Linlithgow Palace although Historic Scotland had estimated it to be in the value of £2.5 million.

Trading at local premises had reportedly gone well in the run up to the event and on the night of the show. The council had received income on charges levied for the use of facilities at Low Port, the Burgh Halls and the Vennel Car Park.

Given the private nature of the event, community involvement had been limited. Pupils from Linlithgow Academy had spent time with staff from Hello Scotland and their fashion designs subsequently being displayed in the empty bus station window at the Cross. Following the event, pupils from the academy had held a fashion show at the Palace on the structure erected for the Chanel event.

The council and emergency services worked very effectively together to facilitate the event and had demonstrated their capacity to facilitate large, high profile events. The net income Historic Scotland received for the

event would be spent on Linlithgow Palace and Peel to enhance visitor experience. It was hoped that the media coverage of the Palace would boost visitor numbers and increase visitor spend in Linlithgow and West Lothian. The ability to successfully facilitate an event of that magnitude in West Lothian would be a strong selling point to other event organisers for venues all over West Lothian.

The Events Co-ordinator undertook to raise with Visit West Lothian whether Linlithgow Palace could become the new National Museum of Costume.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL CAR PARK IN LINLITHGOW INCLUDING COACH PARKING

The committee considered a report by the Head of Operational Services (which had been circulated) advising of the outcome of investigations into options to provide additional car parking in Linlithgow, including an allowance for coach parking.

The report recalled that in November 2008, £500,000 funding had been allocated in the 10 year capital programme to improve car parking at Linlithgow Sports Club and to extend parking at St Ninian's Way. The Sports Club car park had been completed and the sum of £114,000 remained in the budget to deliver additional car parking at St. Ninian's Way and parking provision for coaches.

From the report, members noted information supplied by Historic Scotland on the approximate number of coach tours to Linlithgow Palace in 2010 and 2011. Coaches currently dropped passengers off at the Cross and parked their vehicles at the bus depot or on St. Ninian's Road. Passengers could not be dropped off in the bus depot and coach drivers had to book a space in the bus depot in advance.

The report detailed the various locations where officers had investigated providing coach parking around Linlithgow and Appendix 2 of the report outlined each of the options, details of the existing and additional provisions and the impact of each option.

The report recommended that the committee should support the following options which would achieve the desired outcome of additional car and coach parking in Linlithgow:-

- Extend the St. Ninian's Way Car Park by 50% and increase the number of parking spaces from 47 to 71 spaces, including 3 disabled parking spaces, with no coach parking, at an estimated cost of £80,000.
- Extend the existing bus lay-by on the A803 Blackness Road to accommodate 3 coaches at an estimated cost of £20,000.

- That officers carry out further investigations to identify a suitable location for a coach parking bay on the High Street. A list of areas that had been ruled out were noted. Once identified, the area be designated for coach parking during the tourist season and would be available for use by other vehicles outwith these times. The estimated cost of introducing seasonal coach parking was £5000 including statutory consultation, signage and road markings.

Decision

To support the terms of the report.

7. LINLITHGOW BURGH HALLS CATERING UPDATE

The committee considered a report by the Head of Area Services (which had been circulated) advising of changes to the operational arrangements for catering at Linlithgow Burgh Halls and the progress that had been made to ensure that a high quality service continued to be provided.

When the Linlithgow Burgh Halls had re-opened in 2011 following major refurbishment, catering had been provided by Glasshouse Hospitality. Glasshouse Hospitality had gone into liquidation in October 2012 and a 'phoenix' company, GH Catering, had continued to provide catering in the premises through an informal arrangement with the liquidators and the council. That arrangement had ceased on 24th December 2012 after notice was served by the council. The cafe was now being operated by the council since it had opened again in January 2013 following the New Year break. All staff involved with the cafe were directly employed by the council.

Catering for functions, events and meetings would be arranged by the hirers of the venue and provided by appropriately licensed external caterers under a Licence to Occupy. The council held a liquor licence for the building and would provide a cash bar at functions, events and meetings.

Members noted that customers who had booked functions prior to 24th December 2012 had been offered a refund of their deposits for catering or venue hire if they wish to cancel their event or change their caterer. This was in recognition that customers had previously had to use Glasshouse hospitality.

Feedback to the changes had been positive and staff were taking account of comments where they would further improve the service. Current arrangements would continue to be evaluated to ensure that they met the needs of the customers, residents of Linlithgow and the council.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8. HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING SERVICES

The committee considered a report by the Head of Housing, Construction and Building Services (which had been circulated) providing an overview of housing performance for the period October to December 2012 which included information on mainstream tenancies, temporary tenancies, policy voids and arrears performance. Tenant engagement in respect of arrears was an ongoing challenge across the county.

The report then provided the committee with an update on the activity of the Linlithgow Area Team, service wide Welfare Reform Activity, ward specific capital and environmental programme, tenants participation information and safer neighbourhood information.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

9. UPDATE FROM NETS & LAND SERVICES – 1ST NOVEMBER 2012 – 31ST JANUARY 2013

The committee considered a report by the Head of Operational Services (which had been circulated) providing information on the activities of the NETS & Land Services Teams from 1st November 2012 – 31st January 2013.

The report and appendices provide the committee with detailed information on those areas that had been tackled by the teams during the reporting period and of further proposals and initiatives.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

10. COMMUNITY REGENERATION REPORT

The committee considered a report by the Head of Area Services (which had been circulated) providing an update on community regeneration activities in the ward.

Full information on the activities carried out in partnership with the Linlithgow Issues Group, Bridgend Partners Group and the Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Town Centre Management Group were provided in the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

11. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2013-14

The committee agreed the list of proposed meeting dates for 2013/14 (which had been circulated) and to refer the dates to the Council Executive for approval.

Decision

To agree the meeting dates for 2013-14.

12. LINLITHGOW LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The committee noted its workplan for the period to 30th June 2013 (which had been circulated).

Decision

To note the terms of the workplan.