



ARMADALE AND BLACKRIDGE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE

REPORT BY LEAD OFFICER, ARMADALE AND BLACKRIDGE WARD

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update on the work of the Locality Planning Steering Group.

B. RECOMMENDATION

To consider the report and note contents.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values

Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; making best use of resources; working in partnership.

II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)

Locality Planning – reinforces council's commitment to delivering Community Planning at a local level.

III Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)

Existing council resources

Community Education Association Resources

IV Consultations

D. TERMS OF REPORT

Background

The Locality Planning steering group comprises representatives from the main public and voluntary sector services that operate in the ward area. The group meet every few months with sub groups taking forward the ongoing priorities for the area namely Mayfield area, Environment & Development and Youth Issues.

A random street survey was conducted in July to check if the three priorities were still valid. Results show that 89% of those surveyed felt that the environment and youth issues were still a priority and 93% felt that Mayfield is a priority.

Noted below are the main activities / developments for each priority.

Mayfield Cross Service Group

This Group continues to meet every 2/3 months to identify needs and review progress. The group are working on an action plan for the coming year. The main venue for partners on this group to deliver services to the community in the area is through the community house. Activity at the community house has increased over the last few months following the appointment of the new community development worker for the area. **Programme attached.** Community involvement and volunteering has increased since the formation of The Sunny Dale Association in July. This committee meet regularly and with the support of the development worker are working on:

- Garden improvements - A first stage application has been made to Grassroots Public Arts Grant for a Japanese Health and Wellbeing garden at the back of the community house. Grassroots public art initiative recognises that art can make a substantial contribution to the character of an area and can help encourage individual wellbeing and local confidence. Grants from £10k up to £24k to engage a professional artist to work with the community on approved projects.
- An application has also been made for a community health development grant to increase awareness and understanding of mental health issues and how it affects people's health. If successful this grant will allow the reinstatement of stress busting sessions delivered by an alternative therapy professional and would link to the above.
- Community fund raising events to raise funds for a children's Christmas party.
- A funding application is being prepared to submit to the Go Play programme being run by Inspiring Scotland in partnership with the Scottish Government. This application if successful will further develop a programme for older children and will maximise use of the community house on Friday afternoons and at the weekend by developing a 'Club Class' activity programme for young people.
- Housing staff and the community development worker are jointly doing home visits to all elderly resident households in the area to inform them on what's going on at the community house and to determine interest in forming an older persons group. Of the 38 residents visited so far 15 have shown interest in getting more information on the dale Food group, particularly a home delivery service; 5 want more information on home painting scheme run by Burnhouse school alternative curriculum programme and 9 are interested in getting together with other people in their own age group. A further 3 people have skills they would be willing to share for the benefit of the community.
- Due to the increasing demand for use of the house a more structured programme continues to develop with community members and a range of partners involved including; Housing services, Broxburn Family and Community development centre, Adult Basic Education, Get Cooking, Access to Employment, Burnhouse alternative curriculum, West Lothian Drug & Alcohol Service and Health visitor.

- Future jobs fund (FJF) – FJF aims to enable public agencies and the third sector to create additional job opportunities to undertake works which benefit the community. Funding of up to £6,500 for each job created (for 6 months). The jobs are primarily for people between 18-24 years old. In areas of recognised unemployment hotspots, where the unemployment rates are 1.5% above the national average people over the age of 24 can participate. Armadale Central and Armadale West fall into this category.

A first stage application has been prepared for an ‘Information Worker’ post to assist the development worker and partners in creating a regular news letter for distribution in the Mayfield area and to associate organisations/ agencies and to support the administration requirements of the community house.

- Dale food group continues to operate on Tuesday mornings at the Church and Thursday mornings at the Community House. Their work on the tooth brush exchange saw out of the 128 people registered a staggering 88% returning for the 2nd phase of the exchange service.
- The newly started STOP SMOKING group saw 9 people, 5 adults/ 4 young people attend, further growth will result in two sessions per week, one focussing on young people the other adults.
- Burnhouse, alternative curriculum have been using the house for educational group sessions and have supported the work of the association by carrying out supervised external painting of walls and fence and the internal painting of the crèche room. Once completed they will offer their free supervised painting services to the older people in the area.
- One day a week has been given over to the needs of parents with pre school children, with the establishment of two early years groups and drop in support services in line with the 0-5 Life Stage Planning Model.

Environment& Development – Update report on separate paper

Youth Issues group

The group meets every month and continues to work on three identified priorities which were Video project, Youth Night Club and a COZ style Dedicated Youth Space.

Video project – Earlier this the year a group of 8-10 young people were supported to make a short video film depicting life in Armadale from a young persons perspective. The initial film proved to be controversial in that although it expressed the views of the young people involved, it was thought to portray Armadale in a very negative way. The original copies of the film were not distributed and the young people agreed to re edit it. As intended the film has been entered into short film festivals, the first being the Kids for Kids Festival in Durham on the 17th & 18th October. Three of the young people involved in the production will be attending with West Lothian Youth Action staff. The initial funding for this project was provided by the Armadale Community Education Association and a video camera has been purchased for future work..

Youth Night Club – Discussions have take place with the owners of some local venues in an attempt to provide an attractive alternative weekend activity for young people once a month. Young people have been consulted and are very supportive and want to be involved in the branding, marketing and the running of events. So far the group have been unable to secure the use of suitable premises but will continue to explore options.

Dedicated Youth Space

Background:

Consultation with the community over recent years has regularly highlighted concerns about the needs, services available for young people, and the behavior of some young people in Armadale.

The town has had significant challenges in relation to youth anti-social behavior and alcohol misuse which has resulted in initiatives such as:

- Operation Floorwalk – Multi agency approach involving police; West Lothian Youth Action Project; Neighbourhood Response Team; Community Learning Youth Work team
- Under 21 Drinking Ban – Temporary measure involving police and shopkeepers
- Operation Fever – Police targeting ‘hot spots’ of youth disorder
- Street youth work – Most Friday evenings youth workers are out on the streets engaging with young people in a bid to reduce / discourage under age use of alcohol

Town centre youth issues and concerns about provision for young people have been picked up by both the Locality Planning Steering Group and the Armadale Community Education Association resulting in a Youth Issues Group being established in 2008 to explore how the needs of young people could be better met.

A considerable amount of work has been done with young people through youth groups, secondary school, street work, specialist youth support groups, and special events known as Dale Experience have been organized. These events have been well attended by both young people and young people’s services and were designed to consult with young people to investigate their needs/ issues and to explore solutions. Young people have regularly highlighted the need for a meeting place in the town.

The main venue in the town which has traditionally provided much of the traditional youth club type of activity, Armadale Community Education Centre, is currently closed for refurbishment and is not due to re-open until the middle of 2010. Although this centre would normally have a youth programme of activities, and will continue to do so in the future, it is limited by availability / opening & closing time restrictions and a dedicated youth space specifically resourced, furnished and equipped to attract older young people.

It is intended that the youth space in addition to being attractive to young people, will provide a ‘hub’ which will attract a wide range of services concerned with the education, health and welfare of young people where they can engage, work with and support young people. Because this will be an attractive place for young people to want to go, it will not only attract young people from Armadale but also young people from the wider ward area including Blackridge and Westfield. Young people will be supported to attend by the provision of transport when necessary, particularly to return home following evening events.

In summary the unique youth space will provide:

- An attractive up to date place that young people will want to go.
- Clubs and workshops sessions in response to young people’s need.
- Health and educational inputs, workshops and other regular activities as appropriate / required.
- Alcohol diversion programmes and activities particularly on Friday afternoons / evening and Saturday & Sunday evenings.
- A ‘hub’ location for all youth related services to engage and support young people.

The group are working with the owner of the former co-op halls building in Armadale Main Street with a view to leasing the building. Plans have been drawn up to make the building suitable for purpose and the owner has commenced refurbishment of the property. £19,500 has been secured for the project from Alcohol Diversionary fund with other 'funding in kind' available for staffing through CLD Youth Work team and WLYAP. A European LEADER funding application is in the final stages of completion to secure the additional match funding required to make the project a reality. A funding decision will be finalised in November after which the group will be able to proceed with signing a lease agreement with the owner.

E. CONCLUSION

To note the contents

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None

Appendices/Attachments:

Mayfield Community House programme

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