

MINUTE of MEETING of the ARMADALE AND BLACKRIDGE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within CRAIG INN CENTRE, BLACKRIDGE on FRIDAY 2 OCTOBER 2009.

Present – Councillors Isabel Hutton (Chair), Stuart Borrowman and Jim Dixon.

In Attendance – Eddie Anderson (Communications Officer, WLC), Willie Carruthers (Locality Planning Officer, WLC), William Drummond (Armadale Sports Club), Ann Gee (Housing and Building Services, WLC), Marion Noble (Marches Drive Tenants and Residents Association), Inspector Bob Paris (Lothian and Borders Police), Bobby Robertson (Armadale Sports Club), Andrew Smart (Armadale Community Council), Susan Smith (Armadale Sports Club) and Jackie Turner (Marches Drive Tenants and Residents Association).

1. MINUTE

The committee confirmed the minute of its meeting held on 21 August 2009 as a correct record.

2. NOTICE OF MOTION - ARMADALE ACADEMY

The committee considered a notice of motion submitted by Councillor Borrowman in the following terms:

“Armadale and Blackridge LAC calls for a report providing information on the development of a letting policy for access by community groups to Armadale Academy. This LAC invites officers to include in their report:

- After school agreed opening times.
- Proposed costs per available area.
- Proposed management structure.”

Moved by Councillor Dixon, seconded by Councillor Borrowman.

The Chair suggested that the following be added as a fourth bullet point prior to the motion being agreed:

- Other relevant issues, including those relating to the proposed use of sports passports.

Councillors Borrowman and Dixon indicated that they accepted this suggestion.

Decision -

To agree the terms of the motion, subject to the inclusion of a fourth bullet point as suggested by the Chair.

3. NOTICE OF MOTION - SITES FOR DEVELOPMENT FOR COUNCIL HOUSING

The committee considered a notice of motion submitted by Councillor Borrowman in the following terms:

“Armada and Blackridge LAC requests a report from officers providing information on potential sites for the development for new general needs council housing in Armada and Blackridge Ward.

The LAC invites officers to include in their deliberations -

- The need to safeguard the amenity of existing residents.
- The desirability of new houses to assist in catalysing and supporting the development aspirations for the area enshrined in the West Lothian Plan.
- Opportunities for collaboration with other builders of houses.
- Opportunities for regeneration of brown field or derelict sites.
- Implications for school capacities.

The report should be made, in the first instance, to the LAC by end-February 2010.”

Moved by Councillor Borrowman, seconded by Councillor Dixon.

Decision -

To agree the terms of the motion.

4. NOTICE OF MOTION - PLAY SPACES AND PARKS

The Chair informed the committee that:

- A progress report on the Council's Open Space Strategy and Sports Facilities was considered by the Environment PDSP on 23 April 2009;
- The report highlighted the impact and positive improvements being achieved through capital funding to deliver projects that impacted on all members of West Lothian's communities and organisations, such as football clubs and similar organisations, that frequented open spaces;
- Appendix 1 to the report highlighted the overall background to the assessment process and guidance that was followed or developed in order to provide a level from which to evaluate

need and more importantly performance;

- Appendix 2 to the report highlighted the impact that the investments through Sport and Outdoor Education, from Cultural Services, had delivered, or were delivering. The main thrust was focused on sports pitches and team / local provision requirements; and
- The report, which all members were issued with in April 2009, showed £647k allocated to Armadale for Priority Action Projects at Avondale Park and Wood Park.

The Chair ruled that, in view of the aforementioned and in terms of Standing Order 20(2), the motion be not considered, as it dealt with a matter already being dealt with.

Councillor Borrowman requested that a report be brought back to the committee advising of the current position with the Priority Action Projects at Avondale Park and Wood Park.

The Chair and Councillor Dixon indicated that they accepted this suggestion.

#### Decisions -

1. That the motion be not considered as, in terms of Standing Order 20(2), it dealt with a matter already being dealt with; and
2. To agree that a report be brought back to the committee advising of the current position with the Priority Action Projects at Avondale Park and Wood Park.

## 5. STEERING GROUP ACTIVITIES

A report by the Lead Officer (Head of Housing and Building Services) had been circulated providing an update on the work of the Locality Planning Steering Group.

The report recalled that the Steering Group comprised representatives from the main public and voluntary sector services that operated in the ward area. The Steering Group met every few months, with sub groups taking forward the ongoing priorities - namely the Mayfield area, Environment and Development and Youth Issues.

The report highlighted that a random street survey was conducted in July to check if these three priorities were still valid. Results showed that 89% of those surveyed felt that Environment and Development and Youth Issues were still a priority, and 93% felt that the Mayfield area was a priority.

The Lead Officer continued to advise of the the main, ongoing activities

and developments in respect of the Mayfield area and Youth Issues. The following points were highlighted in the report:

- Mayfield area

This cross-service sub-group continued to meet to identify needs, review progress and prepare an action plan for the coming year.

The main venue for partners on the sub-group to deliver services to the area was through the community house. Activity at the community house had increased over the last few months following the appointment of the new community development worker. A programme of the activities and services being delivered featured as the appendix to the report.

Community involvement and volunteering had increased since the formation of the SunnyDale Association in July. This Association met regularly and, with the support of the development worker, were working on areas such as garden improvements, mental health issues and the future jobs fund.

- Youth Issues

This sub-group met every month and continued to work on three identified priorities - a video project, Youth Night Club and a Chill Out Zone style dedicated Youth Space.

In respect of the dedicated Youth Space, the sub-group were working with the owner of the former co-op halls building in Armadale with a view to leasing the building.

Plans had been drawn up to make the building suitable for purpose and the owner had commenced refurbishment of the property.

£19,500 had been secured for the project from alcohol diversionary funding with other 'funding in kind' made available for staffing through the Community Learning and Development Youth Work team and WLYAP.

A European LEADER funding application was in the final stages of completion to secure the additional match funding required to make the project a reality.

A funding decision would be finalised in November after which the sub-group would be able to progress the signing of a lease agreement with the owner.

Decision -

To note the contents of the report.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL THEMED ACTION GROUP

A report by the Lead Officer (Head of Housing and Building Services) had been circulated providing an overview of the ongoing work of the Environmental Improvement Themed Action Group (sub-group).

The sub-group's action plan featured as the appendix to the report and detailed updates were reported on the following priorities:

- Ensuring the park in Mayfield was a suitable venue for families and that members of the Community could participate in play and Health Improvement facilities;
- Environmental clean-up;
- Grass-cutting scheme;
- Landscape design;
- Garden allotment proposal; and
- Mayfield triangle.

Decision -

To note the contents of the report.

## 7. WARD REPORTS

### (a) Housing and Building Services

A report by the Head of Housing and Building Services had been circulated detailing ward activity and performance information for the service under the following headings:

- Void and Let Performance (Mainstream and Temporary Tenancies);
- Arrears Performance;
- Area Housing Office Activity Locality Planning and Community Engagement; and
- Building Services.

Decision -

To note the contents of the report.

(b) Neighbourhood Response Team (NRT) Update

A report by the Head of Housing and Building Services had been circulated providing an overview of the Neighbourhood Response Team (NRT) activities within the ward. The report provided details of active cases and new cases for the ward, together with comparative figures for West Lothian.

The report highlighted that various joint visits with community-based Housing Officers and Police Officers had been carried out to tackle anti social behaviour issues. The NRT Officer had also been active in the ward, patrolling with local Police Officers, particularly in the known hot spot areas.

Decision -

To note the contents of the report.