

MINUTE of MEETING of the ARMADALE AND BLACKRIDGE LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, , on 29 AUGUST 2014.

Present – Councillors Jim Dixon (Chair), Stuart Borrowman

Absent – Isabel Hutton

In Attendance –

Elaine Cook, Lead Officer, WLC

Douglas Benson, Community Regeneration Officer, WLC

Inspector Andrew Elliot, Police Scotland

Lorraine Donnelly, Housing, Construction and Building Services, WLC

Elizabeth Butters, ADP Policy Officer, WLC

George Scott, Public Health Nurse, WLC

Grace Mortimer, West Lothian Credit Union

1. ORDER OF BUSINESS, INCLUDING NOTICE OF URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair ruled that the presentation by Grace Mortimer, West Lothian Credit Union would be taken after consideration of the Minute.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 7 – West Lothian Villages Improvement Fund Applications – Councillor Borrowman declared a non-financial interest in this item of business as his wife was a Church of Scotland Elder.

3. MINUTE

The committee noted the Minute of its Meeting held on 23 May 2014. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

4. PRESENTATION BY GRACE MORTIMER, WEST LOTHIAN CREDIT UNION

The Committee noted a presentation carried out by Grace Mortimer, Administrator, West Lothian Credit Union, on the work carried out to promote the services available from West Lothian Credit Union.

West Lothian Credit Union works towards financial inclusion for everyone and offers savings accounts and loans to its members. The Jam Jar Account was specifically designed for social housing tenants and support was also available for people struggling to manage their money. When Universal Credit comes into force support would be available from West Lothian Credit Union to help members manage their monthly lump sum.

Benefits could be paid into member's accounts with their rent automatically paid to their landlord. The balance of their money could then be loaded onto a prepaid card to be used anywhere that accepts Visa cards.

In conclusion, the Committee was advised that work would continue to raise awareness of the services available from West Lothian Credit Union within West Lothian.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee thanked Ms Mortimer for attending the meeting and providing an update.

Decision

To note the presentation.

5. WARD 9 ARMADALE & BLACKRIDGE - POLICE REPORT

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Inspector Andrew Elliot, Police Scotland, providing an update on police activity within the ward.

The report provided the committee with information on the key performance indicators for the ward, national and community engagement priorities and highlighted issues of note.

The report also provided details of performance statistics up 30 April 2014. The report provided details of the following activities, initiatives and forthcoming events.

- Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour
- Tackling Substance Misuse
- Making Our Roads Safer

The report advised that the Community Policing Team continued to focus on acquisitive crime and to this end would engage in circulating security advice literature to areas where crimes had been reported.

It was also advised that the "Call 101" campaign was ongoing in an effort to raise awareness of the number for members of the public to use to call the police.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

6. ARMADALE AND BLACKRIDGE MULTI-MEMBER WARD OPERATIONAL PLAN 2014-2017

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated)

by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing details of the draft Livingston South Multi-Member Ward Operational Plan 2014 – 2017.

The report advised that the Multi-Member Ward Operational Plan had been produced to ensure delivery of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian, which was a requirement under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, Section 41E.

The Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian 2014 – 2017 identified key priorities for SFRS activities within the local authority area. The Local Senior Officer for Falkirk and West Lothian then produced a ward operational plan for each multi-member ward area to support and deliver against key priorities. Appendix 1 to the report contained details of the Operational Plan for Armadale and Blackridge ward.

Within the Local Fire and Rescue Plan seven key priorities were identified and were assessed in relation to their impact within each ward. The assessment process included a survey of the West Lothian Citizen's Panel and results based on 120 responses received.

In conclusion the report advised that Armadale and Blackridge ward Multi-Member Operational Plan aligned to the key priorities of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for West Lothian, the West Lothian Strategic Assessment of Community Safety and continued with the excellent partnership working on Community Safety.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7. WEST LOTHIAN VILLAGES IMPROVEMENT FUND APPLICATIONS

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning and Economic Development advising of applications that had been received seeking funding from the West Lothian Villages Improvement Fund in 2013/14.

The report advised that in 2012 the Council Executive agreed the eligibility criteria for a West Lothian Villages Improvement Fund. Funding of £1.65m was available to support eligible schemes with the funding phased over five years.

Three villages within the Armadale and Blackridge ward were eligible under the scheme as follows:-

- Blackridge - £15,000
- Torphichen - £15,000
- Westfield - £5,000

The report advised that the following two applications had been received:-

- Westfield and Bridgehouse Community Council – Bridgehouse Phone Box Restoration - £2,760.00
- Torphichen Kirk – Renovation of Kitchen at St John’s Hall - £15,475

In conclusion the report advised that the two applications were eligible to apply to the Village Improvement Fund and met the criteria.

The report recommended that the committee:

1. Note that two applications had been received for funding;
2. Note that the proposal met the eligibility criteria;
3. Support funding for the projects; and
4. Agree that the Head of Planning and Economic Development make an offer of funding as per the details set out in the report.

Decision

1. To approve the terms of the report.
2. As the meeting was inquorate the Lead Officer would submit a report to Council Executive seeking ratification of the decision.

8. HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING SERVICES

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Construction and Building Services providing an overview of the service activities within the Armadale and Blackridge ward.

The report provided information in relation to property void and let performance for mainstream and temporary tenancies from April 2014 to June 2014. Comparative arrears performance was outlined in the report. A high profile rent arrears campaign was launched at the beginning of October 2013 with adverts in local media, a press release, posters displayed in council offices, Community Centres, GP Surgeries and council vehicles.

For 2014-15 the Arrears Task Group agreed as an interim measure to monitor against a £1.3m target, which would allow time for some actions from the Rent Strategy to be in place and therefore the target would be subject to change at a later stage.

The workload priorities agreed by the Arrears Task Group ensured that tenants who engaged with the council were being offered support and advice in relation to applying for Housing Benefit, Discretionary Housing Payment and referrals to the Advice Shop.

The report went on to provide brief details of the activities of the Mayfield Drive Project, Park Road, Blackridge, New Build, Tenant Participation, Scottish Social Housing Charter, Capital Programme Working Group, Housing Networks, Safer Neighbourhood Council Officer Ward Information, WLC Officer based in SNT and Youth Worker based in SNT update

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

9. ALCOHOL DIVERSIONARY ACTIVITIES

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy advising of the decision made at the Alcohol and Drug Partnership subgroup on 30 May 2014 in respect of the "Armadale Youth Space" application.

The report advised that the application was considered at the Armadale & Blackridge LAC on 9 May 2014 and the Alcohol and Drug Partnership sub group on 30 May.

The report advised that the Alcohol and Drug Partnership sub group recommended that the "Armadale Youth Space" application not be progressed at this stage as it did not meet the criteria/outcomes.

The Alcohol and Drug Partnership sub group informed the applicants of the decision and provided feedback. The applicant was also advised that the application could be resubmitted for consideration.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

10. COMMUNITY HEALTH CHAMPIONS

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive, Community Health and Care Partnership providing details of the ward health profile for Armadale and Blackrdige ward.

The report explained that proposals to develop Community Health Champions in each ward area included the commitment to return to the next round of Local Area Committees with a Health profile for each ward area. The Armadale and Blackridge Ward Health Profile was attached as an appendix to the report.

The nature of health inequalities was complex and could not be attributed to a single risk factor. They were the result of social circumstances and reflected the underlying distribution of power and resources in the population. Although lifestyle choices were important, determinants of

health included community, economic, cultural and environmental factors. Health inequalities were not only related to socio-economic status as people who were disadvantaged by race, disability, gender and other factors also had poorer health.

The Health Profile for Armadale and Blackridge was based on ward profiles produced by Community Regeneration in 2012 and were updated where new information was available. There were indicators based on quality of life, key statistical information, health and population and benefits. The Citizen Panel Quality of Life survey in 2013 provided up to date information for quality of life indicators.

In conclusion, the health profile was developed to support the Local Area Committee to prioritise health issues and agree/develop actions to deliver local initiatives that would impact positively on health. The next step in the community health champions approach was to recruit local people and groups to work towards identifying and addressing issues. Recruits would initially be involved in a shortened version of the Health Issues in the Community course.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

11. PENSIONERS' GROUPS CHRISTMAS FUND PROVISIONAL ALLOCATIONS 2013

The Committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Services setting out the provisional allocations made from the Pensioners' Groups Christmas Fund 2014 to groups in the Armadale and Blackridge ward, Livingston-wide groups and West Lothian-wide groups.

In Armadale and Blackridge ward, ten application forms had been issued, and nine returned. Appendix 1 to the report showed the seven organisations to be supported and the provisional allocation to each.

Appendix 2 to the report showed the provision allocations to Livingston-wide and West Lothian-wide organisations.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

12. COMMUNITY REGENERATION UPDATE

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

The report advised the Community Regeneration activity within the ward was on going with a variety of services and organisations delivering

activities.

The Head of Area Services provided a brief update on the following:-

- Queens Baton Relay
- Happy Healthy Summer Camp
- Armadale Employability
- Armadale Early Years Action Group
- Shop Front Improvement
- Environmental Enhancements
- Health Promotion

In conclusion the report advised that the actions detailed in the report contributed to the implementation of the Armadale and Blackridge Ward Action Plan and enabled Community Planning Partners to contribute to the Single Outcome Agreement at a local level.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

13. WORKPLAN

The committee noted the Armadale and Blackridge Local Area Committee workplan.