

# **Report**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Report to:       | <b>Hamilton Area Committee</b>                              |
| Date of Meeting: | <b>27 January 2021</b>                                      |
| Report by:       | <b>Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)</b> |

|          |                                      |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| Subject: | <b>Neighbourhood Planning Update</b> |
|----------|--------------------------------------|

## **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update the Area Committee on the work being carried out in Hamilton in relation to neighbourhood planning

## **2. Recommendation(s)**

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the progress being made in respect of neighbourhood planning be noted;
- (2) that the new plans for Fairhill and Larkhall be noted;
- (3) that the annual reports on Hillhouse, Udston and Burnbank, and Strutherhill and Birkenshaw be noted; and
- (4) that the next steps planned for the Hamilton Area Committee area be noted.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a statutory duty on Community Planning Partnerships (CPP), of which the Council is a statutory partner, to identify smaller areas within the local authority area which experience the poorest outcomes and to prepare and publish locality plans to improve outcomes on agreed priorities for these communities. These plans are required to set out clear priorities for improving local outcomes and tackling inequalities which agreed by the CPP and community. In South Lanarkshire, these plans are referred to as neighbourhood plans.
- 3.2. The guidance makes it clear that participation with communities must lie at the heart of community planning and that the partners must engage with the communities identified as requiring specific attention and be more than just consultation but involve active engagement and empowerment.
- 3.3. At its meeting on 14 July 2017, the CPP Board considered the results of a statistical exercise which identified the areas experiencing the poorest outcomes in South Lanarkshire relative to the South Lanarkshire average position, which resulted in areas within 9 of the Council's 20 wards being identified as potential neighbourhood planning areas.
- 3.4. At its meeting on 11 October 2017, the Community Planning Board agreed to pilot the use of neighbourhood planning activity in South Lanarkshire, and recognised that this approach required a longer investment of time within communities to engage and involve people and produce plans. The first three neighbourhood plans, for the pilot

areas of Hillhouse/Udston/Burnbank, Whitlawburn and Springhall and Strutherhill and Birkenshaw were published in January 2019.

- 3.5. The legislation further requires that reports are produced on a yearly basis which identify the progress made in relation to the plans. The purpose of these reports is for the communities involved to see and understand what has happened in their areas. The guidance accompanying the legislation states that annual reports should be published in an accessible and easy to understand way which enables communities to understand the direction and scale of progress. As a result, the manner in which reports are produced for communities will vary from the way in which partners may usually report.

#### **4. New Neighbourhood Planning Areas - Progress to Date**

- 4.1. Learning from the phase 1 areas included the recognition that each area is individual in its capacity and the priorities which it identifies, and that the work which is carried out in neighbourhoods as a result must be individualised. In addition, the neighbourhood planning work should strengthen and empower the community within the neighbourhood, developing their capacity to both engage with potential delivery services and to create and deliver upon their own priorities where this is appropriate.
- 4.2. In September 2019, the Community Planning Board agreed the neighbourhood planning processes should be rolled out to the following communities:-

| <b>Neighbourhood Planning Wards</b>    | <b>Priority Communities</b>                       |
|--|---|
| Ward 12 – Rutherglen Central and North | Burnhill  |
| Ward 14 – Cambuslang East              | Halfway, Westburn, Circuit                        |
| Ward 15 – Blantyre                     | Auchinraith, Blantyre, High Blantyre, Springwells |
| Ward 19 – Hamilton South               | Fairhill  |

Each community has individual levels of community capacity and support already in place and required individualised programmes of support, which were delivered by the Community Engagement Team (CET) alongside local partners and community groups.

- 4.3. In **Blantyre**, the community were recently supported by Coalfields Regeneration Trust (CRT) to produce a community plan. Work with the community here will be to produce measurable actions from this plan, engage broader sections of the community with its delivery, and link in appropriate services who could be delivery partners. A series of community meetings around the themes of the Town Centre and Greenspace had been planned by the stakeholders, however, these had to be postponed. Over the next few months, online and other methods will be used to generate new interest in the plan and the priorities, and to re-engage with stakeholder to progress these.

**Fairhill** Neighbourhood plan extended its consultation phase (Fairhill Fairsay) over a four month period, with the stakeholders group approving the proposed content in early March 2020, just prior to lockdown. Overall, the work has been a significant success with 595 (48.45%) households engaging in the process. The consultation provided a clear indication of the priority themes within the area with the top 3

themes being physical environment improvements; more leisure, recreation and social opportunities, and greater community safety.

The stakeholders group has continued to grow and develop with local residents actively participating in the group and taking control of the direction of the plan and the administering of small grants monies for the area through the Renewable Energy Fund (REF) micro grants programmes. The plan has now undergone a soft launch with copies delivered to every household during December 2020 and is ready to be moved forward in partnership with the whole area. A copy is attached as Appendix 1.

- 4.4 In addition, the community of **Larkhall** has worked to produce a plan which covers the entire town as well as some of the small villages close by. This plan has been produced using a robust methodology and showcases the priorities of the community as well as complimenting the new Town Centre Plan for the town. The plan launch was again delayed due to the pandemic but took place online on Thursday 3 December 2020. A copy of this is attached as Appendix 2.

## **5. Existing Neighbourhood Planning Areas - Progress to Date**

- 5.1. Three neighbourhood plans were produced for publication in January 2019, covering phase 1 communities within 5 out of the 9 wards which had been identified as experiencing the greatest inequality of outcomes within South Lanarkshire, detailed in the table below. Responsibility for leading on this work sat within the Tackling Poverty Team from the Council.

| <b>Neighbourhood Planning Wards</b>                                      | <b>Communities Involved</b>    |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Ward 11 – Rutherglen South<br>Ward 13 – Cambuslang West                  | Springhall and Whitlawburn     |
| Ward 17 – Hamilton North and East<br>Ward 18 – Hamilton West and Earnock | Hillhouse, Udston and Burnbank |
| Ward 20 - Larkhall   | Strutherhill and Birkenshaw    |

- 5.2. In August 2019, the Community Participation and Empowerment Team aligned with the existing Tackling Poverty, Voluntary Sector and Community Planning Teams to create an overall Community Engagement Team. Working more closely together in this way allowed the team to further strengthen and articulate the links between Neighbourhood Planning and Community Planning, and increased the resource which the Council has made available to help implement the neighbourhood planning approach.
- 5.3. Progress has been made on delivering actions against the top priorities of all three phase 1 neighbourhood planning areas. Details of these have been included in the three annual reports which have been produced to feed back to the local communities. A copy of the annual reports for Hillhouse, Udston and Burnbank and for Strutherhill and Birkenshaw are included as Appendices 3 and 4.
- 5.4. Key progress has been the increase in the number of local people participating in neighbourhood planning processes, in particular participatory budgeting approaches and this again is outlined within the annual report.

## **6. Impact of COVID-19 and Next Steps**

- 6.1. The pandemic and the corresponding lockdown has meant that the work of the Community Engagement Team was redirected towards supporting the capacity of community and third sector partnerships and linking in those needing assistance from the wellbeing help line with the help available in their community. In addition, stakeholder groups within communities were not meeting during the initial lockdown period, and most had already paused their meetings prior to this.
- 6.2. The team and their partners are maintaining regular contact with the stakeholders and have begun to arrange stakeholder meetings and discuss how priorities can be progressed with communities in the current circumstances. The Fairhill plan has had a soft launch and the team are using new and innovative ways to engage with people around progressing the community priorities. Online sessions are being held to update the community on progress around the priorities in the existing plans and the services which are available to support them at present. The team will continue to work with each individual community to find appropriate ways to progress the plans further.
- 6.3. In addition, this work includes ensuring that the priorities are current and if any changes are required to reflect the impact of the pandemic. Small amounts of funding are allocated to each neighbourhood planning area from an existing budget, and this will be used to progress local work through a participatory budgeting approach in each area.
- 6.4. Work is also being carried out with the partners delivering services locally to continue to identify their contribution to the communities' priorities and how this will impact upon the improvement of outcomes for those living in the neighbourhood planning areas. As community engagement and participation strengthens within neighbourhoods, there is evidence of communities becoming more aware and more confident to address issues such as health and employment, and this presents both a challenge and an opportunity to partners to work alongside people to develop new and innovative approaches to these.
- 6.5. As part of this ongoing work, yearly delivery plans focusing on improving local outcomes will include actions from delivery partners as to their contribution towards outcomes as well as actions from communities as to how they are progressing their own solutions with appropriate support. Monitoring of these delivery plans will be carried out by the local stakeholder group who will provide scrutiny of actions carried out and their impact, and challenge as to where these should be further developed.
- 6.6. Further neighbourhood planning processes have begun this year in Whitehill, Low Waters and Eddlewood. These areas have also been identified through the process described in 3.3. and 3.4. of this paper.
- 6.6. While these neighbourhood plans are being created in response to a statutory requirement, the ambition in South Lanarkshire is that the process of neighbourhood planning is extended beyond the identified areas and that it is possible for all communities to produce their own plans of local priorities and their planned responses to these.
- 6.7. As the number of neighbourhood plans increases, locality priorities will begin to be developed by identifying key shared priorities across localities. This provides the opportunity for wider resources to support actions over localities with a view to improving outcomes and to work in partnership at a locality level across South Lanarkshire. This again offers a further chance for challenge and scrutiny between partners and communities.

## **7. Employee Implications**

7.1. There are no employee implications associated with this report.

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

## **9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

9.1. There are no implications for climate change, sustainability or the environment in terms of the information contained in this report.

## **10. Other Implications**

10.1. There are no risk issues associated with the content of this report.

## **11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

11.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to existing policy, function or strategy and therefore no impact assessment is required. Consultation on neighbourhood plans are carried out on an ongoing basis with each community involved in the process.

**Paul Manning**

**Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)**

7 January 2021

## **Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives**

- ◆ Work with communities to promote high quality and thriving and sustainable communities
- ◆ Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration

## **Previous References**

- ◆ None

## **List of Background Papers**

- ◆ None

## **Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Rhonda Leith, Community Engagement Manager

Ext: 5783 (Tel: 01698 455783)

Email: [rhonda.leith@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:rhonda.leith@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

**Appendix 1: Fairhill Plan**

**Appendix 2: Larkhall Plan**

**Appendix 3: Hillhouse, Udston and Burnbank Annual Report**

**Appendix 4: Strutherhill and Birkenshaw Annual Report**