

HAMILTON AREA COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Confero and in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton on 8 February 2023

Chair:

Councillor Allan Falconer

Councillors Present:

Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Ross Clark, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Colin Dewar, Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Celine Handibode, Councillor Cal Johnston-Dempsey, Councillor Gavin Keatt, Councillor Kenny McCreary, Councillor Lesley McDonald, Councillor Davie McLachlan, Councillor Mo Razzaq (Depute), Councillor Bert Thomson, Councillor Helen Toner

Councillors' Apologies:

Councillor Graeme Horne, Councillor Martin Hose, Councillor Mark McGeever, Councillor Richard Nelson, Councillor John Ross

Attending:

Community and Enterprise Resources

S Clark, Planning Team Leader (East Area); I Ross, Project Manager; D Russell, Team Leader

Education Resources

J Wallace, Quality Improvement Manager

Finance and Corporate Resources

M Gordon, Administration Assistant; J McCafferty, Development Officer; E-A McGonigle, Administration Officer; K McLeod, Administration Assistant; I Mulholland, Community Asset Transfer Officer

Housing and Technical Resources

C Frew, Strategy Co-ordinator

1 Declaration of Interests

The following interest was declared:-

Councillor(s)	Item(s)	Nature of Interest(s)
McDonald	Warm Welcome Initiative:- ♦ The Machan Trust, Larkhall	Chair of Group

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Hamilton Area Committee held on 9 November 2022 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Committee decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3 Community Asset Transfer Update

A report dated 10 January 2023 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing an update on the current work related to Community Asset Transfer (CAT).

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 had created several legal obligations aimed at improving the involvement of community members in the design, implementation and delivery of services and activities that impacted them and their fellow residents, one of which had been the introduction of CAT.

CAT enabled suitably constituted local community organisations to formally apply to lease, purchase or implement managed arrangements for any land or property owned by relevant public bodies where it could be evidenced that the proposed community benefit was better than the current usage.

The legislation had increasingly impacted upon the work of the authority and a dedicated Community Asset Transfer Officer had been employed from March 2022 on a 2-year contract. The Officer's role was to improve the authority's internal processes, redesign community information (website, documentation and marketing) to improve uptake, support organisations considering the process and to act as a conduit for the flow of information within the Council and externally.

Detailed information was provided on the following:-

- ◆ redesign of internal processes including:-
 - ◆ upgrading the existing website to a more user friendly and informative platform
 - ◆ production of a YouTube animation
- ◆ promotion of CAT processes internally via the production of a Learn On Line training package for staff and elected members
- ◆ external promotion:-
 - ◆ attendance at a wide number of third sector events to promote opportunities that existed using the legislation
 - ◆ developing strong links with key local and national agencies such as Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire (VASLAN)
 - ◆ hosting an information event in conjunction with South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture (SLLC) and the Scottish Football Association (SFA)

Progress to date had included contact from 75 organisation South Lanarkshire wide, 19 of which were from the Hamilton area and of those enquiries:-

- ◆ 30 organisations were in dialogue with the CAT officer, 5 of which were from the Hamilton area
- ◆ 2 applications had been submitted and approved and 5 more were anticipated by the end of the year. One of those applications was from the Hamilton area

A presentation was given by the CAT Officer which provided further information on:-

- ◆ the legislation
- ◆ criteria for community organisations
- ◆ the internal process
- ◆ best value
- ◆ timescales
- ◆ the role of the CAT Officer
- ◆ engagement with communities

The CAT Officer responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report and undertook to circulate the presentation to all councillors for information.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

Councillors Johnson-Dempsey and McLachlan entered the meeting during consideration of the above item of business

4 Participatory Budgeting – Education Resources - Pupil Equity Funding

A report dated 24 January 2023 by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was submitted on Participatory Budgeting (PB) in relation to Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

Schools within the Hamilton area had allocated £196,007.25 of their £3,656,910 PEF allocation for PB. A breakdown of the allocation for each learning community was provided in Appendix 1 of the report. Appendix 2 of the report summarised the percentage of PEF which schools had allocated for PB. Appendix 3 outlined the outcome of the vote in relation to category of spend for each school. Appendix 4 indicated the distribution in terms of categories of spend across the Hamilton area, while Appendix 5 outlined the distribution of votes by stakeholders across the Hamilton area.

Schools were now progressing with their spend to ensure the minimum 5% was spent in full by the end of March 2023.

Education Resources would provide Area Committees with:-

- ◆ a summary report of each school's PB outcome
- ◆ case studies of school activity, which had particular impact/success
- ◆ a detailed financial report of how PEF money allocated for PB had been spent

Education Resources would support schools and monitor and track the impact of this activity. Findings would inform any future PB activity within the Resource.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 9 November 2022 (Paragraph 5)]

5 Participatory Budgeting – Housing and Technical Resources - Estate Improvement Budget

A report dated 24 January 2023 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on Participatory Budgeting (PB) in relation to the Estate Improvement Budget.

The Estate Improvement Budget totalled £40,000 and was split across the 4 housing divisions of South Lanarkshire. Each local housing management team could direct the funding towards projects or improvements highlighted as a priority by customers of Housing and Property Services. Although not a significant value, the budget was ideally suited for conversion to a PB approach and often funded a number of smaller projects that had been highlighted as a priority by customers. Examples of recent exercises included customer engagement on options for the type and design of new fencing and lighting.

To date, one project had been undertaken within the Hamilton area which had involved improvements made to bin areas in the industrial estate area of Blantyre and this had followed feedback from tenants. A total of £3,109.20 from the Estate Improvement Budget had been spent in the Hamilton area during 2022/2023, removing bin chutes and installing the new bins.

In addition, a small project had taken place to improve lighting at Annbank Street in Larkhall and this had been delivered through the Planned Maintenance Budget due to safety and security issues that had been highlighted by tenants. Officers had engaged with local people on this project and the total cost from the Planned Maintenance Budget was £3,865.71.

Officers from Housing and Technical Resources would continue to take forward opportunities within the Hamilton area to ensure tenants and other customers had the opportunity to determine the outcome of budgets within the Environmental Programme and Community Safety Partnership Commissioning Budget. Further updates would be provided to the Committee at a future meeting.

There followed a full discussion during which members:-

- ◆ welcomed the work in Larkhall and Blantyre and acknowledged the positive community engagement that had taken place
- ◆ asked for information on the current process of community engagement in relation to PB in Bothwell and Uddingston (Ward 16)
- ◆ highlighted that the dates/times for the Local Housing Forum in Blantyre, which also included Bothwell and Uddingston, were unsuitable for elected members due to prior diary commitments. It was also commented on that those meetings had poor attendance from Ward 16 due to the location

The Strategy Co-ordinator, having responded to members' questions, undertook to feedback to the Area Offices those concerns from members and would ask that alternative dates be considered for the Local Housing Forums that would allow elected members to attend.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 16 February 2022 (Paragraph 4)]

Councillor Thomson left the meeting after consideration of the above item of business

6 Update on Town Centres

A report dated 24 January 2023 by the Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted providing an update on the activity currently being undertaken in town centres across the Hamilton area.

The nature of town centres across the UK was in a transitional stage. The range of issues involved in the challenges town centres were facing were broad and complex. Factors such as the economic downturn, internet shopping, the growth of out of town shopping malls, changes in retailers' business models and consumer expectations had resulted in a decline in footfall.

Supporting town centres remained a Council priority and officers continued to work in partnership with groups and organisations in each town to achieve common goals. Town centres supported and contributed to people across communities for essential services, shopping or enjoying leisure time. Around 70% of businesses and jobs in the economy were located in town centres and those were with principal location for leisure and hospitality.

Across the 10 towns defined in the South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan (LDP), there was an active and ongoing engagement with the most appropriate groups in the town. Those varied from town to town and included Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Development Trusts, Community Councils and private property owners.

Town Centre strategies and action plans had been prepared and approved for Hamilton, Cambuslang, Larkhall and Blantyre, with work now underway in Rutherglen. Similar plans were being progressed by the communities in Lanark and Carluke along with the master planning work being conducted by the owners of East Kilbride. Those strategies and action plans were closely aligned with the Scottish Government's approach to town centres which was captured in 'A New Future for Scotland's Town Centres' report and action plan.

Officers in Economic Development had worked with key stakeholders across South Lanarkshire towns and commissioned the following 2 key pieces of work to set the direction of the Council's work around town centres going forward which would inform and align with existing and emerging funding opportunities:-

- ◆ Town Centre Visioning
- ◆ transition to net zero

Detailed information was provided on town centre activity in Hamilton, Blantyre and Larkhall. Each of those town centres had a town centre strategy and action plan which had been approved by the Community and Enterprise Resources Committee. The town centre strategy and action plan for Hamilton had been in place since October 2018 and a review and update of the plan had commenced. A consultative draft of the revised strategy and action plan for Hamilton would be presented to the Community and Enterprise Resources Committee in early summer 2023.

There was significant and ongoing activity across the town centres in the Hamilton area and officers in Enterprise and Sustainable Development were keen to explore further opportunities with groups across communities.

There followed a full and frank discussion during which members raised concerns regarding:-

- ◆ the state of decline of Hamilton town centre, in particular the area from the old Bairds building to the Regent Shopping Centre
- ◆ the fact that the updated town centre strategy and action plan for Hamilton would need to reflect the extent of the decline of the town centre
- ◆ the high business rent and rates in Hamilton which, although outwith the Council's control, impacted on businesses being able to operate in the town centre
- ◆ the need for more housing, including social housing, as well as microbusinesses to help regenerate Hamilton town centre and increase footfall
- ◆ the parking issues being experienced in Larkhall and Blantyre

The Project Manager responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report and undertook to update the Committee later in the year on the concerns raised specifically in relation to timescales for Wetherspoons progressing work on the Bairds building as well as the future plans for the Regent Shopping Centre.

The Committee decided:

- (1) that the report be noted; and
- (2) that a report detailing the progress made by Wetherspoons on progressing plans for the vacant Bairds building, and an update on future plans for the Regent Shopping Centre in Hamilton, be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee decided: that the report be noted.

7 Application P/22/1613 for Change of Use from House to Short-Term Lets/ Serviced Accommodation at 26 Shawburn Street, Hamilton

A report dated 23 January 2023 by the Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was submitted on planning application P/22/1613 by S Evans for the change of use from dwellinghouse to short-term lets/serviced accommodation at 26 Shawburn Street, Hamilton.

There followed a discussion on the application during which the Planning Team Leader (East Area) responded to members' questions on aspects of the report. Councillor Falconer, seconded by Councillor Razzaq, moved that the application be granted subject to the conditions specified in the Executive Director's report. Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Councillor Keatt, moved as an amendment that the application be refused on the grounds of insufficient parking and congestion on Shawburn Street, Hamilton. On a vote being taken using the electronic voting system, 9 members voted for the motion, 3 for the amendment and one member abstained. The motion was, therefore, declared carried.

The Committee decided: that planning application P/22/1613 by S Evans for the change of use from dwellinghouse to short-term lets/serviced accommodation at 26 Shawburn Street, Hamilton be granted subject to the conditions specified in the Executive Director's report.

8 Community Grant Applications/Warm Welcome Initiative

A report dated 24 January 2023 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on:-

- ◆ applications for community grant
- ◆ grants awarded to community and voluntary groups/organisations in the Hamilton Area Committee area in response to the Warm Welcome Initiative

In view of the fact that this was the last meeting of the Committee in the current financial year and to allow best use to be made of the remaining 2022/2023 community grant budget, it was proposed that the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources), in consultation with the Chair, be authorised to approve any further community grant applications meeting the relevant criteria in the period to 31 March 2023.

At its meeting on 28 September 2022, the Council agreed that the Chief Executive would bring a package of cost of living supports for agreement, in consultation with Group Leaders, which was approved in terms of Standing Order No 37(c) and noted by the Executive Committee on 30 November 2022. This package included support for a Warm Welcome Initiative.

Working in conjunction with South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture and community and voluntary groups/organisations, the Warm Welcome Initiative was a network of warm spaces in community settings and public buildings where members of the public were welcomed and could participate in activities and access advice and support.

To support the Initiative, a small grants scheme had been created offering grants to a maximum of £1,000 to cover extra costs incurred by offering a Warm Welcome. A total of £40,000 had been identified for the Initiative and the monies had been apportioned equally between the 4 Area Committees.

As funds were required immediately, it had been agreed that applications would be considered by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources), in consultation with the relevant Area Committee Chair or Depute, and submitted to the Area Committee for noting.

Councillor Falconer, seconded by Councillor Razzaq, moved that the recommendations for community grants (a) to (h), as detailed at section 2.1 of the report, be approved. Councillor Donnelly, seconded by Councillor Keatt, moved as an amendment that the full eligible amounts for community grants (a) to (h) be approved. On a vote being taken using the electronic voting system, 6 members voted for the motion and 7 for the amendment which was declared carried.

The Committee decided:

(1) that community grants be awarded as follows:-

- (a) Applicant: Dalsersf Village Garden Club, Larkhall (*HA/20/22*)
Purpose of Grant: Environmental Project
Amount Awarded: £380
- (b) Applicant: Larkhall Old Age Pensioners' Association Town Branch (*HA/22/22*)
Purpose of Grant: Outing
Amount Awarded: £300
- (c) Applicant: REACH Lanarkshire Autism SCIO, Hamilton (*HA/27/22*)
Purpose of Grant: Equipment, outing and entrance fees
Amount Awarded: £800
- (d) Applicant: Cadzow Community Corps, Hamilton (*HA/28/22*)
Purpose of Grant: Equipment and materials
Amount Awarded: £625
- (e) Applicant: Trinity Church Guild, Larkhall (*HA/30/22*)
Purpose of Grant: Outing
Amount Awarded: £400
- (f) Applicant: Hamilton Stitchers (*HA/31/22*)
Purpose of Grant: Equipment
Amount Awarded: £986
- (g) Applicant: National Autistic Society (NAS) South Lanarkshire, Hamilton (*HA/33/22*)
Purpose of Grant: Materials
Amount Awarded: £210
- (h) Applicant: Hamilton Youth Football Club (*HA/34/22*)
Purpose of Grant: Start-up costs - Equipment
Amount Awarded: £360

(2) that, to ensure that the remaining 2022/2023 community grant budget was utilised as fully as possible, the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources), in consultation with the Chair, be authorised to approve community grant applications in the period to 31 March 2023, subject to the applications meeting the Council's criteria for receipt of funding;

(3) that details of those applications approved be reported to the next meeting of the Area Committee for noting; and

(4) that the award of 6 grants, totalling £5,500, to the following community and voluntary groups/organisations in the Hamilton Area in response to the Warm Welcome Initiative be noted:-

- (a) Applicant: Hamilton Old Parish Church
Amount Awarded: £1,000
- (b) Applicant: The Machan Trust, Larkhall
Amount Awarded: £1,000

Councillor McDonald, having declared an interest in the above application, withdrew from the meeting during its consideration

- (c) Applicant: St Andrew's Parish Church, Blantyre
Amount Awarded: £1,000
- (d) Applicant: Meikle Earnock Community Council, Hamilton
Amount Awarded: £1,000
- (e) Applicant: Supporting Our Community, Hamilton
Amount Awarded: £1,000
- (f) Applicant: Hamilton Baptist Church
Amount Awarded: £500

[Reference: Minutes of 9 November 2022 (Paragraph 6), Minutes of South Lanarkshire Council of 28 September 2022 (Paragraph 7) and Minutes of the Executive Committee of 30 November 2022 (Paragraph 11)]

9 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.