

MINUTE of MEETING of the DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST Lothian COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST Lothian CIVIC CENTRE, on 17 AUGUST 2015.

Present – Councillors Cathy Muldoon (Chair), Tony Boyle, Harry Cartmill, Alexander Davidson, Robert De Bold and Greg McCarra

In Attendance – Robin Lever (Senior People's Forum Representative)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- i. Agenda Item 6 (Quarterly Performance Report) – Councillor C Muldoon declared a non-financial interest in that she was a council appointed member of SESPlan and SESTran; and
- ii. Agenda Item 6 (Quarterly Performance Report) – Councillor T Boyle declared a non-financial interest in that he was a council appointed member of SESPlan and SESTran.

2. MINUTES :-

- a) The Panel confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 4 June 2015; and
- b) The Panel confirmed the Minute of its special meeting held on 22 June 2015.

Both Minutes were thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. CONTINUATION OF DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PUBLIC ART

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) advising of the proposed continuation of the reduced developer contributions for public art.

West Lothian Council had adopted the West Lothian Local Plan in January 2009. The local plan was prepared at a time of strong economic growth but as a consequence of the recession the strength of the national and local economy had declined significantly. Therefore to try and stimulate the local economy particularly the construction sector the council approved its Housing Recovery Action Plan in February 2013 and which included a commitment to consider if there was scope to reduce further the developer contributions for housing developments.

As a response to this the Development and Transport Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel considered proposed changes to developer contributions at its meeting on 14 November 2013 noting that consultation would be carried out on the matter. The outcome was reported to Council Executive in April 2014 where it was agreed to reduce rates for public art

contributions along with the removal of the contribution for affordable housing providers. The revised position was put in place until the end of March 2015. Details of the revised rates were summarised in the report.

As economic conditions remained difficult it was proposed to continue with the reduced developer contributions for public art until March 2018 when they would be reviewed again. This proposal was being supported by the council's Community Arts Service but would be subject to wider consultation which would then be reported to the Council Executive in due course.

Additionally given the high priority given by the council to the delivery of affordable housing it was also being recommended that all affordable housing land should continue to be exempt from public art contributions. Also for the avoidance of doubt where a development comprised mainstream private housing and affordable housing, only the mainstream private housing element would attract public art contributions.

The report concluded that the proposed changes would improve development viability and would continue to send out the message that West Lothian was open for business.

Therefore it was recommended that the Panel :-

- i. Note that the temporary changes previously agreed by Council Executive regarding developer contributions for public art came to an end on 31 March 2015;
- ii. Note that public consultation would be carried out on the proposed changes with the outcome reported to Council Executive;
- iii. Note, that subject to public consultation, it was proposed that the current reduced public art contributions were continued until 31 March 2018, when they would be reviewed again; and
- iv. Consider and comment on the proposed changes to the Supplementary Planning Guidance

Decision

1. Noted the contents of the report;
2. Agreed that the report be forwarded to the next appropriate meeting of the Council Executive with the recommendation that it be approved; and
3. Agreed that until such time the revised policy was approved by Council Executive then the PDSP be provided with details of any house builders affected by the policy for the period between the end of March 2015 and until it was approved.

4. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning and Economic Development providing an overview of performance for the first quarter of 2015-16.

The report advised that the council's performance management system, Covalent had two basic functions. Covalent used a simple traffic light system to show if progress was on target, in danger of falling behind target or below target. Covalent also measured progress on actions or initiatives with a definite start and finish.

Appendix 1 to the report showed all actions and initiatives that supported the responsibilities of the D&T PDSP which provided the most up-to-date officers' notes on progress against all actions and initiatives.

Appendix 2 showed all performance indications that supported the responsibilities of D&T PDSP which provided the most up-to-date officers' notes on progress against all performance indicators.

Appendix 3 was an exception report which provided the most up-to-date officers' notes on progress.

The Head of Planning and Economic Development then continued to provide details of those indicators that were red; these being the annual percentage of all local and other applications (excluding householder applications) determined within 2 months and the quarterly percentage of all major applications determined within 4 months.

Information was also contained within the report with regards to those indicators showing as amber; this being the quarterly percentage of all local planning and other applications (excluding householder applications) determined within 2 months.

It was recommended that the Panel :-

1. Note the terms of the report;
2. Note in particular that the majority of the performance indicators were green with only two flagging as red, details of which were summarised in the report; and
3. Consider any additional actions which may address any areas of concern.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

5. WORKPLAN

The Panel considered a list of items that would form the basis of the Panel's work over the coming months.

Decision

Noted the contents of the workplan.