

MINUTE of MEETING of the HOUSING SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 20 OCTOBER 2022.

Present – Councillors George Paul (Chair), Alison Adamson, Robert De Bold, Jim Dickson, Craig Meek (substituting for Councillor Andrew McGuire), Cathy Muldoon and Tony Pearson

Apologies – Councillor Andrew McGuire

In attendance

Julie Whitelaw – Lead Officer, Head of Housing, Customer & Building Services, West Lothian Council

Graeme Struthers – Depute Chief Executive, West Lothian Council

Marjory Mackie – Housing Strategy Manager, West Lothian Council

Sarah Kelly – Customer Service Manager(Housing Needs), West Lothian Council

Kirsty Weir – Service Development Officer, West Lothian Council

Alison Smith - Customer Services Manager, West Lothian Council

Jessie Duncan – Tenants' Panel

Donald Stavert – Joint Forum of Community Councils

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair ruled that agenda item 6 (*Chartered Institute of Housing – Scottish Housing Awards 2022*) would be withdrawn from the agenda as it was being considered elsewhere in the council.

3 MINUTES

The panel approved the minutes of its meeting held on 16 August 2022 as a correct record.

4 PROPERTY TURNOVER APRIL TO JUNE 2022

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services informing members of property turnover for Quarter 1 of 2022/23 (1 April to 30 June 2022).

It was recommended that the panel note the current levels of activity relating to property turnover for Quarter 1 of 2022/23 and in particular note:

1. The increase in property lets for Quarter 1 2022/23 compared to the same period the previous year;

2. That of the 49 communities in West Lothian, 15 had had no properties available for let throughout Quarter 1 of 2021/22; and
3. That 57% of lets throughout the quarter had been allocated to people who were homeless.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5 2021/22 ANNUAL RETURN ON THE CHARTER

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services advising members of the service's performance against the Annual Return on the Charter and of the intent to seek approval of Council Executive of the Annual Assurance Statement following the recent submission of the ARC to the Scottish Housing Regulator on 31 May 2022.

It was recommended that the panel note the content of the 2021/22 Annual Return on the Charter, the commentary and improvement actions identified during our data verification and benchmarking. Also to note the service intention to proceed to the Council Executive for approval/signature to our Annual Assurance Statement for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator by 31 October.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report.
2. To agree that the report be presented to a future meeting of Council Executive for approval.

6 PERFORMANCE REPORTING

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services inviting members to note the current performance on Housing, Customer and Building Services key performance indicators and determine if further action or enquiry was necessary.

It was recommended that the panel note the current performance on Housing, Customer and Building Services key performance indicators and determine if further action or enquiry was necessary.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7 HOUSING RENT CONSULTATION 2023/24 TO 2027/28

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services advising members of the proposed future rent charge consultation process for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28 and the range of tenancy support services and potential capital investment that could be funded by each rent increase option.

It was recommended that the panel note and consider the following recommendations which were intended to be submitted to Council Executive for approval:

1. The intention to consult with tenants and persons on the Common Housing Register on the rent strategy options for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28;
2. The range of tenancy support services and potential capital investment required to meet legislative, compliance and quality standards on existing housing stock and surrounding estates;
3. The rent charge increase options which were proposed to be set out in the consultation;
4. The scale of capital investment that could be funded by each of the rent charge increase options; and;
5. The proposed consultation plan and indicative timeline for approval of the rent strategy, Housing Revenue Account budget and Housing Capital Investment Programme for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report.
2. To agree that the report be presented to a future meeting of Council Executive for approval.

8 WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.