

MINUTE of MEETING of the HOUSING SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 15 NOVEMBER 2022.

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

Apologies – Jessie Duncan, Tenants' Panel

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

Pippa Plevin – Joint Forum of West Lothian Community Councils

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 9 – West Lothian Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28 –

Councillor McGuire declared an interest as he was employed by the Wheatley Group, referred to in the paper as Dunedin Canmore and now known as Wheatley Homes East. He withdrew from the meeting during discussion of the item.

Councillor Meek declared a connection as he was employed by Bield Housing and Care who were noted in the paper. The connection would not preclude him from taking part.

2. MINUTE

The panel approved the minutes of its meeting held on 20 October 2022 as a correct record. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. TENANT AND CUSTOMER PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2022-2027

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services presenting a Tenant and Customer Participation Strategy for the period 2022-27.

It was recommended that the panel notes and provides comment on the terms of the Tenant and Customer Participation Strategy 2022-2027.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4. PRIVATE LANDLORD REGISTRATION ENFORCEMENT –
IMPLEMENTATION OF THIRD-PARTY REPORTING TO THE FIRST
TIER TRIBUNAL (HOUSING AND PROPERTY CHAMBER)

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services presenting a proposed enhance enforcement process for raising proceedings at the First Tier Tribunal (Housing and Property Chamber).

It was recommended that the panel consider and provide comments on the enhance enforcement process proposals.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. INTRODUCTION OF A PRIVATE LANDLORD ACCREDITATION
SCHEME

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services setting out a draft Private Landlord Accreditation Scheme which was intended to support an increase in engagement from private sector landlords and to promote landlords who took a responsible approach to letting their properties.

It was recommended that the panel note and provide comment on the draft Private Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

The Service Development Officer would take forward for discussion with landlords the suggestion that Section 3 of the Code of Standard, Management of Tenancies, be expanded to include provision for accreditation being removed when private landlords did not follow due legal process to end tenancies.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. PERFORMANCE REPORTING

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services setting out the current levels of performance for Housing, Customer and Building Services indicators that were the responsibility of the panel.

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. WEST LOTHIAN STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 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 reporting on the main points of West Lothian Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2022/23 to 2027/28.

It was recommended that the panel:

1. Note the terms of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) attached as an appendix to the report;
2. Note that over a 10-year period from 2012-2022, the council and RSL partners delivered the 3000 affordable homes programme with the majority being council houses;
3. Note that the council was planning a future new build programme over the next five years, the scale of which would be dependent on the outcome of the rent consultation and available funding, and that indicative sites for 495 homes had been identified and were included in the SHIP;
4. Note that the level of grant funding for affordable housing delivery for the period 2022-2027 had increased from previous years and that in 2021/22 West Lothian received additional grant funding of more than £6.776 million for the affordable homes programme;
5. Note that the SHIP required to be submitted to the More Homes Division of the Scottish Government following consideration by Council Executive on 6 December 2022; and
6. Note that the SHIP would be presented to Council Executive for approval.

Decision

To endorse the terms of the report which would be presented to Council Executive for approval.

8. PROPERTY TURNOVER JULY TO SEPTEMBER 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 2 of 2022/23 (1 July to 30 September 2022).

It was recommended that the panel note the current levels of activity relating to property turnover for Quarter 2 of 2022/23 and in particular note:

1. The increase in property lets for Quarter 2 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 2 of 2022/23; 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.

9. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.