

MINUTE of MEETING of the PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 10 MAY 2023.

Present – Councillors Peter Heggie (Chair), Tony Boyle, Carl John and Maria MacAulay

Absent – Councillor Danny Logue

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTE

The committee approved the minutes of its meeting held on 27 March 2023. The Chair thereafter signed the minute.

3. SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND WLAM OUTCOME REPORT - HOUSING OPERATIONS

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive along with an accompanying presentation which provided an overview of the service assessment from the West Lothian Assessment Model process (2022/25) for Housing Operations. It also provided a summary of recommendations from the officer-led scrutiny panel that had been identified for action and were to be delivered by the service.

Following the presentation members took the opportunity to explore a number of themes raised in the presentation including the digitisation of housing information and alternatives to that; the reasons behind delays with void properties; and the provision of paint packs for new tenants.

With regards to secure tenancy rights a number of areas were explored and it was suggested that there was a lack of information on the matter available to communities. Therefore, it was suggested that information on this subject could not only be included in the FAQ section for online Housing services but also a narrative could be included in the housing reports that were presented to the nine local area committees.

The number of complaints received in 2022/23 was discussed and it was noted that the target for the service was 50 complaints per quarter. However, whilst there had been a slight increase compared to the previous year many of these were attributable to environmental type complaints such as grass cutting and over-hanging trees and hedges. The committee were advised that each month, all complaints were reviewed by an officer-led working group to ascertain where changes and improvements could be made and to engage with other service areas to facilitate any changes.

With regards to the staff survey results particularly employee satisfaction, committee enquired as to whether the figure of 54% was connected to the number of complaints received. Committee was advised that following the completion of the employee survey a focus group was held to further investigate this response rate and it was noted that it was mainly due to learning and development opportunities which management were looking to address and included mitigation measures around stress levels.

The presentation concluded and the Chair took the opportunity to thank the staff for all their efforts.

It was recommended that the Performance Committee :-

1. Note the outcome from the WLAM and Review Panel process
2. Note the recommendations for improvement;
3. Agree any other recommendations that may improve the performance of the service.

Decision

1. To note the content of the report and accompanying presentation
2. To agree that in future Housing Update reports to local area committees would include a section around the matter of Secure Tenancy Rights;
3. To agree the FAQ section on the Housing web pages would also include information on Secure Tenancy Rights.

4. SERVICE PERFORMANCE AND WLAM OUTCOME REPORT - HOUSING NEED

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive along with an accompanying presentation which provided an overview of the service assessment from the West Lothian Assessment Model process (2022/25) for Housing Needs. It also provided a summary of recommendations from the officer-led scrutiny panel that had been identified for action and were to be delivered by the service.

Following the presentation members took the opportunity to explore a number of themes raised in the presentation and included the availability of private lets. It was noted that there were around 100 less private landlords available compared to the previous year, which equated to a loss of around 150 properties. Where possible the council had encouraged any tenants effected to remain in the private let market so it could retain council stock for the most vulnerable tenants.

With regards to purchasing any properties that were once part of private landlords portfolio, officer's explained the various interventions that were

undertaken by the council's Landlord Registration Service with every effort being made to retain the property on the register. If any properties were former council houses and were in good condition then they could also be considered for the Open Market Acquisition Scheme.

Committee continued to seek clarification with regards to the housing needs of Ukrainian families heading to the UK later in the year. Officer's explained that information from both the UK and Scottish Government's was expected in the coming weeks but the usual approach to dispersal was on a pro-rata basis depending on the size of communities. It was also noted that an update on the matter had been presented to Council Executive at its meeting on 9 May 2023.

Alternatives to housing homeless persons in B&B's or hotels were explored by committee suggesting that those with spare rooms in large houses could be utilised. Officer's explained that it was a service that was currently provided but for young people only through the Night Stop Service operated by Rock Trust. It was also noted that Sharing Spaces was a service currently offered by the Council and usually involved two young male persons sharing one house that had been split into two self-contained accommodations with communal sharing space.

It was recommended that the Performance Committee :-

1. Note the outcome from the WLAM and Review Panel process
2. Note the recommendations for improvement;
3. Agree any other recommendations that may improve the performance of the service.

Decision

To note the content of the report.

5. WLAM PROGRAMME 2022/25 - PROGRESS REPORT ON YEAR 1 (2022/23)

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive providing a summary of the progress made in year one (2022/23) of the council's three-year programme of self-assessment activity during the period 2022/23 to 2024/25.

Committee were advised that for the next meeting officer's would update the workplan to reflect the programme of services due to present to committee in 2023/24

Decision

1. To note the content of the report;
2. To agree that the workplan be updated in preparation of the next meeting and would include details of the programme of services

due to present to the Performance Committee in 2023/24

6. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

1. To note the workplan.
2. To agree to update the workplan to reflect those service areas that would report to the Performance Committee in 2023/24.