

MINUTE of MEETING of the SOCIAL POLICY, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 17 MAY 2019.

Present – Councillors Angela Doran (Chair), Alison Adamson (substituting for Councillor Kennedy), George Paul, Sarah King, Dom McGuire and Damian Timson

Apologies – Councillors Charles Kennedy and Dave King

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The panel approved the minute of its meeting held on 22 March 2019 as a correct record. The Chair thereafter signed the minute.

3. WEST LOTHIAN'S WHOLE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy and a presentation by the Senior Manager, Young People and Public Protection providing an overview of the Whole Family Support Service.

The Whole Family Support Service had secured a Big Lottery award to support 70–100 families per year between April 2019 and March 2022. The service aimed to support families with multiple and complex needs with a child under 16 through the provision of whole family key worker support. The key workers worked directly with families to rebuild family relationships, maintain positive routines for children, ensure adequate school attendance, provide positive behaviour management strategies, improve conditions in the home and reduce antisocial behaviour.

The presentation, delivered by Family Support Worker, detailed referral criteria as well as the service's approach to family interventions. The Whole Family Support Service team consisted of eight members and collaborated with other services and organisations such as Children 1st to deliver its outcomes. The service currently aimed to improve family relationships, coping skills and resilience and to facilitate successful learning and community engagement for children and young people. Figures shown indicated that the service had been successful in the delivery of its key outcomes.

In response to a suggestion for dedicated staff for children, officers reiterated the benefits of the whole family approach. Reasons for the considerable reduction in family violence were then discussed, which included effective support and safety plans and good relationships between families and support workers. It was also clarified that children

received dedicated representation in court situations. Finally, referral sources were discussed and it was noted that referrals to the service could come from anyone and that there had even been cases of self-referral.

It was recommended that the panel note the outcomes achieved by the Whole Family Support Service.

Decision

To note the contents of the report and presentation.

4. SOCIAL POLICY MANAGEMENT PLAN 2019-2020

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy informing the panel of the contents of the Social Policy Management Plan 2019–2020.

The plan set out how the service would drive performance and would be utilised by the management team and stakeholders to assess and gauge performance and improvement. The measures, targets and actions of the plan would be available for management monitoring and reporting on the corporate performance management system.

The plan was aligned with the Corporate Plan 2018/23, fulfilled a number of planning and improvement requirements and set out how the service would use its resources to deliver positive outcomes for West Lothian. Key activities were identified for the service's three core areas: Community Care, Children and Families and Criminal and Youth Justice Service. The plan also set out the process and timescales for its development and publication and included a performance scorecard. The full plan was attached to the report as Appendix 1.

During discussion, it was noted that the plan was aligned with corporate priorities and officers strived to have a clear view of relevant policies in place and ensure that actions set out in the plan would be deliverable in coming years. Performance monitoring would be ongoing and actions would reflect any significant changes in the social policy landscape to ensure the plan continued to be effective. Officers were confident that the targets set in the plan would be met.

It was recommended that the panel note the details of the Social Policy Management Plan 2019–2020.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

5. SOCIAL POLICY CONTRACT ACTIVITY UPDATE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy providing an update on contracting activity for

the provision of care and support services for the period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Appendix 1 of the report detailed Social Policy contracts which had either been awarded or amended under the guidance of the Social Policy Contracts Advisory Group. The report also indicated contract performance, noting that four providers had attracted a high risk score and twelve providers had attracted a medium risk score. Those providers would require more intensive monitoring.

It was recommended that the panel:

1. note the contracting activity for the provision of care and support services for the period 1 October 2018 to 3 March 2019; and
2. recognise the ongoing development of clear contractual agreements between the council and providers of care and support services.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

6. MIDDLETON HALL CARE HOME - REMOVAL OF ENHANCEMENT

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Social Policy advising members of the removal of the enhanced fee element of the National Care Home contract fee to one private provider following inspection by the Care Inspectorate.

The enhanced quality fee had been implemented in order to create additional incentives to improve the quality of care in Older People Care Homes. The Care Inspectorate had awarded Middleton Hall Care Home grade 3 to Key Question 1 and grade 4 to Key Questions 2–5 of the new Quality Framework, which meant that the care home was no longer eligible for the enhanced quality award available for the best performing Care Homes. The Care Inspectorate findings were attached to the report as an appendix.

During discussion, it was noted that if care homes did not agree with the Care Inspectorate findings, they had 28 days to supply any additional evidence to support their case.

It was recommended that the panel note the removal of the enhanced fee element of the National Care Home Contract fee to Middleton Hall Care Home.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

7. SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE, S72 HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2006

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by

the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services and the Head of Social Policy providing an update on the council's refreshed scheme of assistance or section 72 statement under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006.

Services had collaborated to refresh the scheme to reflect current council policy and practice and align with the Local Housing Strategy (2017–2022) and Housing Capital Investment Programme 2019/20–2022/23, and Eligibility and Contributions Policies approved by Council on 11 September 2018. The draft scheme of assistance was attached to the report as Appendix 1, while Appendix 2 showed the Integrated Impact Assessment of the scheme.

The refreshed Scheme of Assistance provided information about the services and support available from the council to disabled persons in private sector homes as well as practical information for private homeowners about the types of support they could expect to receive from the council. The scheme supported continued repairs and works to mixed tenure estates. A list of changes to the scheme of assistance was provided as well as a timeline for progressing publication.

The council's approach to adaptation requests was then discussed, and officers indicated that Social Policy officers were working closely with Housing officers to ensure appropriate solutions were adopted in each case.

It was recommended that the panel:

1. note the proposed changes to the scheme of assistance as outlined in the report.
2. note that following consideration of the proposal at the Services for the Communities and social Policy Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels a report would be presented to Council Executive to approve the scheme of assistance for publication.
3. note that amendments included reference to Eligibility and Contributions Policies approved by the council on 11 September 2018 and clarity around the types of adaptations which were grant funded by the council.
4. note that the revised Scheme of Assistance superseded the Mixed Tenure Estates Report approved by Council on 13 October 2015.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To agree that a report would be presented to Council Executive to approve the scheme of assistance for publication.

8. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.