

MINUTE of MEETING of the SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 10 DECEMBER 2019.

Present – Councillors George Paul (Chair), Andrew McGuire, Alison Adamson, Frank Anderson, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, John McGinty

Apologies – Councillor Peter Heggie

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 12 – New Build Temporary Accommodation Provision in West Lothian – Councillor Frank Anderson declared an interest in this item of business in that he was Chair of the Open Door Accommodation Project.

Agenda Item 15 – Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) Update – Councillor Frank Anderson declared an interest in this item of business in that he was Chair of the Open Door Accommodation Project.

Agenda Item 17 – Deans South Proposed Land Assembly Arrangements – Councillor Andrew McGuire declared an interest in this item of business in that he was an Employee of Dunedin Canmore and would leave the meeting during consideration of this item of business.

2. MINUTE

The Panel confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 1 October 2019 as a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE LOCAL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on the Local Performance for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in West Lothian for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019.

The Panel was asked to note the contents of the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

4. SCRUTINY OF POLICE SCOTLAND PERFORMANCE IN WEST LOTHIAN

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

the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on the performance of Police Scotland in West Lothian for the period 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019.

The Panel was asked to note the contents of the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

5. CONTACT ASSESSMENT MODEL

The Panel considered a report and a presentation (copies of which had been circulated) by Chief Inspector Jocelyn O'Connor providing an update on the implementation of the Contact Assessment Model within Police Scotland.

The report requested that the Panel note the contents of the report which would provide understanding and context around changes to service delivery within Police Scotland.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

6. 2019/20 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services providing an update on the financial performance of Services for the Community portfolio for the General Fund Revenue budget.

The report recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the financial performance of the Services for the Community portfolio as at month 6;
2. Notes that the Services for the Community portfolio position at month 6 was part of the overall council budget position reported to Council Executive on 12 November 2019; and
3. Notes any actions required to be taken by Head of Service and budget holders to manage spend within available resources.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

7. SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD PERFORMANCE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an

update on the Safer Neighbourhood performance information from July 2019 to September 2019.

The report recommended that the Panel note the performance information detailed for the Safer Neighbourhood Team

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

8. RENTAL EXCHANGE SCHEME

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services advising that a decision at the Full Council meeting on 22 January 2019 directed Housing Customer and Building Services to prepare a report exploring the possibility of making The Rental Exchange Initiative available to council tenants wishing to participate in order to improve their credit rating. The report also advised of the findings of the work undertaken by the service in considering the possibilities of the scheme.

The report recommended that the Panel note and comment on the findings.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

9. PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing the current levels of performance for Housing, Customer and Building Services.

The report recommended that the Panel note the Housing, Customer and Building Services key performance indicators and determine if further action or enquiry is necessary.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

10. NEW BUILDING TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PROVISION IN WEST LOTHIAN

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated providing an update on the options for new building temporary accommodation provision identified in the West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP).

The report recommended that the Panel:

1. Note the proposals for a 12-person supported accommodation unit for young people;
2. Note that subject to availability of funding, there may be an opportunity to build either 12 or 16 mainstream flats;
3. Note that the preferred site at Deans, Livingston would deliver the full project within the budget of £4 million;
4. Note the proposal to reconfigure Newlands House, Bathgate to four self-contained flats; and
5. Agree that the proposals could be progressed to Council Executive to seek approval.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report
2. Agreed that the report and its recommendations be forwarded to the next appropriate meeting of Council Executive for approval.

11. HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services informing of the proposal for changes to the council's Housing Allocation Policy.

The report asked the Panel to:

1. Note the proposed changes to the Housing Allocation Policy and agree these would now be progressed to Council Executive to seek approval to commence the review and consultation process;
2. Note the proposed consultation timeline;
3. Note the proposal to explore Choice Based Lettings approach;
4. Note the proposal to review the Transfer led approach;
5. Note the alignment with the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) timescales; and
6. Confirm any other required actions.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report
2. Agreed that the report and its recommendations be forwarded to the next appropriate meeting of Council Executive for approval.

12. PROPERTY TURNOVER JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2019

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services informing of the property turnover for the second quarter, July to September 2019/20.

The report recommended that the Panel note the current levels of activity relating to property turnover for the second quarter of 2019/20 and in particular to note:

1. an increase in properly lets compared to the same period last year;
2. of the 47 communities in West Lothian, seven had only one mainstream property to let and 12 had none; and
3. 52% of lets were allocated to people who were homeless.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

13. RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN (RRTP) UPDATE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on progress of the West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) and the implications of recent legislative announcements by the Scottish Government on delivery of the plan.

The report recommended that the Panel:

1. Note the update on progress of the delivery of the West Lothian RRTP;
2. Note the Scottish Government allocation of £302k towards the delivery of the plan in 2019/20 through the Ending Homeless Together (EHT) fund;
3. Note that a report would be prepared and brought back to the panel, on the implications of the extension to the current restrictions in the Unsuitable Accommodate Order 2014 which would come into effect in May 2021; and
4. Note that update reports on the RRTP would be presented to future meetings of the Services for the Community PDSP on a biannual basis.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

14. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on various initiatives to increase the supply of affordable housing in West Lothian.

The report recommended that the Panel note the progress being made on delivering 3,000 affordable homes in West Lothian over the period 2012-2022.

Decision

3. To note the contents of the report
4. Agreed that the report and its recommendations be forwarded to the next appropriate meeting of Council Executive for approval.

15. DEANS SOUTH: PROPOSED LAND ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on the outcome of the recent engagement with all nine remaining private owners in Deans South with respect to the council's financial offer and to make recommendations on the way forward.

The report recommended that the Panel:

1. Notes the position with respect to the redevelopment of the Deans South Phase 2 site, which would provide around 24 new homes for social rent;
2. Notes that there were ten remaining privately owned properties in the core area of Deans South, with the location of the properties shown in Appendix 1;
3. Notes the outcome of the recent engagement carried out with all nine remaining private owners, whereby none of the owners were currently interested in accepting the council's financial offer;
4. Notes the progress with discussions with the Wheatley Housing Group; and
5. Notes the proposed next steps for reporting to committee.

Discussions then took during which it was suggested that the council enter into tripartite negotiations with the Wheatley Group and Springfield Properties, and that the Scottish Government should be asked to provide financial assistance to help to resolve the difficulties.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report

2. Agreed that the report and its recommendations be forwarded to the next appropriate meeting of Council Executive for approval.

16. WORKPLAN

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

Decision

To note the contents of the workplan.