

MINUTE of MEETING of the ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within WEBEX VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 15 SEPTEMBER 2020.

Present – Councillors Tom Conn (Chair), Cathy Muldoon, Alison Adamson, Diane Calder, Andrew McGuire, Tom Kerr substituted for Chris Horne

Apologies – Councillors Chris Horne, George Paul

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 5 – Update on Linlithgow Loch Improvements – Councillor Tom Kerr declared an interest in that he was a trustee of Lady Park Trust and would leave the meeting taking no part in the consideration of this item of business.

Agenda Item 11 - Interim Review of West Lothian Geodiversity – Councillor Alison Adamson declared an interest in this item of business in that she was a council appointed member of Almond Valley Heritage Trust.

Agenda Item 13 – The Shale Trail Across West Lothian – Councillor Alison Adamson declared an interest in this item of business in that she was a council appointed member of Almond Valley Heritage Trust.

2. MINUTES

- a) The Panel confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 11 February 2020 as a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.
- b) The Panel confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 10 March 2020 as a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. UPDATE ON LINLITHGOW LOCH IMPROVEMENTS

The panel considered a joint report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services and the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update on the various improvements proposed for Linlithgow Loch and surrounding areas.

The report recommended that the panel:

1. Not the contents of the report and Appendices 1 and 2; and
2. Offer any comments about further improvements to the Loch and surrounding areas.

Decision

To note the contents of the report and appendices.

4. CYCLING WALKING AND SAFE STREETS - PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS AND FOOTWAY SCHEMES

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing a list of proposed schemes for the provision of pedestrian crossing and footways to deliver cycling, walking and safer streets and sustainable active travel within West Lothian.

The report recommended that the panel note the contents of the report and recommends the following to the Council Executive:

1. Approve the list of schemes detailed in Appendices 1 and 2;
2. Ask officers to proceed with designs through to implementation of the footway schemes; and
3. Ask officers to carry out the assessments of the pedestrian crossings detailed in Appendix 1 and to bring a report back to a future meeting of the Panel for scrutiny of the prioritised programme.

Decision

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

5. ADDITIONAL TIME LIMITED BUDGET PROVISION - IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing an update on the work being undertaken to progress the additional funding measures approved as part of the council's budget setting exercise on 28 February 2020.

The report recommended that the panel note the progress and the implementation timescales outlined in Appendix 1 to the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

6. PENTLAND HILLS REGIONAL STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN

(2019-28)

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising of the review of the strategic management plan for the Pentland Hills Regional Park that covered the 10-year period from 2019–2028.

The report recommended that the panel note and consider the following recommendations which were intended to be submitted to Council Executive for approval after a consultation exercise had been undertaken:

1. Note the comments received on the Pentland Hills Regional Park Strategic Management Plan (2019-2028) following consultation;
2. Agree the responses to the comments received during consultation on the Pentland Hills Park Strategic Management Plan (2019-2028);
3. Approve the content of the Pentland Hills Regional Park Strategic Management Plan (2019-2028) (appendix 1);
4. Approve the “Screening Report” which was to be submitted to SEA Gateway and the Consultation Authorities and which set out the council’s justification that the guidance was exempted from additional Strategic Environmental Assessment because it would not in itself have any significant environmental effects;
5. Delegates authority to the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration to timeously issue a “Screening Determination” in the event that SEA Gateway and the Consultation Authorities confirm their agreement that the guidance would not in itself have any significant environmental effects, and to report the outcome of the SEA screening process to a future meeting of the Council Executive for information; and
6. Note that following consideration by Council Executive (and having secured exemption from additional SEA) the guidance would require to be submitted to Scottish Minister for scrutiny and consideration before it could be adopted as non-statutory supplementary guidance in support of the West Lothian Local Development Plan.

Decision

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

7. HARPERRIG RESERVOIR LOCAL NATURE RESERVE - INTERIM REVIEW OF 2016-21 HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising of the interim review of the management plan for Harperrig Reservoir Local Nature Reserve that covered the period 2016-2021.

The report recommended that the panel:

1. Note the interim review of the Harperrig Reservoir Local Nature Reserve Management Plan (2016-2021) (see appendix 1); and
2. Offer any comments at this stage of the plan.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

8. SCOTTISH ROAD WORKS COMMISSIONER'S PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2019/20

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing an update on the Scottish Road Works Commissioner's performance review of West Lothian for 2019/20.

The report recommended that the panel note the progress made by Roads and Transportation during 2019/2020, in improving performance in respect of compliance with the notification, co-ordination and planning aspects of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1001 and acknowledged the efforts of the staff involved.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

9. INTERIM REVIEW OF WEST LOTHIAN GEODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (2017-2022)

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising of the mid-point review of the West Lothian Geodiversity Action plan that covered the 5-year period from 2017-2022.

The report recommended that the panel:

1. Note the outcome of the mid-point review of the West Lothian Geodiversity Action Plan (2017-2022); and
2. Offer any further comments at this stage of the plan.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

10. 2019/20 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - MONTH 12 MONITORING REPORT

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 the Environment portfolio for the General Fund Revenue budget and the General Services Capital Investment Strategy.

The report recommended that the panel:

1. Note the financial performance of the Environment portfolio for 2019/20;
2. Note that the Environment portfolio position for the year formed part of the overall council position reported to Council Executive on 23 June 2020; and
3. Note any actions required to be taken by Heads of Service and budget holders to manage spend within available resources.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

11. THE "SHALE TRAIL" ACROSS WEST LOTHIAN

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising of the new 16-mile walking and cycling "Shale Trail" route that crossed West Lothian from West Calder to Winchburgh, via Livingston and Broxburn.

The report recommended that the panel note and consider the following recommendation which was intended to be submitted to a future meeting of the Council Executive for approval;

- Note the details of the new "Shale Trail" across West Lothian and offer any further comments on the initiative.

Decision

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

12. RIVERLIFE: ALMOND & AVON - ALMOND BARRIERS PROJECT MID CALDER WEIR

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing an update on progress in the development of the project to adapt Mid Calder Weir to allow fish passage and to enhance access to the weir from Mid Calder.

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

1. Note the progress being made on detailed design to adapt the weir at Mid Calder, restoring fish passage; and
2. Approve efforts to secure alignment of the National Cycle Network route (NCN75) between Pumpherston Road, Mid Calder and East Calder Wastewater Treatment Works and authorise officers to secure external funding and necessary consents leading to detailed design and construction, if the proposal proved feasible.

Decision

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

13. PERFORMANCE REPORT

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services on the current levels of performance for all indicators which were the responsibility of the Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

The report recommended that the panel note the performance information and determine if further action or enquiry was necessary for any of the indicators mentioned within the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

14. TRANSFORMING YOUR COUNCIL: RECYCLING & WASTE SERVICES COLLECTION SECTION SHIFT CHANGES AND ROAD END COLLECTIONS

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services advising of the proposals for efficiency savings of £320,000 to be met from changing the current shift working arrangements within the collection section of Recycling & Waste Services and a further £76,000 from implementing the previously agreed policy for Road End Collections on private roads and narrow access areas to complement the £92,000 saving already achieved as part of the revision

of Overtime & Sickness Absence cover.

The proposed changes to shift patterns permitted an increase in the utilisation of the vehicle assets whilst retaining the overall staffing complement and functional hours for service delivery over a 7-day period. The implementation of road end collections reduced the liability and financial cost of operating collections in these locations as well as improving efficiency through the use of standard collection vehicles. These savings were an approved budget measure following the Transforming Your Council (TYC) process and were phased for introduction in 2020/21.

The report recommended that the panel:

1. Note the customer journey and changes within the service to date;
2. Note proposals and approach;
3. Note the phasing impact due to the requirement to undertake requisite approvals, public and staff engagement for a wholesale change of the collection scheduling; and
4. Agree for a report to be submitted to Council Executive for consideration given the public impact of the outlined savings proposals.
7. To note the contents of the report; and
8. Agreed that the report and its recommendations be forwarded to the next appropriate meeting of the Council Executive for approval.

15. WORKPLAN

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

Decision

To note the workplan