

MINUTE of MEETING of the SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within WEBEX VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 20 OCTOBER 2020.

Present – Councillors George Paul (Chair), Andrew McGuire, Alison Adamson, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, Peter Heggie, John McGinty, John Sives, Joint Forum of Community Council's representative.

In Attendance – Inspector Alun Williams, Police Scotland, John McKenzie, Divisional Commander, Police Scotland, David Sharp, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Brian Robertson, Scottish Fire and Rescue, Graeme Struthers, Depute Chief Executive, AnnMarie Carr, Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services, Sarah Kelly, West Lothian Council, Katy McBride, West Lothian Council, Alison Smith, West Lothian Council, Grant Taylor, West Lothian Council, Pamela Bell, West Lothian Council

Apologies – Councillor Frank Anderson, Jessie Duncan, Alison Kerr, David Rintoul, Tenants Panel Representatives.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair changed the order of business as follows:

Agenda item 6, 12, 15, 8, 9, 13, 10, 11, 7 and 14.

It was noted that agenda item 15 replaced agenda item 5.

3. MINUTE

The Panel confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 4 February 2020 as a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

4. SCRUTINY OF POLICE SCOTLAND PERFORMANCE IN WEST LOTHIAN OCTOBER TO MARCH 2020

This item of business was replaced by Agenda Item 15.

5. 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 April 2020 to 30 June 2020.

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

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

6. 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 April 2020 to June 2020.

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

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

7. SCRUTINY OF POLICE SCOTLAND PERFORMANCE IN WEST LOTHIAN APRIL TO OCTOBER 2020

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 April 2020 to October 2020.

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

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

8. HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW

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 Housing Allocations Policy Review consultation and providing a draft copy of the revised Housing Allocations Policy.

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

1. Note the outcome of the Housing Allocations Policy Review Consultation

2. Note the updated national/local position for housing allocations and homelessness along with the impacts of Covid-19;
3. Note the outcome of the Choice Based Letting (CBL) scoping exercise;
4. Approve the updated Housing Allocations Policy (Appendix 5) for implementation in accordance with paragraph D.9;
5. Agree that a CBL approach be adopted as the council's letting process with appropriate procedure and guidance being introduced and maintained by officers within the terms of the new policy once the service had reviewed and renewed/replaced the existing housing management IT System; and
6. Agree that the new policy would be reviewed every three years with the outcome of the review and recommendations reported to PDSP and to Council Executive for approval.

Decision

1. Noted 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.

9. PERFORMANCE REPORTING

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services reporting the current levels of performance for Housing, Customer and Building Services indicators that were the responsibility of the Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

The report 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 contents of the report.

10. HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020/21 - REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES (HEREWITH)

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) presenting the Management Plan for Housing, Customer and Building Services which was provided as an appendix to the report.

The report recommended that the panel consider the Management Plan

and comment as appropriate.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

11. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON MINISTERIAL STATEMENT FOR MODIFYING LOCAL CONNECTION REFERRALS IN SCOTLAND

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services outlining the proposed response to the Scottish Government's consultation paper inviting views on whether the content of a ministerial statement setting out the new power for Scottish Ministers to modify local connection referrals between local authorities in Scotland was to be exercised. The submission date for the response to be included in the consultation process was 23 October 2020.

The report recommended that the panel consider the council's response as set out in Appendix 2 of the report for submission to the Council Executive for approval.

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

12. PROPERTY TURNOVER QUARTER 4 2019/20 AND QUARTER 1 2020/21

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services advising of the property turnover for fourth quarter (1 January to 31 March 2019/20) and first quarter (1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020/21).

The report recommended that the panel note the current levels of activity relating to property turnover for quarter 4 of 2019/20 and quarter 1 of 2020/21 and in particular to note:

1. The decrease in properties let for quarter 4 2019/20 and quarter 1 of 2020.21 when compared to the same period last year;
2. Of the 47 communities in West Lothian, nine had only one mainstream property to let and 18 had none; and
3. The decrease in properties let due to Covid-19 in quarter 1 of 2020/21 of 54 when compared to quarter 1 2019/20 of 385

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

13. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - MONTH 12 MONITORING 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 financial performance of the Services of the Community portfolio for the General Fund Revenue Budget.

The panel was advised that an error in the report showed an overspend of £104,000 for Homeless Transport but was in fact an underspend.

The report recommended that the panel:

1. Note the financial performance for the Services for the Community portfolio for 2019/20;
2. Note that the Services for the Community portfolio position for the year formed part of the outturn reported to Council Executive on 23 June 2020; and
3. Note the 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.

14. 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.