

MINUTE of MEETING of the ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within WEBEX VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 2 FEBRUARY 2021.

Present – Councillors Tom Conn (Chair), Cathy Muldoon, Alison Adamson, Diane Calder, Chris Horne, Andrew McGuire, George Paul, Pippa Plevin (WL Joint Forum of Community Councils representative), Tom Carr-Pollock (Union Representative)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The panel confirmed the minute of its meetings held on 10 November subject to noting that the Councillor Tom Conn had submitted his apologies and Councillor Cathy Muldoon chaired the meeting. It was also noted the Councillor Andrew McGuire had been recorded in the sederunt twice.

3. PETITION - REQUEST FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE SPACES FOR PEOPLE TEMPORARY 20MPH SPEED LIMITS

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services advising of the receipt of an electronic online petition remitted to the Environment PDSP from the Council Executive at its meeting on the 15 December 2020

It was recommended that the Spaces for People temporary 20mph speed limits in West Lothian be assessed and evaluated by officers at the conclusion of the temporary project's duration as part of the whole project as originally planned and taking account of the council's decision of 29 September 2020, however in line with Scottish Government guidance the measures would be removed when the national Covid-19 restrictions are fully lifted

The Head of Operational Services explained that since the Council Executive remitted this item of business to the Environment PDSP a motion was agreed at Full Council on 25 January 2021 calling for an examination of the full Spaces for People programme to be carried out and reported back to council on 16 March 2021

It was therefore noted that the outcome of this item of business would be reported back to Full Council and not Council Executive.

The panel was of the opinion that while there were issues raised to the Spaces for People Scheme in some areas, others welcomed the scheme and therefore the full evaluation should take account of all views that had been submitted.

Decision

1. To note the contents of the report; and
2. To note that a report and the outcome of the review be forwarded to the next meeting of Full Council on 16 March 2021 for approval.

4. 2020/21 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - MONTH 6 MONITORING

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

The report recommended that the panel:

1. Notes the financial performance of the Environment portfolio as at month 6;
2. Notes that the Environment portfolio position at month 6 is part of the overall council budget position reported to Council Executive on 17 November 2020; and
3. Notes 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.

5. CONSULTATION ON CYCLE 2 OF THE FORTH ESTUARY FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND PLAN - UPDATE ON WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL'S ACTIONS

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services advising of the proposed Flood Risk Management Actions for the Council, for Cycle 2 of the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009, and to inform the Panel of the delayed launch of the full public consultation on the Draft 2021-2027 Forth Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy and the Draft 2022-2028 Forth Estuary Flood Risk Management Plan.

The report recommended that the panel notes, the public consultation dates for the Forth Estuary Flood Strategy and Plan and the draft prioritised actions for the council, which officers will be reporting to the Council Executive for information.

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 Council Executive for approval.

6. BROXBURN FLOOD PROTECTION SCHEME - REVIEW OF FLOOD EVENT

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing an update, following a preliminary review by officers and subsequent technical review, of the event which took place on 27 August 2020 and flooded 21 properties in Nicol Road and Pyothall Court, Broxburn and the implications that this had for any future flood protection scheme.

The report recommended that the panel:

1. Note the findings from officers' preliminary review and the independent consultant's review of the flood event;
2. Note the intention of officers to resume work on outline design of flood protection measures to reduce the risk of flooding to properties in Pyothall Court and Nicol Road from the Liggat Syke; and
3. Note proposals would be brought back to Environment PDSP.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

7. WEST LOTHIAN STATUTORY RETURN TO SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT ON PUBLIC BODY REPORTING ON BIODIVERSITY DUTY: 2018 - 2020

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising of the requirement for public body reporting to the Scottish Government on West Lothian Council's Biodiversity Duty for the three-year period between 2018 – 2020.

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

1. Notes the contents of the general review of West Lothian's commitment to biodiversity (as detailed in Appendix 1);
2. Agrees to forward the report to the Scottish Government as evidence that the council, as a public body, has met its reporting duty on biodiversity over the 3year period (2018 to 2020); and
3. Agrees to publicise the report on the council's website as advised by the Scottish Government.

Decision

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

8. EASTER INCH MOSS & SEAFIELD LAW LOCAL NATURE RESERVE - REVIEW OF HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLAN (2011 - 2021)

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 habitat management plan for Easter Inch Moss & Seafield Law Local Nature Reserve originally prepared in 2011.

The report recommended that the panel notes the contents of the general review of Easter Inch Moss & Seafield Law Local Nature Reserve Habitat Management Plan (as detailed in Appendix 1).

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

9. CLIMATE EMERGENCY UPDATE, REPORTING & TIMESCALES

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update on progress made in the response to the Climate Emergency and to present proposals for revised reporting timescales.

The report recommended that the panel:

1. Note the contents of this report and appendix;
2. Consider whether the revised reporting timescales are appropriate in the current and post-covid environment, and;
3. Note that the revised timescales as suggested in the report and Appendix 1 will be presented to Council Executive for approval.

Decision

1. Noted 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.

10. THE ROLE OF PLANNING IN TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration advising of the role of planning in tackling climate change. Consideration of the role was a matter considered by West Lothian Council at a meeting on 17 March 2020.

The report recommended that the panel note the contents of the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

11. SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT DUTY

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services providing an update to the Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on progress in the council's progress in implementing the Sustainable Procurement Duty.

The report recommended that the panel note the contents of the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

12. YOUTH PARTICIPATION

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update on the plan for engaging young people in the development of the Climate Change Strategy, as agreed at a meeting of West Lothian Council on 17 March 2020.

It was recommended that the panel note the contents of the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

13. WASTE AND RECYCLING FUTURE LEGISLATIVE INFLUENCES
REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing an update on future, environmentally driven, legislative influences affecting the collection, transport and processing of the materials generated by West Lothian residents and businesses, as agreed at a meeting of West Lothian Council on 17 March 2020.

It was recommended that the panel note the contents of the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

14. DECARBONISING THE COUNCIL'S FLEET

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Operational Services providing an update on opportunities and methods through which the council could move towards decarbonising the council's fleet, as agreed at a meeting of West Lothian Council on 17 March 2020.

It was recommended that the panel note the contents of the report.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

15. PLANS TO DEVELOP EV CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE ACROSS WEST LoTHIAN

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services providing an update on the existing Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across West Lothian and outlining options for increasing and enhancing the charging network as part of the council's Climate Emergency response, as agreed at a meeting of West Lothian Council on 17 March 2020.

The report recommended that the panel:

1. Note the contents of this report;
2. Reviews and comments on the proposals outlined, and;
3. Notes that the report will be presented to Council Executive, seeking approval to introduce tariffs for use of council operated charging facilities.

Decision

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

16. THE INTEGRATION OF NET ZERO CARBON TARGETS IN HOUSING STRATEGY

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 proposals for the integration of net carbon zero targets in housing strategy, as agreed at a meeting of West Lothian Council on 17 March 2020.

The report recommended that the panel:

1. Note the contents of this report;
2. Notes that for all proposed new Build Council houses it is recommended that the initial specification for the heating system should be for a system which produces zero direct emissions at the point of use or low carbon alternative, prior to the proposed introduction by Scottish Government in 2024;
3. Note that officers would investigate the feasibility of implementing The Committee on Climate Change recommendations that new homes must achieve 'ultra-high' levels of energy efficiency consistent with a space heat demand of 15-20 kWh/m²/yr; and
4. Note the recommendations for the existing stock to meet the Route Map regarding milestones for EESSH 2 compliance.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

17. IMPROVING THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF OPERATIONAL BUILDINGS

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services providing an update on options for decarbonising existing and future non-domestic buildings, including the use of renewable technologies where appropriate as agreed at a meeting of West Lothian Council on 17 March 2020.

The report recommended that the panel:

1. Note that emissions from council buildings had reduced considerably since the baseline year of 2013/14;
2. Note that de-carbonising council buildings would present significant challenges, and;
3. Note that officers would develop a Carbon Management Plan as part of the new Climate Change Strategy to be brought forward in 2021.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

18. CARBON OFFSETTING

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration providing an update on carbon offsetting requirements, as agreed at a meeting of West Lothian Council on 17 March 2020.

The report recommended that the panel:

1. Notes that carbon offsetting and sequestration should be considered only where actual emissions have been reduced to as low as possible;
2. Notes that officers would investigate the current status of all council land assets to establish the current amount of carbon being sequestered and what future opportunities for enhanced carbon offsetting were, and;
3. Notes that these findings would be included in the net-zero forecasts within the new West Lothian Climate Change Strategy to be published in 2021.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

19. 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 and to add the following two items:

- Spaces for People
- Deputation - speed limits on Westfield Road/Slackend/Cathlaw Lane, Torphichen