

MINUTE of MEETING of the SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within MS TEAMS VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 7 SEPTEMBER 2021.

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

In Attendance

Graeme Struthers, Depute Chief Executive
Chief Inspector Alun Williams, Police Scotland
Partnership Superintendent Debra Forrester, Police Scotland
David Sharp, Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Lynne Gow, Station Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Marjory Mackie, Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services
Sarah Kelly, West Lothian Council
Katy McBride, West Lothian Council
Alison Smith, West Lothian Council
Grant Walker, West Lothian Council
Robert Smith, West Lothian Council
John Sives, Joint Forum of Community Councils
Jessie Duncan, Tenants Panel Representative

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTES

- (a) The panel confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 1 June 2021 as a correct record. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.
- (b) The panel confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 15 June 2021 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 Plan Performance for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in West Lothian for the period 1 April to 30 June 2021.

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

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4. SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD PERFORMANCE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing performance information on the Safer Neighbourhood Teams for the period April to June 2021.

It was recommended that the panel note the performance information detailed for the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. 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 April to 30 June 2021.

It was recommended that the panel note the contents of the report covering the period 1 January 2021 – 31 March 2021.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. PROPERTY TURNOVER APRIL TO JUNE 2021

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services informing members of inform the panel of property turnover for Quarter 1 of 2021/22 (April to June 2021).

It was recommended that the panel note the current levels of activity relating to property turnover for the first quarter of 2021/22, and in particular to note:

1. The increase in property lets for Quarter 1 2021/22 compared to the same period last year;
2. Of the 48 communities in West Lothian, 19 had had no properties available for let throughout Quarter 1 of 2021/22; and
3. 54% of lets had been allocated to people who were homeless throughout the quarter.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

7. PERFORMANCE REPORTING

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 current levels of performance for Housing, Customer and Building Services via the indicators that were the responsibility of the Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

It was recommended that the panel note the current performance on Housing, Customer and Building Services key performance indicators and determine if further action or enquiry is necessary.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8. 2020/21 ANNUAL RETURN ON THE CHARTER

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services advising of the service's performance against the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) and seeking approval of the submission of the Annual Assurance Statement following the recent submission of the ARC to the Scottish Housing Regulator on 31 May.

It was recommended that the panel note the content of the 2020/21 Annual Return on the Charter, the commentary and improvement actions identified during the verification of the data and benchmarking. It was further recommended that the Annual Assurance Statement be submitted to Council Executive for the Chair to sign and submit the statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator by the deadline of 31st October.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report.
2. To agree the recommendation which was intended to be submitted to a future meeting of the Council Executive for approval.

9. 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 also provided an update on the impact of the

COVID-19 pandemic on both the timescale for delivery and completion of the Council's 3,000 Affordable Houses programme.

It was recommended that the panel note and consider the following recommendations which are intended to be submitted to Council Executive for approval:

1. Notes the progress being made on delivering 3,000 affordable homes in West Lothian over the period 2012-2022;
2. Notes the impact on the construction of the new build houses due to the COVID 19 pandemic; and
3. Notes projected delivery estimated at 89% of the overall programme by March 2022.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

10. SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE S72 HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2006

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update of the Council's 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, practice and align with the Local Housing Strategy (2017-2022) and Housing Capital Investment Programme 2019/20 – 2022/23, in relation to dealing with repairs and improvements in the mixed tenure estate.

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

- i. Notes the proposed changes to the scheme of assistance as outlined within the report;
- ii. Notes that amended included reference to the Tenement Management Scheme and clarity around when the council would use the Tenement (Scotland) Act 2004 to progress works within mixed tenure blocks;
- iii. Notes that the revised Scheme of Assistance would supersede the scheme approved by the council on 25 June 2019; and
- iv. Notes the updated scheme of assistance set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report.

2. To agree the recommendations which were intended to be submitted to a future meeting of the Council Executive for approval.

11. 2020/21 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 Services for the Community portfolio for the General Fund Revenue budget

It was recommended that the panel:-

- (A) Notes the financial performance of the Services for the Community portfolio for 2020/21;
- (B) Notes that the Services for the Community portfolio position for the year formed part of the overall council budget position report to Council Executive on 22 June 2021; and
- (C) Notes any actions required to be taken by Heads of Service and budget holders to manage spend within available resources.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

12. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.