

MINUTE of MEETING of the HOUSING SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LoTHIAN, on 16 AUGUST 2022.

Present – Councillors George Paul (Chair), Alison Adamson, Robert De Bold, Andrew McGuire, Cathy Muldoon and Tony Pearson

Apologies – Councillor Jim Dickson and Jessie Duncan (Tenants Panel Representative)

In Attendance –

Julie Whitelaw, Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services, West Lothian Council

Marjory Mackie, Housing Strategy Manager, West Lothian Council

Pamela Bell, Senior Accountant, West Lothian Council

Pippa Plevin, Joint Forum of Community Councils

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Agenda Item 7 - Update on Home Energy Efficient Programmes for Scotland - Councillors Adamson and De Bold declared a connection in that the name of the streets where they lived were contained in the Appendix to the report. The connection was remote and they would take part in the discussion.

2. MINUTE

The panel confirmed the Minute of meeting of the Services for the Community PDSP held on 29 March 2022 as a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY UPDATE

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services updating 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:

1. note the progress being made on delivering 3,000 affordable homes in West Lothian over the period 2012-2022;
2. notes that at 31 March 2022, 3,000 homes within the Affordable Houses Programme were either complete or under construction, with 80% already occupied; and

3. Notes the ongoing impact on the construction of the new build houses due to the Pandemic and resulting economic situation.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW WEST LoTHIAN LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on the development of the new West Lothian Local Housing Strategy.

It was recommended that the panel:-

1. Notes the progress on developing the Local Housing Strategy;
2. Notes that consultation was underway with key stakeholders;
3. Provides feedback on the key matters for consideration as set out in D.3 of the report to inform the Local Housing Strategy; and
4. Notes that a further report would be brought forward to the Panel in the autumn with the draft West Lothian Housing Strategy.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

5. UPDATE ON HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMMES FOR SCOTLAND: AREA BASED SCHEMES (HEEPS:ABS) 2021/22 AND 2022/23

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on the progress made on the 2021/22 HEEPS: ABS programme of External Wall Insulation and providing details of the proposed 2022/23 programme.

It was recommended that the panel:-

1. Notes the progress made on the 2021/22 HEEPS:ABS programme;
2. Notes the final funding allocation for the 2022/23 HEEPS:ABS programme of £968,301;
3. Notes the continuation to provide HEEP:ABS funding to home owners in the Dedridge area as part of the 2022/23 programme; and

4. Notes the continuation of delegated powers to the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services for non-substantive changes to the HEEPS:ABS programme.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

6. PROPERTY TURNOVER JANUARY TO MARCH 2022

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services informing members of property turnover for Quarter 4 of 2021/22 (1 January to 31 March 2022).

It was recommended that the panel note the current levels of activity relating to property turnover for the Quarter 4 of 2021/22 and in particular to note:

1. The increase in property lets for Quarter 4 2021/22 compared to the same period last year;
2. Of the 48 communities in West Lothian, 19 had no properties available for let throughout Quarter 4 of 2021/22; and
3. 56% of lets were allocated to people who were homeless throughout the quarter.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

7. PERFORMANCE REPORTING

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services reporting on the current levels of performance for Housing, Customer and Building Services indicators that were the responsibility of the Housing Services 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 was necessary.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

8. HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES MANAGEMENT PLAN 2022/23

The panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Interim Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services introducing the 2022/23 Management Plan for Housing, Customer and Building Services which was provided as an appendix.

It was recommended that the panel considers the plan and provides comment as appropriate.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

9. 2021/22 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 updated on the financial performance of the Housing Services portfolio for the General Fund Revenue budget.

It was recommended that the panel: -

1. Notes the financial performance of the Housing Services portfolio for 2021/22;
2. Notes that the Housing Services portfolio position at month 12 was part of the overall council budget position reported to Council Executive on 21 June 2022; and
3. Notes actions to be taken by Heads of Service and budget holders to manage spend within available resources.

Decision

To note the contents of the report.

10. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.