

MINUTE of MEETING of the CORPORATE POLICY AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, EH54 6FF, on 7 JUNE 2023.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), Kirsteen Sullivan, Tom Conn, Lynda Kenna, Maria MacAulay; and George Paul

In attendance – Malcolm Hill (Joint Forum of Community Council's Representative); and Karen Nailen (Third Sector Representative)

Apologies – Councillors Janet Campbell; and Damian Doran-Timson

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTE

The Panel approved the minute of its meeting held on 13 February 2023. The minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. BOUNDARIES SCOTLAND - REVIEW OF SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT BOUNDARIES: CONSULTATION ON PROVISIONAL PROPOSALS

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Chief Executive advising that Boundaries Scotland has started their Second Review of Scottish Parliament Boundaries and was consulting on provisional proposals for constituencies.

The Panel was asked to note and consider the recommendations below which were intended to be submitted to Council Executive for approval: -

1. Consider the provisional proposals for Scottish Parliament constituencies covering West Lothian
2. Agree a response to the Boundaries Scotland consultation on their provisional proposals.

Decision

1. To approve the terms of the report
2. To agree that the report be presented to a future meeting of Council Executive for consideration and decision

4. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 4 OF 2022/23

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive reporting the current level of performance for

all indicators that support the council's Corporate Plan and were the responsibility of the Corporate Policy and Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel.

It was recommended that the Panel note the performance information and determine if further action or enquiry was necessary for any of the performance indicators in the report.

Decision

To note the content of the report

5. SICKNESS ABSENCE (1 APRIL 2022 TO 31 MARCH 2023)

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services providing details on sickness absence rates during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and to also provide an update on the ongoing application of the council's Policy & Procedure on Managing Supporting Attendance at Work.

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

Decision

To note the content of the report.

6. CORPORATE STRATEGY ANNUAL UPDATE - DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by Depute Chief Executive providing a review of the Digital Transformation Strategy 2018/23 including progress against the planned actions and an overview of the performance to date

It was recommended that the Panel

1. Notes the performance against the outcomes.
2. Notes the progress made in implementing the key activities and actions.
3. Comments on areas for improvement

Decision

1. To note the content of the report; and
2. To suggest officers consider gathering data on how community centres were engaging with customers with respect to public access to those computer suites/facilities they directly managed.

7. CORPORATE STRATEGY ANNUAL UPDATE - ICT

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services providing an end of strategy review of Information Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy 2018/23 to the Panel including progress against the planned actions and an overview of the performance to date.

It was recommended that the Panel: -

1. Notes the performance against the outcomes.
2. Notes the progress made in implementing the key activities and actions.
3. Agree any recommendations for improvement.

Decision

1. To note the content of the report; and
2. To record a note of thanks to all the ICT staff for their excellent performance

8. CORPORATE STRATEGY ANNUAL UPDATE - IMPROVEMENT

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services providing a review of the Improvement Strategy 2018/23 to the Panel, including progress in the planned actions and an overview of the performance during the period. The Strategy covers the period 2018/19 to 2022/23.

It was recommended that the Panel: -

1. Notes the performance against the outcomes;
2. Notes the progress made in implementing the key activities and actions

Decision

To note the contents of the report

9. CORPORATE STRATEGY ANNUAL UPDATE - PEOPLE

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services providing a review of the People Strategy, including progress against the planned actions and an overview of the performance to date.

It was recommended that the Panel: -

1. Notes the performance against the outcomes.
2. Notes the progress made in implementing the key activities and actions.
3. Agree any recommendations for improvement.

Decision

1. To note the content of the report; and
2. To suggest that for future surveys consideration be given to rephrasing the question about discrimination in the workplace to make it more nuanced with respect to individual characteristics

10. CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services providing information on the key strengths and areas for improvement that were identified through the Customer Services Excellence (CSE) Standard that was undertaken in council services in 2022/23

It was recommended that the Panel: -

1. Note that the council has retained the CSE Standard;
2. Note the findings from the CSE Assessment in 2022/23
3. Note the opportunities for improvement that were identified in the CSE Assessment.

Decision

To note the content of the report.

11. CORPORATE STRATEGY ANNUAL UPDATE - CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY 2018/2023

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing a review of the Customer Service Strategy 2018/23 to the Panel, including progress against the planned actions and an overview of the performance to date.

It was recommended that the Panel: -

1. Notes the performance against the outcomes.
2. Notes the progress made in implementing the key activities and actions.

3. Agree any recommendations for improvement.

Decision

To note the content of the report

12. HORIZON SCAN

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Service providing a summary of the latest economic indicators and announcements for the UK, Scotland and West Lothian and the potential impact on the council.

It was recommended that the Panel notes: -

1. The results of the horizon scan for the UK, Scotland, West Lothian and West Lothian Council; and
2. The risks and uncertainties in relation to the council's budget model.

Decision

To note the content of the report

13. SCOTTISH WELFARE FUND REVIEW

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services advising of the findings of the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) Independent Review which was undertaken in January 2022 by Ipsos on behalf of the Scottish Government and for the Panel to note that the review was initiated in January 2022 and concluded in March 2023.

It was recommended that the Panel: -

1. Notes the key findings from the SWF's Independent Review; and
2. Notes the next steps to be taken from the findings of the Independent Review

Decision

To note the content of the report

14. CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL TAX FOR SECOND AND EMPTY HOMES AND NON-DOMESTIC RATES THRESHOLDS

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Finance and Property Services to consider the proposed

response to the consultation by the Scottish Government in relation to Council Tax for Second and Empty Homes and Non-Domestic Rates Thresholds for self-catering accommodation which was intended to be submitted to Council Executive for approval and submission.

It was recommended that the Panel: -

1. Notes the consultation on the Council Tax for Second and Empty Homes and Non-Domestic Rates Thresholds
2. Considers and provides comment on the attached consultation response which was intended to be presented to Council Executive for approval.

Decision

1. To note the content of the report; and
2. To agree that the report be presented to a future meeting of Council Executive for consideration and decision.

15. LIBRARY AND MUSEUM SERVICES 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 Library and Museum services performance and activities from October 2022 to March 2023.

The Panel was asked to note the performance and activities of the Library and Museum Service for the period October 2022 to March 2023 contained in Appendix 1 attached to the report.

Decision

To note the content of the report

16. COLLECTIONS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL AND WEST CALDER AND HARBURN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services presenting the draft Collections Partnership Agreement between the Council and West Calder and Harburn Community Development Trust.

It was recommended that the Panel considers and provides comment on the draft Collections Partnership Agreement, which would be presented to Council Executive for approval.

Decision

1. To note the content of the report

2. To agree that the report be presented to a future meeting of Council Executive for consideration and decision

17. LEAVE SCHEME FOR ELECTED MEMBERS

The Panel considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services seeking consideration to extending the Family Leave Scheme for Elected Members to include provisions for periods of sickness absence

The Panel was asked to note and consider the following recommendation(s) which were intended to be submitted to Council Executive for approval: -

1. Note the terms of The Local Governance (Scotland) Act 2004 (Remuneration) Regulations 2007 in relation to 'leave of absence';
2. Consider the proposed extension to the Family Leave Scheme for Elected Members to include provisions for periods of sickness absence as outlined in the draft Leave Scheme for Elected Members;
3. Amend the existing Family Leave Scheme for Elected Members to include sickness absence and to re-name the Scheme as the Leave Scheme for Elected Members

Decision

1. To note the content of the report; and
2. To agree that the report be presented to a future meeting of Council Executive for consideration and decision

18. WORKPLAN

A workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.